Love Know Limit

by TheBrokeZane

Summary

What happens when Wally brings his roommate Barry home for winter break and meets his little sister, Iris?

Notes

This is just a fic I had the idea to write. Barry doesn't have superpowers in this. Wally is Iris' big brother.

I am totally seeing Wally as Michael B. Jordan, if you needed a visual reference.

Let me know what you guys think. Please don't be afraid to leave feedback.
Wallace "Wally" West and his little sister Iris have always been close. At two years apart, they were thick as thieves and the best of friends. Their father, Joe was happy that his two children were so close. They were close even before their mother Kristina died. That bonded them and really made their bond unbreakable.

Wally was Iris' protector and there seriously wasn't anything he wouldn't do for his sister. He felt like that was his job as her older brother. Including keeping guys away from her. He had several friends throughout the years that liked Iris and wanted to get with her, but Wally was having none of that. He knew how guys, mainly his friends were, and didn't want to jeopardize relationships with them or with Iris, and especially Joe, by having something happen between a friend and iris. It was just something Wally wanted to avoid at all costs. Wally's friends surely came to realize that they were to look at Iris like their little sister too.

Except for one friend, Edward "Eddie" Thawne. He had a serious thing for Iris and really wasn't trying to hear Wally's 'Don't date my sister' rule. Wally and Eddie were very close, so he thought that if he talked to Wally first, he would give him clearance. It didn't happen that way, and Eddie wasn't too happy about it. He figured he would do what he wanted anyway and it caused the demise of their friendship.

It also caused a rift between Wally and Iris, but only for a little while. They couldn't go that long without talking to each other. It was hard enough at home, but they went to the same high school and ran in the same circles. Iris just accepted the fact that she had a father and a brother that were overly protective of her. She'd take that over them not caring at all.

So now, Iris and Wally were both in college, with Wally being a senior and Iris a sophomore. He was away at Starling City University on a track and field scholarship. Wally had always been a fast runner. He won several titles and awards in high school which caused him to get a free ride to school. Joe was especially thankful for that. He was raising two kids alone on a police detective's salary.

Wally was eager to get home to his father and sister. He missed them terribly since he wasn't able to go home during Thanksgiving. It was hard for him to miss that. The team had an important indoor track meet in Coast City. Wally was under obligation to be there since he's under scholarship. He hated that he was that far away from them and hadn't seen them since August before he left.

Iris was a little closer to home at Central City University, majoring in journalism. She too had a scholarship, though it was an academic one. She had always been an avid writer, and decided that writing was her calling. She had dreams of becoming an ace reporter and winning herself a Pulitzer. She was putting that out into the universe and hoped that it came back to her. Iris was a truly lovely person with a social butterfly persona, infectious and fun loving personality. It was hard not to love Iris West.

Wally truly thought his little sister was a perfect gem and wanted nothing but the best for her. He had no idea that the best for her was right under his nose.
Bartholomew "Barry" Allen is the son of Dr. Henry Allen, and the late Nora. Nora was murdered when Barry was just 11 years old right in front of him. Two masked men came into his house one night robbed them, and killed her. Henry was out on a call and came home to the tragedy. He tried to help his wife by tending to the huge butcher knife stuck in her chest. He wasn't able to save her, and was unjustly accused and convicted of killing her. They didn't believe 11 year old Barry. They thought he was just covering for his father. Henry's prints were on the knife. No one else's were except for Nora. Everybody believed he was guilty. Everyone except for his son.

Barry then went to live with distant relatives on his mother's side. He was essentially an orphan because his family held a lot of hostility, anger, and resentment towards Henry. They never let Barry visit him in prison and Barry often ran away because of it. When he became old enough, he went to see his father on his own.

He essentially was a genius and worked his butt off through school. He also was on the track team because the boy was fast. Really fast. The team dubbed him 'The Flash' because of how fast he ran. He actually got an academic and athletic scholarship. He was currently double majoring in Physics and Chemistry at Starling City University.

He had dreams of becoming a scientist. Science fascinated him more than anything in the world. So now he was just studying and running. His current semester of his sophomore year was over and Christmas was fast approaching. He hated this time of year because it reminded him too much of all that he lost and didn't have. He seriously didn't want to go stay with his relatives for nearly a month during winter break. He wished he could stay at school, but he couldn't. He wondered what he'd do with all that free time. It was easier during the summer because he could work and never be there, and spring break was a breeze as well. It was just this time of year that was making him nostalgic and missing his family.

He was dreading packing. His roommate Wally, however was eager to pack and get home. He couldn't wait. Barry envied that. But it wasn't Wally's fault that he was dreading going home and he had a nice and inviting home to go to. Barry was sitting on his bed, pretty much wallowing in self pity when Wally walked in.

"Hey Barry." Wally says as he sits down on his bed.

"Hey." Barry replies gravely.

"What's with you?"

"I'm just dreading going home. I don't really want to. I feel isolated from that part of my family."

Wally looks around. "Yeah, I see you haven't even started packing yet."

"Nope. I wish I could just stay here. I really don't want to see them. They still talk badly about my dad and I really don't want to hear how glad they are that I'm not just like him."

"I tell you what. How about you come home with me?" Wally asks.

"I can't do that. I don't want to impose on your family time." Barry says, though he's grateful that Wally offered.

"You can do that. You're my friend, teammate, and roommate and I'd hate to see you miserable when you don't have to be. The more the merrier at my house. Christmas is a big deal at our house."

"Are you sure? You're sure your father won't mind?" Barry asks.
"Yes I'm sure, and no he won't mind. So I think you need to start packing. I'm getting on the road in about 3 hours. We'll get there when everyone is sleep, but who cares. And now I don't have to drive all that way by myself."

"Thanks, man. I'll have to repay the favor one day." Barry says as he stands and goes to their shared closet.

"Don't mention it. And you're pitching in for gas too." Wally jokes as he stands as well.

"No problem. Are you really sure that's not too long to have a house guest? We're off for about a month."

"Nope. I told you, the more the merrier at my house. You'll love it there." Wally says.

"Ok. Cool." Barry says.

"Oh, and before we leave, I just have to make some ground rules." Wally says.

"Sure. You already know you can live with me and I'm not a slob." Barry jokes

"No, it's not that." Wally says.

"Then what is it?" Barry asks.

"My little sister is off limits." Wally says surely while he deadpans Barry.

"What? In case you haven't noticed, I'm a huge nerd that girls don't even like that much. And you're like my slightly older brother. I wouldn't dream of doing that. I can't wait to meet Iris though. So I can finally see what she looks like." Barry rambles on.

"Do you really think I'd put a picture up of my sister with all the guys that come through here? I don't need anybody jacking off to my sister's image." Wally says.

"Didn't need to hear that man." Barry says and starts pulling out clothes.

"Alright. Just saying."

Barry thinks for a minute. "You really think one of the guys would do that? Like really whack off to her picture?"

Wally looks at Barry like he's crazy. "We're talking about the guys here, Barry. Most of them aren't as straight laced and Mr. Rogers-esque like you are. Have you heard the way they talk?"

"I am not like Mr. Rogers." Barry says to his defense. "And yes I've heard it."

Wally again looks at Barry like he's crazy. "Yes, you are. You wear sweaters and plaid shirts, Barry. Come on. I won't hold that against you. Some other nerd girl will like you the way you are." He says as he pats Barry on the back.

"I get it. I'm an uber nerd." Barry says.

"There's nothing wrong with being a nerd, Barry. Steve Jobs was a nerd. Bill Gates is a nerd. And look at what they accomplished. At least you aren't totally one. You're at least athletic. Chicks dig that. Lose the sweaters, and I'll bet girls would be falling over you." Wally says.

"I happen to like my sweaters. But I'm a dork and a nice guy. We always finish last."
"I'm going to get you laid one of these days." Wally says and laughs.

"Thanks, but I'm good." Barry says and gets more clothes to pack.

"Oh, another heads up. I'm meeting my girl when I get home. It'll be so late, that you won't notice I'm gone. Just hang out in my room until I get back."

"You're seriously going to leave me alone in your house with people I don't know and don't know me?" Barry asks incredulously.

"Yeah, what's the big deal? You'll be like family in a day or two. My peeps are great. And you're kind of ok." Wally jokes.

"Very funny. Am I going to get to meet Linda too?" Barry asks.

"Probably. She gets home today too and I miss her. I haven't seen her since August when she left for school. We're meeting up tonight because I know her family will want to visit with her as well. Plus, you know the other thing." Wally says and smiles.

"Again, I didn't need to know that man."

"I promise I'm going to get you laid one day." Wally jokes and walks over to his bed.

Barry and Wally finished packing and set out to load up Wally's car with the insane amount of stuff they had. The trunk and back seat were packed to capacity. They then headed for the road and drove to Wally's house in Central City.

They arrived there well after midnight and the house was eerily quiet. Wally showed Barry to his room before he quickly showered, texted Linda, and was out the door. Barry made himself comfortable in Wally's room by watching a movie on his laptop. He soon dozed off and was startled awake by someone jumping on him while he was in the bed.

"Wake up you big lug! I missed you!" Iris says.

It startled Barry so much that he jumped and rolled over, knocking whomever was on top of him over in the bed. He looked over and was shocked to see a girl in the bed with him.

He heard a light scream and jumped from the bed as she did the same. She reached for the lamp on the nightstand and held it up towards him, ready to strike. He looked at the girl standing in front of him, holding a lamp, ready to hit him with it.

The girl looked utterly horrified and he figured he must too.

"You're not Wally. Who in the hell are you? And why are you in Wally's bed?!" She asks, pretty much demands as she changes her grasp on the lamp she's holding. She seriously looked like she was getting ready to pass a football.

"Uh….I'm Barry….Wally's roommate. I came home with him." Barry says nervously.

"Where in the hell is Wally?" She pretty much demands again.

"Uh…He went to meet Linda." A flustered Barry says. Now that he has his composure he takes in the girl standing in front of him. She was short, well short to him since he's 6'2" and lanky. He noticed that she was very pretty and had the same skin tone as Wally. He figured she was Iris. "You must be Iris." He says and smiles awkwardly.
"Yeah. I'm Iris. Who are you again?" She asks as she sizes him up. She lowered the lamp, but didn't put it down. He was a tall and lanky guy, but she couldn't help but notice he was kind of cute. In a baby deer in headlights sort of way. He had green eyes that she thought were cute. He was wearing plaid pajama bottoms and no shirt. She quickly took in that he had a six pack. He also had nice arms that she subtly checked out.

Barry nervously walked towards her. "I'm Barry. Bartholomew Allen. I'm Wally's roommate and I'm on the track team with him." He says as he awkwardly stuck out his hand to her.

She finally put the lamp down. She had heard of Barry from Wally, but just finding some strange white dude in her brother's bed threw her for a loop.

Iris took his hand and was surprised at the size of his hands and how strong they felt. She felt warmth radiate through her when she shook his hand. "Hi. I'm Iris. West. I guess you already know that. I'm Wally's little sister. You said your name is Bartholomew?" She asks while she's still holding his hand.

"Yeah. I go by Barry though." Barry says and smiles at the incredibly gorgeous Iris. They were still holding hands.

She noticed the way his arms rippled as they shook hands. She thought Wally's roommate Barry was definitely cute.

Barry subtly checked Iris out as well. He knew he wasn't supposed to but she was gorgeous. She had on the same pants he has seen countless girls at their school wear, and a tank. He also noticed that she had something on her head. It looked like a shower cap, but it wasn't. It looked like it was satin or something. It didn't take away from how pretty she was. Barry now knew why Wally didn't put her picture up. His sister was absolutely gorgeous. And he was screwed. He suddenly remembered Wally's warning about his little sister being off limits and he took his hand away from hers. He cringed, then smiled at her awkwardly. He suddenly ran his hand through his hair. Iris was making him nervous.

Iris noticed how nervous he suddenly got after they kind of stared at each other for a while. He was probably wondering what she had on her head. The way he suddenly yanked his hand away let her know that Wally must have told him that she's off limits. Iris decided to make small talk anyway.

"So, you're the one they call 'The Flash'?" Iris asks subtly.

Barry blushed and slightly turned red. Well, the tips of his ears did. "Yeah. Wally told you that? Why am I asking you that? Of course he told you that. And now I'm rambling. Sorry….I get nervous around pretty girls." Barry rambled on then cringed at his last statement. "Sorry…I didn't mean to call you pretty….Not that you aren't. I just didn't mean to. And I'm going to shut up now."

Iris looked at him and just smiled at his adorable awkwardness. Barry was deliciously cute in that nerdy and awkward way that's hard to find. She liked guys like that and suddenly wondered if he wore glasses sometimes. He would be hot in glasses, she thought. She shook that from her mind because she wasn't supposed to think one of Wally's friends is cute. She already made that mistake with Eddie. But there was something about Barry.

"It's ok, Barry. I did kind of startle you out your sleep. I didn't mean to just jump on you like that. I thought you were Wally. And thanks for calling me pretty. I don't usually get that from Wally's friends." Iris rambles as well.

"Don't tell him I said that." Barry says.
"I won't. He's kind of protective over me." Iris states surely.

"Yeah, he is. You mean a lot to him."

"He told you I'm off limits, didn't he?" Iris asks.

Barry nervously shifts. "Yeah, he did. I can see why. He doesn't even have your picture up in our room because he doesn't want-. Nevermind."

"You sure ramble a lot, Barry." Iris teases.

"Only around pretty girls." He says and blushes. "Damn. I shouldn't have said that."

"It's ok, Bear." Iris says.

"Bear?" He asks.

"I didn't mean to call you Bear, Barry. Sorry." Iris apologizes.

"No, I like it. You can call me Bear if you want to." He says and blushes even more. This one makes his whole face turn red.

Iris felt like she needed to get away from Barry before she said something else. "Well, Bear. It was nice meeting you. I'm going back to my room to sleep some more. I was so excited about seeing Wally that I woke up too early. Sorry for waking you." She says and smiles widely.

Barry thought her smile could make a blind person see. Iris was breathtakingly gorgeous. And off limits. Life seemed unfair. "That's ok. You can just make it up to me somehow." He suggests. He knew he was trying to flirt with her despite her making him nervous and her being off limits.

Iris raised an eyebrow to him. She blushed this time. "I'll keep that in mind. See you later Bear." She says as she walks away. Barry watched her leave the room. He was so glad that Wally wasn't there to witness the exchange between him and his sister.

Iris went to her room and got back in her bed. She tried to put the cute and awkward guy in her brother's room out of her mind. She soon drifted back off to sleep.

Down the hall, Barry got back in Wally's bed and tried not to think about Iris. He knew he couldn't think about her in that way. He was now glad that Wally hadn't put her picture up. He'd be doing exactly what Wally didn't want him to do. Iris was gorgeous. He hadn't seen a girl that gorgeous ever. And there were some really pretty girls at his university. But he knew that Iris was special because of how Wally adored her. He was starting to wish he hadn't come home with Wally. It was going to be a long month.

He was sitting there lost in thought when Wally came in. "Hey Barry."

"Hey. Did you have fun?" Barry asked. He suddenly felt guilty.

"Of course I did. I hadn't seen Linda in months. Now I'm hungry."

"Yeah, me too."

"Well, throw on a shirt and we'll head to the kitchen." Wally says.

Barry jumped up and looked through his suitcase and found a Starling City University tee shirt and put it on. "I just need the bathroom first." He says as he grabs his toiletry bag.
"It's right next door."

Barry headed to the bathroom and came back minutes later. He followed Wally downstairs where he saw who could only be Wally's father Joe.

"Welcome home, son." Joe says as he pulls him into a bear hug.

"It's great to be home. Dad, this is Barry. The one I told you about. He's gonna be staying here with us." Wally says.

Joe walked over and gave Barry a hug that surprised him. Made him realize how much he missed his own father. "Hello, Barry. It's nice to meet you. Happy to have you here." Joe says sincerely. He knew about Barry's backstory and knew how much of a good kid he was and good friend to Wally.

"Thanks, Mr. West." Barry says.

"Call me Joe." He says. Joe patted Barry on the back and went back over to the counter. "You guys want coffee? I know you want breakfast."

"Yeah." Wally says as he walks over to the fridge and looks in. Barry went to sit at the table and realized how much at home he felt. Wally was right. He never felt that welcomed even at his relatives' house. He was glad he came home with Wally. Then Iris came bumbling into the kitchen. Barry felt something stir inside him. She was another reason he was glad he came home with Wally.

Iris ran and literally jumped in Wally's arms. "Wally! I missed you!" She says as she hugs him. Seeing how excited she was to see her big brother made Barry smile. Then he started checking her out again. He noticed that he could now see her hair and it was long and slightly curled. He also noticed that she was wearing his Starling City University Track sweatshirt. He knew it was his because it was red. Wally had the gray one. He wondered why she was wearing his sweatshirt, though he didn't mind.

"I missed you too, Iris." Wally says as he swings her around. He finally put her down. "Hey, I want you to meet Barry." Wally says happily.

Iris smiled widely. "We already met." She says and subtly winked at Barry.

"Really? How? When?" Wally asks as he looks over at Barry.

"I came to your room looking for you and I found Barry there instead. And I hope you don't mind me getting my girly smell all over your sweatshirt, but I kinda missed wearing your things." She says and again smiles widely.

"You couldn't have missed it that much." Wally says.

"Why?" Iris wonders.

"Because that's Barry's sweatshirt." Wally says sarcastically as he looks from Iris to Barry.

"I'm sorry, Barry. I thought it belonged to this jerk. Do you want me to take it off?" She asks.

Barry knew he turned red at her asking him that. "No, it's cool." He replies. He got a little kick out of her wearing his shirt. He saw the way Wally was looking at him. He put that thought out of his mind.
"I'll wash it for you when I'm done." Iris says.

"No, that's fine. It's just a sweatshirt." He almost told her she could keep it, but knew that wouldn't go over well.

"So, are you guys hungry?" Iris asks to change the subject.

"Of course we're hungry. We live off campus food. Neither one of us has had a home cooked meal since August." Wally says.

"What about you, Bear?" Iris asks and Wally, Joe, and Barry look at her.

"Bear?" Wally asks as he looks from Iris to Barry.

"I meant, Barry." Iris says.

"Yeah, right." Wally says and gets juice from the fridge. He found it funny for some reason. Probably because he knows that Barry is harmless. He's pretty sure the dude is still a virgin and Iris better be.

"So what do you guys want? Pancakes, waffles, omelets, French toast?" Iris asks.

"All of the above." Wally jokes.

"I kinda have to agree." Barry says.

"She is not fixing all that." Joe says almost sternly.

"He's right, I'm not. Since Barry is the guest, we'll have him choose." Iris says. She looks at Barry and discreetly mouthed 'French toast'.

"I guess I'll choose French toast." Barry says.

Iris smiled widely again at the adorably cute Barry. "Good choice, Bear. I mean Barry." She says and gets to work.

Wally looked at Barry and went and sat down. He sat across from Barry and just looked at him.

"My sister is off limits." Wally says under his breath and smiles.

I'm dead, Barry thought to himself.
"Alright, no more flirting."

Chapter Summary

Breakfast with the West's and Barry.

Chapter Notes

Thank you guys for the positive feedback! It makes me happy that you like this story. Here's a new chapter for being so kind.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yeah, Barry knew he was in trouble. This is the second time Wally had to remind him that his little sister was off limits. The first time he just brushed it off as Wally being a protective older brother. Now, Barry had feelings stirring inside of him from just being in the same vicinity as Iris.

The way they met was purely random and comical. She was ready to bash his head in with a lamp. Then he realized how gorgeous she was, and that made him giddy and more nervous and awkward than he already is.

He shook her hand and felt something surge through him. He wanted to get to know Iris a lot better, but he knew he couldn't in the way that he really wanted to with Wally swatting that notion away before he could even fully get it out.

He already was trying to flirt with her with telling her that she could repay him in some way. He was glad that Wally didn't know that. He was also glad that Iris didn't tell the whole story of how they met. He was sure Wally would tell him to leave. Well maybe not that far, but he knew Wally meant business. Especially now that he was reminding him under his breath with that sarcastic smile he displays sometimes.

Barry awkwardly smiled at Wally and shook his head. "What?" He asks nervously.

Wally turned around to look at his father and Iris then back at Barry. "I said, my sister is off limits."

Barry shook his head again and scoffed. "I wasn't even….What? I know she is." He says.

Wally just took in how flustered and nervous Barry was and tried to contain his laughter. He could already see the boy was sprung. He was more nervous and awkward than he usually is. He was such a target that Wally couldn't help but tease him about it. Easy target aside, Wally meant what he said about Iris being off limits.

"Good. I hope you mean that." Wally says.

"Of course I do." Barry says. He knows she is and can't help but again feel like life is unfair. He met a great girl and he couldn't do a thing about it. The time he was going to spend in that house
would be challenging but he had to do it because the last thing he wanted to do was leave and go stay with his relatives. He already felt so welcomed in this house. He wondered if his life would have turned out differently had he grown up in the West house instead of the one he did grow up in.

He knew that Wally's mom died when he was younger just like his. And Wally turned out alright because he still had his father. Barry still had his father too, but it was impossible to raise him from a jail cell. Barry turned out alright too despite his upbringing. He got lost in thought thinking about that while things were just going on around him. He got back in the moment and just watched the West family interact with each other. There was one particular West family member that he wanted to watch always.

He watched Joe brew the coffee and fix himself a cup. He watched as Iris took what she needed from the fridge to start cooking. Joe took his mug and came and sat at the table with Barry and Wally. He knew Iris didn't want people in her way while she cooked.

"So what do you guys want with your French toast? Again, I'm letting Barry decide since he's the guest." Iris says a little too happily. She knew she was subtly flirting with Wally's roommate and knew she shouldn't be. But the boy was cute. She couldn't help it and neither could he. She loved how adorable, nerdy, and awkward he seemed to be. He wasn't aggressive like some college guys at her school. She knew he was subtly flirting with her too, but was trying to hold back she assumed because of Wally and his warning to him.

She loved that her big brother was protective over her, but she couldn't help but feel a little tinge of resentment at him dictating whom she could date. While she didn't want a repeat of what happened with Eddie and Wally pretty much coming to blows over her, she wanted a chance to at least get to know Barry better.

She smiled as she looked over at the three men sitting at the table. She was surely really looking at Barry. She loved the way he slightly blushed all the way to his ears. The boy was adorable.

Joe didn't look up from his paper but Wally looked at Barry and seriously wanted to laugh. Barry was almost as red as the sweatshirt Iris was wearing. "Yeah, Barry. What'll it be? Choose wisely." Wally says.

"Um…I don't know. What are my options?" He asks as he looks at Iris.

"Well, you can choose between sausages or bacon. I am fixing eggs as well. So what do you want, Bear?" Iris asks and smiles, then catches herself. "I mean Barry."

Barry blushed again and Wally really had to force himself not to laugh. "Can I have both?" He asks. He really would like both, though there's some hidden meaning behind his question. He wants to know if he can still have his friendship with Wally and get to know Iris better.

"Yes, you can have both." Iris says.

Barry smiles from his face to his feet. He avoids looking at Wally. He has to. "Great." He says enthusiastically.

"Wanna help me, Barry?" Iris asks and Joe and Wally look up at her. They both know she doesn't like help when she's cooking. "What?"

They all just looked at Iris, but Barry wasn't looking for the reason that Joe and Wally were. Wally eyed Iris suspiciously. He decided to poke fun at her too. It was obvious she liked Barry. He wondered exactly what happened when she and Barry met for the first time. "Since when do you
want someone in the kitchen helping you cook?" He asks as he eyes her carefully.

Iris smiled and it again made something stir inside of Barry. He was just thinking of how beautiful she is and her smile. He could watch her smile forever. It's like the sun opened up behind her when she did.

"What? What's the big deal? I already know you two and you aren't much help. This will give me a chance to get to know Barry better. I'm perfectly willing to kick him out and banish him like I do you guys if he doesn't do a good job." Iris rambles. She just needed an excuse to get to know Barry without Wally's stern and disapproving eye analyzing every moment between them. She was glad that his back would be to them so that he couldn't watch them.

"Uh huh." Wally replies. He doesn't buy that for a minute. This was becoming increasing hilarious. If it were any other guy, he would forcefully object, but it's Barry. Harmless, nerdy, awkward, shy Barry. He had no idea how to really act around the opposite sex. Iris was no exception. Wally really just wanted to see Barry make a fool of himself. Then maybe Iris would stop lowkey flirting with him. He knew what she was doing.

Iris smiled again for good measure. "Good. So what do you say, Barry? I promise not to be too demanding or yell too much before I kick you out. I know I shouldn't be asking you to help when you're a guest, but I'm cooking more than usual." Iris says.

Barry blushed again. "No, it's fine. I don't mind helping." He says as he stands and walks over to the counter with Iris. He stood at the sink and washed his hands.

Iris was glad she didn't have to remind him to do that like a child. "So, is there anything you're good at?" She asks and then suddenly hears how it sounds.

"I'm good at running and science." He says awkwardly.

"That's great, Bear. I heard you're a genius. And I'm assuming they don't call you 'The Flash' for nothing. I'll have to see you in action sometime." Iris says.

Wally and Joe exchanged glances, and Joe went right back to reading his paper. He wasn't getting involved in that at all.

"Maybe we can go to the track or something, then you can see." Barry says and again smiles so hard his face almost cracks.

"That sounds like fun. We have a lot of time to get to do things like that. We don't have to go back to school until next year. Are you staying that long?" Iris asks hopefully. She then stops and takes his sweatshirt off and Barry gets lost in thought staring. Iris finally removes the shirt all the way and placed it on the top of the fridge. She saw that Barry was staring at her. She kind of blushed herself from that.

Wally noticed the silence and turned around to Barry looking at Iris and her just standing there in front of him with the same goofy expression on her face. "You alright, Bear?" He asks just to taunt him.

Barry shook his head from his reverie. "What? Yeah. What's up Wally?" He asks quizzically.

"I asked if you were alright." Wally says and turns back around to hide his amusement. He didn't want them to think he found their flirting and banter funny when she's supposed to be off limits to his friends, and they're both teetering on the line.
"Yeah, I'm fine. Just hungry." Barry says.

"You never answered my question, Barry." Iris says as she gets a bowl from the cabinet to mix the ingredients for the French toast.

"What question?" He asks. He seriously can't remember anything she asked him.

"I asked if you were staying until January when we go back to school." Iris says.

"Oh, yeah. If you'll have me." Barry says and smiles awkwardly. Again.

"Of course we'll have you." Iris says and playfully nudges Barry.

Barry felt a jolt that surged through him. It started on his side where she nudged him, traveled down his spine, and landed in a pit in his chest. He liked Iris. No point in denying it. He was royally screwed because he couldn't do a thing about it. He could at least admit it to himself. What Wally didn't know wouldn't hurt him.

He started thinking that coming home with Wally was a blessing and a curse. He felt so welcomed in their house that he felt like part of the family. Then he wanted to kick himself for developing an instant attraction to Wally's sister. The sister he told him that was off limits. It seemed so unfair. He could already tell she was a great girl. Then he started wondering if she had a boyfriend or something at school. Or if she had one here like Wally did with Linda. *But she's flirting with me too, right?* Barry asked himself. He really didn't know. Pretty girls didn't just flirt with him, even if he was an athlete. The girls at the school were into the jocks. Barry didn't really consider himself a jock. He was a nerd that just happened to run fast. Now he felt like he was caught in a Catch 22. He liked Iris. He really already did. He wanted to get to know more about her. But Wally wouldn't like that. He didn't want to lose his friend. He also didn't want to pass up an opportunity with a great girl that seemed to be interested in him.

He doesn't know why, but he just playfully shoved Iris back and smiled at her. He just needed an excuse to touch her.

Iris again felt warmth when she touched Barry. She thought he was the cutest thing walking and was glad Wally brought him home with him. It's like he brought home the cutest little stray puppy that she just wanted to pick up and let lick her face. He had the enthusiasm of a puppy and she found it endearing and adorable. He seemed to be wagging an invisible tail, so excited from seeing her that he accidently pees on the floor. Iris looked up at Barry and thought that if Barry was a dog, he'd be a cocker spaniel or something. The thought made her laugh internally and she laughed out loud.

Barry looked down at her and Wally turned in his chair. Joe just got up, grabbed his coffee and his paper and went into the living room. He was leaving that all in Wally's hands. Though he hoped that Wally didn't go apeshit over Barry and Iris obviously flirting. Joe knew that Barry was a good kid that had some bad stuff happen to him. He might be a good balance for Iris. He'd take that over some jackass that just wanted to sleep with his only daughter.

Wally sized Iris and Barry up. "What's so funny?" He asks.

"Nothing I was just thinking about something." Iris says. She goes to get frying pans for the food.

Wally decided to leave Iris and Barry alone, just to see what they would do. "I'll be in the living room with Dad." He says and then stands up to leave. He was going to pop back in unexpectedly the first chance he got.
Iris just put the meat on the stove without a word while Barry just stood there awkwardly and watched her. "Spill it." She says seemingly out of nowhere.

"Spill what?" Barry asks.

"Whatever it is that's on your mind. I'm a good listener." Iris says.

Barry knew he really couldn't tell Iris what's on his mind. He knew he couldn't tell her that he liked her and wanted to get to know her better. That he was wondering if she really was flirting with him or just being nice. That he hoped she was even if they were off limits to each other. That he was glad that she jumped in the bed with him and woke him up even if she did think he was Wally. How hilarious he thought it was that she grabbed a lamp and was ready to do bodily harm to him with it. That he liked that she had on his sweatshirt. He had never had a girl wear his clothes before and he liked it. He really did. He liked her. He really did and there was nothing he could do about it. But flirt. Life was unfair.

"Nothing much. Just glad that Wally offered to let me come home with him. I already love it here. You guys make me feel like I'm one of you. Especially you, being so nice to me and all." Barry says.

Iris stopped what she was doing and looked up at him. God he was a cutie. He wasn't aggressive or one of those jocks that don't have an ounce of sense. That think they're the best thing walking because they play a sport. She wanted to pinch his cheeks he was so adorable.

"Well, I'm glad you came home with Wally too. I like meeting new people. I'm still sorry for the way we met." Iris says and laughs. She playfully nudged him again. "I mean, I know you almost jumped out of your skin at me jumping on you. Then I was ready to crack your face open with a lamp. I'm glad I waited and didn't strike and ask questions later. I could've ruined that adorable face." Iris says and smiles.

Barry turned candy apple, fire engine red at her saying he had an adorable face. From that to her nudging him again. "Well, thanks for that. I didn't mean to scare you as well. I know you must've really been scared just finding some random white guy in your house." Barry says.

Iris laughed out loud. "That's exactly what I thought. I was seriously wondering who the strange white guy in Wally's bed was. Guilty as charged. Then when you started looking at me funny, I knew you were wondering what in the hell I had on my head."

"I just thought it was a shower cap." He says and laughs too.

"Sort of. It's a satin bonnet. I sleep in it. I take it you've never dated a black girl before?" Iris states as a question.

Barry became a little flustered. "No, I never have." He answers and looks at Iris intently.

Iris went into the cabinet and got a large bowl and started cracking eggs. She added the rest of the stuff for the French toast and tended to the bacon and sausages cooking. "Can you mix this up for me, Bear?" She asks in an almost sultry tone.

"Sure." Barry says. He grabbed the whisk and started mixing. They did that in silence for a little while though it seemed longer to them.

"Would you?" Iris asks suddenly.

"Would I what?" Barry asks in confusion.
"Date a black girl?" Iris asks nervously. She doesn't know why she suddenly got nervous. She knew it was never happening, she just wanted to know.

"Of course I would. Why wouldn't I?" Barry asks innocently.

Iris looked up at him and the sheepish expression he had on his face. His adorable face would be the death of her.

"I don't know. Some people aren't into that." Iris states impassively.

"Into what?"

"Interracial dating."

"I mean, why wouldn't people be into that? If you like someone, why does it matter if they're of a different race? Wally's dating Linda. I'd totally date you." Barry says and then catches himself. "I mean….I guess I would….If I could…Sorry. I'm rambling again." Barry says and shifts a little nervously next to Iris.

Iris looked up at him and smiled. "You are so adorable, did you know that?"

"No, I didn't know that. No one has ever called me adorable before." Barry admits truthfully. "But thanks. You just made my day. It's not every day that a beautiful girl tells me that I'm adorable." He rambles again.

"Your girlfriend doesn't tell you that you're adorable?" Iris asks just to see if he does have a girlfriend.

Barry becomes flustered and nervous. "I don't….I don't have a girlfriend."

Iris checks the meat, gets another pan, and the bread if one quick sequence. "Did you leave one at home when you went to school?" She asks just as effortlessly as she asked the first question.

"Nope. No girlfriend. In case you haven't noticed, I'm kind of a nerd." Barry jokes.

"You're an adorable nerd." Iris adds. Wally was going to kill her.

"What about your boyfriend? Does he live here or somewhere else?" Barry subtly asks.

"I don't have a boyfriend." Iris says. "Do you think I'd be flirting with you if I had a boyfriend?"

"You're flirting with me?" He asks just to be sure.

Suddenly Wally walks back into the kitchen. He heard the back end of their conversation. He saw how close they were standing to each other. "Is breakfast ready yet?" He asks.

Iris turned towards her overbearing big brother. "Nope, not yet. Patience grasshopper." She jokes.

"Really? I thought it would be ready by now." Wally says. "Maybe if you two weren't in here flirting, it would be." He says to a shocked Barry and Iris. Iris turned to look at him a second before Barry did. With that Wally just turned and left the room. He smiled to himself on his way back in the living room.

"Don't pay him any mind. He's just BEING A JERK!" She yells loud enough for him to hear.

"He's going to kill me." Barry says out loud.
"He's going to kill me too." Iris says. She gets another bowl for the eggs and cracks several in there. She again did everything so effortlessly, and Barry just watched. He wasn't really helping her anyway. But he liked this little alone time they had together. She was taking the meat from the pan and flipping the French toast when she just looked up at Barry. The tall and cute self-proclaimed nerd that could run fast. With the cutest green eyes and eyelashes she doesn't usually see on a guy. With the adorable freckles and moles that she could imagine herself kissing one day. The one with the faint outline of facial hair that made her wonder what he'd look like with it. The one that had nice arms and a damn six pack under his clothes. The guy that was just so darn cute that she wanted to tuck him away in her room. The guy that was her brother's roommate that would kill them both if they dated. The guy that just told her he would totally date her. She said the total opposite of what she was thinking. "Alright, no more flirting." She says and tries to smile. She knew she was lying as soon as she said it.

Barry audibly swallowed. "Alright. No more flirting." He says just to agree with her. He didn't mean it for a second, but he had to believe that he would at least try. Life. Is. Unfair. He thought. For the first time in his life, a beyond gorgeous girl flirted with him, and actually admitted that she was, and he had to let it go. Why couldn't Wally just have a little sister that was too young for him to date? Or one that was older and married? Or one that didn't make his heart flicker like Iris did? Or not even have a sister at all? Why couldn't he have had a brother? No he just had to have a knockout little sister that actually flirted with him. One that none of the guys on the team would think he could get to flirt with him. He was dead and screwed. Dead if he pursued Iris. Screwed if he didn't. Who knew when another girl like Iris would come along? Life. Is. Unfair. Barry again thought.

Iris was just as lost in thought as Barry was. She kept thinking that things would be ok if Wally hadn't brought Barry home with him. They'd just be having regular visits and Christmas together. But she wasn't upset that Barry was there. She was actually glad that he was there. He added a new dynamic to the house. If only he weren't so damn cute and adorable. Why couldn't Wally bring an ugly guy home? One that was vulgar and aggressive. One that made her skin crawl like some of his guy friends from high school. No he brought home a human puppy. And she liked puppies. She wanted to smack Wally. As much as she missed him, she hoped that he spent a lot of time with Linda. She wanted to spend time alone with Barry, Bear. She liked calling him Bear though he was more like a puppy. She could get away with calling him Bear. She wanted to snuggle up with him. And she couldn't do that. Not unless she snuck him in her room or something. That was seriously an option for them. Then she figured Barry would surely give them away. He wouldn't even have to say anything, it would just show.

Iris thought she was surely losing it thinking that she would sneak her brother's roommate into her room. Wally would kill them both. She didn't even understand why she was thinking that when she had just met Barry hours ago. She was just attracted to his cute awkwardness. His adorably cute awkwardness. She'd be lying if she said she wasn't attracted to his arms and abs. The boy was definitely cute. Then he was tall. She had the feeling she could feel protected in his arms. She shook the image of him standing in his pajama bottoms in front of her from her brain. She quickly finished up with the food. She just needed to scramble the eggs and that wouldn't take long at all.

"Ok. So no more flirting." She says after their long silence.

"You already said that." Barry says.

"I did? Right. No more flirting. Wally will kill us." Iris says.

Barry swallowed. "Yeah."
"So, I guess we can hug it out?" Iris suggests. She just wanted to hug him.

"I guess." Barry timidly says.

Iris turned towards him and looked up at him and smiled. She put her arms out. Barry did the same. He gently pulled her into his arms. He felt hot all over. Iris pressed her body close to his and wished that she didn't. She couldn't help but feel like she had missed out on something. She felt warm and protected. "I would totally date you too." She says a little sadly. She broke the hug first and just went to finish the eggs.

Barry again just stood and watched Iris in silence. He looked at her face and thought she looked a little sad. She looked how he felt. He wanted to hug her again.

"Food's done." Iris called and Wally and Joe came into the kitchen. Joe got plates and glasses while Wally went to the fridge. Barry glanced at Iris before helping her take the food to the table. They all sat down at the table. Joe at the head, Wally on his side, and Iris sat next to Barry. Wally reached for some bacon and Iris scowled at him. "I guess being at school broke your manners." She says smartly, but in a sisterly love kind of way.

He looked at her. "Sorry. But I'm hungry. I missed your cooking." Wally says.

Iris grabbed Barry's hand and the men did the same as Joe said grace. Barry almost felt something like being struck by lightning surge through him when Iris grabbed his hand. She felt it too, but ignored it. Barry was off limits and that made her incredibly sad. She pushed it away.

They all started to dig into the food and make small talk. Barry just looked around and again took in how welcomed he felt. Even if nothing could happen between him and Iris, these people would be a part of his life forever. He started to eat and almost fell in love. Iris' French toast was the best he had ever eaten. Sure he was surviving on campus food and takeout, but he knew good food when he ate it. Better than his mother made.

They all continued to make small talk while they ate. Iris found little ways to tap Barry's leg under the table and he did the same. No more flirting was already a hard thing for them to do. They finished their meal and Wally started to clean up since Iris cooked. Barry of course offered since he didn't really do anything to help Iris.

Joe left because he had to go to work and Iris retreated to her bedroom. She collapsed on her bed and tried not to think about the cute guy in her kitchen. Life and Wally were being unfair to her. She was used to him meddling and keeping guys away, but she liked this one. More than she liked Eddie. Which is strange since she doesn't know this one that well. She just knows what Wally has told her, which were all good things. Now she's met him and likes Wally's nerdy roommate. That wouldn't matter to Wally. It didn't matter with Eddie.

Wally and Barry just cleaned up, almost in silence though it wasn't awkward. "So, what did you want to do today? I'm going to see Linda again, but maybe we can hang out? Go to the movies, bowling or something?" He suggests.

"That sounds like fun, but I don't want to be the third wheel." Barry says.

"We can just ask Iris to come." Wally says and watches as Barry's face lights up. "As long as you understand that it's not a date." He had to add to tease the big dork.

"What? I know that." Barry says.

"I guess we can play some video games or something in the meantime." Wally says.
"Lead the way." Barry says. He goes to grab his sweatshirt from the top of the fridge and followed Wally up to his room. He suddenly wondered where Iris was. He went in and sat down while Wally set his Xbox up.

Barry knows why, though he still wonders why he did it. When he really thought Wally wasn't paying him any attention, he smelled his sweatshirt. He was trying to see if it smelled like Iris since she was wearing it. Wally caught him mid sniff. He looked at Barry like he had lost his damn mind.

Barry really did look like a deer caught in headlights. There was nothing he could say.

"Yeah, that's not weird at all." Wally says to red faced, deer caught in headlights, embarrassed and scared as hell Barry.

_Oh shit, yeah I'm dead._ Barry thinks.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! I hope you enjoyed. Feedback is hugs.
"Can I put you on the list?"

Chapter Summary

Wally, Barry, and Iris interacting.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all so much for the kudos and comments. They're hard to come by and I appreciate them all. Feedback is greatly appreciated! I hope you enjoy this latest chapter.

If Barry could have found a hole to crawl into and die from embarrassment, he would have. Not only was he embarrassed, he was a little afraid. Wally specifically told him that Iris is off limits. And what does he do? Immediately falls for her, flirts with her, and then, THEN, sniffs his sweatshirt that she was wearing to see if it smelled like her. Talk about creepy, weird and embarrassing. And Wally had to see it. Barry knew he was as red as the sweatshirt he was holding. He really couldn't help himself, he already had it bad for Iris.

"I was just…" Barry tries to begin but can't even complete the thought.

"You were just what? Sniffing your sweatshirt to see if it smelled like my sister?" Wally asks almost harshly.

Barry cringed and then looked down. He felt like a child being scolded by his parents. "Unfortunately, yes." Barry admits while his head is still down.

Wally then did something he wasn't expecting and started to laugh. "Even though it's weird that it's my sister, I do things like that if Linda has worn my stuff too. But if I catch you sniffing her underwear or something, I'm kicking you out." Wally says.

Barry looked up at him in shame and disgust. "I would never do something that creepy and gross, Wally."

"You're in to her, aren't you?" Wally asks as he deadpans Barry.

Barry becomes 10 degrees of nervous."What? No!" Barry lies. "You told me she was off limits."

"She is off limits, but that's not what I asked you." Wally says as he continues to deadpan Barry.

"Then there's no reason for me to be into her if she's off limits, now is there?" Barry asks almost smartly.

"Look, I get that my sister is gorgeous, and awesome, but she's very special to me. I don't want some guy that I know using her or breaking her heart. She's too special for that." Wally confesses truthfully.
"I'm not just some guy that would use her or break her heart. I think you should already know that, Wally." Barry states surely.

"So you are in to her?" Wally asks again.

"No. I just like her as your little sister, that's all." Barry lies. He knows he's lying, but it's better than admitting the truth to Wally. Who's seriously looking like he's ready to kick his ass. He'd push that away for the sake of his friendship with him. They were roommates and teammates. He had to interact with him. He didn't have to interact with Iris. He'd be going home in about a month and would forget all about her. Hopefully.

"You're lying. It's ok that you're in to her, as long as it doesn't go further than that." Wally states. He knows Barry is a good guy, but his sister was more important to him that anyone. He had already lost a good friend over that and didn't want to fuck things up with Barry either. Barry already didn't have that many people in his life to begin with and he didn't want to be the cause of him losing someone else. He understood it, he really did. His sister was beautiful and wonderful. And she was flirting with him. Anyone could see that. Of course Barry would feed off that. Girls didn't usually flirt with him the way Iris did. Some girls would talk to him to get him to help them with their classwork or something, but he didn't have hot girls just falling over him even if he was on the track team. So yeah, Wally fully understood it. He figured he'd do better with talking to Iris instead of Barry. Tell her not to flirt with him and lead him on if nothing was going to happen between them.

"It won't. Your sister and I will just be friends like you and I are." Barry says and it almost pains him to say that.

"You're not going to sniff my clothes or anything when I'm not around, are you?" Wally jokes and starts to laugh.

"Very funny." Barry says and joins in on the laughter. He was glad they were laughing about it instead of Wally going bonkers over what he caught him doing.

"Come on man. You've gotta admit that was pretty funny." Wally says.

"No, it wasn't funny. I'm totally embarrassed." Barry admits.

"Lighten up. Just be glad I caught you and Iris didn't."

"I actually think it would've been better if Iris had caught me." Barry says.

As if on cue, Iris appears at Wally's bedroom door.

"If I caught you doing what?" Iris asks as she looks at Barry and his adorable self.

"Uh....." Barry starts. There's no way he can tell her he sniffed his sweatshirt to see if it smelled like her. No way. She would really think he was a creep and a weirdo and take back saying she would totally date him.

"I caught him sniffing his sweatshirt. I guess he was seeing if it smelled like you since you were wearing it." Wally says totally embarrassing Barry again and putting him on the spot.

Iris smiled and raised an eyebrow to Barry. She looked at him and then looked at Wally. She looked back at Barry and the poor little human puppy looked so embarrassed. He really did look like an energetic puppy that just peed on the floor. He was so adorable she wanted to run to him and kiss his face. But she couldn't. Well, she couldn't in front of Wally.
"Is that so?" She asks to poke a little fun at her adorable Bear.

"No, it's not. He's just kidding around." Barry lies. He hopes Iris falls for it even if he's a bad liar.

"Yeah, I was." Wally says to help Barry out, but decides to make it worse. "Actually, I caught him whacking off and moaning your name."

Iris revolted and looked at Barry again. He turned redder than the sweatshirt. "You did not and you know it." She says as she walks further into Wally's room.

"You're right, I didn't. But it's a guy thing." Wally says.

"So, what are you two getting into?" She asks as she sits on the foot of Wally's bed, next to Barry.

"Getting ready to play a few games. I'm meeting Linda later and I was wondering if you and Barry wanted to come too." Wally offers.

"What? Like a double date?" Iris asks almost hopefully.

Wally totally picked up on Iris' enthusiasm, but ignored it. He didn't want to put her on the spot too. "No, not like a double date. Just hanging out amongst friends." He says, sounding more like Iris and Barry's father than their brother and friend.

"But you and Linda will be on a date though, right?" Iris asks

"Yes. Isn't that a given? But you two are just coming along. You've been along with me and Linda before." Wally says.

"Yeah, and I was the third wheel. Even though I love you and Linda like my sister, I always felt like the third wheel."

"I hear you, Iris. But this isn't a date. It'll give you a chance to get to know Barry better and he can meet Linda. Fun all around."

To say Iris was a little disappointed is putting it mildly. Barry was too. Wally looked at Iris and Barry and could see that they both were bummed out by him shutting down that whole double date notion.

"Well, I'm game. I miss Linda." Iris says. "So where are we going?" She asks absently as she reaches for the sweatshirt in Barry's lap and puts it on.

Barry felt excited and warm at her putting his sweatshirt back on. He really got a kick out of her wearing his shirt. He had never had a girl want to wear his clothes before. He knew that was something a lot of girls did with their boyfriend's things. Wally just admitted that Linda wore his. And while Iris wasn't his girlfriend, he really dug her wearing his things. It kind of made him feel like she was his girlfriend. She already made it clear that she was flirting with him and would date him. If only Wally wasn't so hellbent on his sister being off limits, he would ask Iris out. At least he already knew he wouldn't get rejected.

Wally noticed Iris put Barry's sweatshirt back on and the goofy expression on both of their faces. He knew he was really going to have to have a talk with Iris about her and Barry.

"I don't know. A movie? Bowling? The arcade? Where would you guys like to go?" He asks as he comes to sit down on the floor in front of the tv.
"I'm up for bowling. Maybe we can go to a movie too." Iris says.

"I agree. I'm up for whatever." Barry says and he really means it. He's up for whatever involves him getting to be close to Iris. And while Wally said it wasn't a double date, he was thinking of it as one. He hoped that Iris felt the same way. He was also hoping that Wally and Linda were so engrossed in each other that they wouldn't pay him and Iris any mind and they could flirt and talk in peace.

Iris wanted to say some choice words to Wally for essentially cockblocking her and Barry. But despite him saying it wasn't a double date, she was counting it as one. As far as she was concerned, it was her and Barry's first date. She was going to casually ask Linda to really keep Wally occupied so that she could get to know Barry better.

Iris discreetly moved her body closer to Barry's. She didn't care what Wally said. She liked Barry. He seemed like a great guy and she would get to know him better. She felt like she had the right to do that. She knew Barry was interested in her too. They were both single and weren't hurting anybody. Wally would just have to get over it. He has a girlfriend, so for him to deny someone else that seems pretty selfish of him. He was her big brother, but he wasn't her father. Joe didn't even get on her about who she dated. She was really going to start ignoring Wally and his bullshit claims of protecting her. It was cute when they were little, but now she's an adult. Dating his friend won't be the end of the world.

Barry again got a kick out of Iris sliding closer to him on the bed. He really liked this girl. He'd be the luckiest guy in the world if he really got with her how he wanted to.

"So what time is all this going down? I'd like to get a mini nap in before we leave. Don't want to be a party pooper." Iris says.

"I don't really know yet. I guess around 4 or so. I have to talk to Linda and see what she's doing with her family. I figure we can do it early enough that I can still spend some alone time with her." Wally says.

Iris briefly glanced at Barry before responding. "What about us?" She asks.

Wally turned to look at them. "What about you?"

"What are me and Barry gonna do? Especially Barry. He came here with you. I can hang out with my friends, but what about him?"

"Iris, I'm sure you and Barry can find something to do while I'm gone. Or take him with you. I'm sure he won't mind hanging out with some girls. Right, Barry?" Wally teases.

"I guess." Barry says but he was internally happy that Wally would be leaving him and Iris alone while he was with Linda. That was a very good thing. Barry suddenly didn't care if Wally always left him and spent all his time with Linda. He would be happy spending time with Iris. He kinda wished she hadn't brought it up.

"Are we taking one car?" Iris asks as the wheels start spinning in her head.

"No. I need mine. You can drive yours in case me and Linda wanna make a mad dash for it."

"Ok. Cool." Iris says. She was starting to get a little excited at the prospect of their almost first date. She would enjoy this time and hopefully she would really find out things about the cute nerd sitting next to her. She subtly slid her hand next to her and lightly tapped Barry's leg. He looked over at her and then down at her hand. He guessed she wanted him to hold her hand. He just as
subtly slid his hand next to hers. He then grazed her hand with his until their fingers were almost linked. Barry and Iris both felt that warmth surge through them when their hands touched.

Barry decided right then and there that he was going to make Iris his girlfriend. Even if he had to go against Wally's wishes. Even if they had to hide it from him and date behind his back. He liked Iris and he wanted her. Wally's bullshit stance on her being off limits would just have to be ignored. He might not ever meet another Iris in his life. He'd be a fool to pass that up.

Miraculously, Iris was thinking the same thing. She liked Barry. She thought he was great and adorable and she wanted him. She wanted to get to know him and date him and would do so if she had to go against Wally and do it. It wouldn't be like that time with Eddie. She was older now. She knew what not to do. They'd have to keep it a secret. She figured it would be easier since they were going to school in different places. Sure Wally and Barry were roommates, but Wally would be graduating in May. They'd only have to really hide it until then, if it worked out. They may not even have to go that far. They could really talk and realize that they aren't compatible. She was still willing to give it a try. She owed it to herself and Barry to at least try. She decided there was a reason Wally brought him home, and she met him in the most unusual way. There had to be a reason why she was so attracted to him that she couldn't stop touching him or thinking of how adorable he is. She just couldn't help herself. The boy was freaking adorable. She wanted to make him hers. Her cute little adorable Bear. Her awkward and sweet human puppy, that had some underlying sexiness to him. She squeezed his hand one solid time and let his hand go before Wally caught them.

Iris stood. "Well, I'm heading to my room if you need me. You guys have fun with your game." She says as she walks over to the door.

When Iris really thought Wally wasn't paying attention, she winked at Barry and disappeared from the doorway. Barry again felt something stir inside him.

Iris retreated to her room to think. She knew she was playing a dangerous game. She could potentially ruin the relationship she has with her brother. She could ruin the friendship Wally and Barry have. She didn't understand why it was such a big deal to Wally that his friends think she's off limits. She could date a guy he doesn't even know and he could break her heart. Not just one of his friends.

Usually she would go along with it. She has for years. She thought Eddie was cute, and more, but that's ancient history now. Now she's intrigued by the tall and lanky nerd that runs so fast they call him The Flash. The guy that Wally told her was a genius and who was double majoring in Physics and Chemistry. He had to be to major in both. And he still had time to run for the school.

She laid across her bed and thought back to how it felt when they first shook hands and how she felt warmth radiate through her when she did. Then the hug. She didn't want to end that hug. She could really get used to hugging Barry. She was really trying to figure out if she should let it go or go for it. Maybe she'd talk to Linda. Have her get on Wally about trying to prevent her from dating. She and Linda had always gotten along and hoped that she'd be her sister in law one day. She was so used to being the only girl since their mom died. Now she had 3 guys in the house. Two she loved with everything in her. And then there was Barry.

The stray puppy Wally brought home. She again though of how cute he was and laughed out loud. She hoped that Barry wouldn't get offended at her thinking of him as a human puppy. But who doesn't like puppies? They're the cutest things in the world next to kittens. Barry was definitely a puppy. He was her puppy. He was also kind of sexy. In that nerdy, Clark Kent sort of way. The guy actually had a surprisingly nice body under his clothes. He had a six pack for crying out loud. She
knew people wouldn't expect that from him. She smiled thinking of that as she started to daydream about him. He had quite the affect on her already.

She knew that she had an affect on him as well. Especially in the way he grinned, got nervous and turned red around her. She started thinking about the conversation she just walked in on. She really had to wonder what Barry and Wally were talking about. What if Barry really did smell his sweatshirt to see if it smelled like her? What if he did? She then pulled the collar towards her nose and inhaled. It had a trace amount of either aftershave or cologne that she didn't notice before but should have. It smelled nothing like Wally. She should have known it was Barry's when she put it on. She smelled it again and could faintly make out the perfume that she wore. She smiled to herself thinking of their scents mixing together. She had to admit she kind of liked the way Barry smelled. She could admit to herself that she liked a lot of things about Barry. And her overbearing and over protective ass big brother was trying to throw a wrench into that. Maybe she'd get their father on her side, though he might be inclined to side with Wally. He probably didn't want her dating anyone either. She wondered when they would both cut the cord considering she's now an adult. She liked to think that she would eventually meet a guy and get married. Would they try to stop that as well? How long would it take? She knew she was probably going to have that conversation with Wally soon enough. What would it take for them to stop protecting her and treating her like a little girl?

She was just going to do what the hell she wanted. She was grown. Grown enough to go off to school and pretty much live on her own. She could vote, pretty soon she'd legally be able to drink. She could go off to war if she wanted to. So her brother wasn't going to stop her from dating his friend. Not again. He had already did that once and she wasn't trying to allow it to happen again. She and Eddie were just a casualty, if you could call it that. It wasn't meant to last forever. She's not thinking that she and Barry are, but there was just something about Barry. Bartholomew. She had to giggle about his name being Bartholomew. She wondered why he didn't go by Bart. Wondered so many things about this guy.

Iris decided she was just going to either date Barry secretly, or put her foot down. Show Wally how much of a hypocrite he's being. He's trying to deny her from dating someone when he has Linda. Linda is somebody's little sister as well. She loved Linda like her sister and would try to get her on her side. That's what she was going to do. And if Wally acted crazy about it, then she was going to date Barry behind his back. It was settled.

Wally and Barry played several games on his Xbox. It was seriously no different than what they did on the weekends or when they didn't have a ton of stuff to study for. Barry was eager and anxious about the non double date that was happening later. He seriously could not wait. He wasn't paying Wally and his nonsense any mind. Yeah he said his sister was off limits, but he and Iris were both over 18. As far as Barry was concerned, he was an adult and had been for a while. His father was in prison. And while he respected Wally as his friend and teammate, and really did look up to him like he was his big brother, he really didn't owe Wally anything. Sure he brought him home with him, but that's not even the same thing. He liked his sister and he wanted to date her. End of story. He wasn't there to put a damper on their relationship, but Wally needed to let his sister live.

After they played for a while, Wally went to sleep. He hadn't really gotten much sleep the night before since he was with Linda. Barry looked around and wondered what he'd do with his time. He could always just watch tv, or a movie on his laptop. He could always go online and get lost there, but he didn't want to do that. He got his laptop out anyway so it wouldn't look like he was just
sitting and looking off into space. He kept glancing at Wally's door wondering if Iris would appear. He wanted to just see her go down the hall or something. He knew he couldn't go to her bedroom, like he wanted to. Wally would kill him for sure. He wasn't planning on doing anything with her, he just wanted to see her.

About 5 minutes later, he got his wish. He saw Iris walking down the hall. Still wearing his sweatshirt. He smiled just because. She stopped at the door like he hoped she would.

"Hey." She says as she just stands in the doorway.

"Hey." He says and tries not to grin too hard.

"What are you up to? I see the big lug is sleep."

"Yeah. I'm kinda used to it by now since we're roommates. We've heard each other snore more times than I can count." Barry says. "What are you up to?"

"I was just going to grab me something to drink." Iris replies.

"Oh." Is all Barry says.

"Want me to bring you something back? Or would you like to come with me?" She throws out to see if he's willing to come with her.

"I'll come with you." He says with the eagerness of a puppy that wants to go for a walk. He got up and quickly left Wally's bedroom and followed Iris down the hall and down the stairs. He watched her the whole way.

Once they're in the kitchen, Iris suddenly stops and turns around. "You don't have to stay holed up in Wally's room. You do know that right?" Iris asks as she smiles at her adorable puppy.

"No, I really didn't know that. I don't want to just roam around your house." Barry says.

"Well, while you're a guest here, this is your house too. I wouldn't suggest you go in my Dad's room, but the rest of the house is fair game." She says and hopes he gets the hidden meaning behind what she's saying. She didn't want to flat out invite him to her bedroom, but she was throwing it out there. She hoped that he got it.

Barry wondered what Iris was trying to imply. Is she inviting me into her bedroom? What does she mean? Barry almost frantically asked himself. "Great. I'll keep that in mind. You're not gonna try and hit me with a lamp again, are you?" Barry jokes.

Iris smiled at his joke about how they first met. "Ha ha. Very funny, Bear. Are you planning on coming into my room and sleeping in my bed?" Iris asks and wonders how he'll respond to that.

Barry knows he became red again. He also got just a little aroused at her asking him that. She is definitely inviting me into her bedroom, he thought. "Um, I hadn't planned on it, but I can always change my mind."

"Good." Iris says and leaves it at that. She put it out there. He responded. Barry might be nerdy and awkward, but he isn't stupid. He knows what she means. She walks over to the refrigerator. "So, what'll it be Bear?" She asks as she looks in.

"What do you have?"
"I suggest you come and look at the selection. If there's something specific you want, just put it on the list and I'll get it for you."

Barry decides to be bold and try his hand. "Can I put you on the list?" He asks as he walks towards where she's standing.

Iris turned towards him and the looked at the expression on his face. She had to give it to him, he surprised her with that one. She didn't think her shy puppy would ask her something like that. He was bolder than she is. Yeah, Barry definitely had something sexy hiding under all that nerd. She smiled up at him. "Am I something that you want?" She asks subtly.

"Yes. Even if you're off limits and Wally will surely kill me."

"He's going to kill me too." Iris says.

"Why?" Barry asks, though he knows. At least he hopes he knows.

"Because I want you too. I know I'm not supposed to, even though that's bullshit, Wally's bullshit, but I do. I just met you a mere few hours ago and I honest to God want you too." Iris says.

Barry smiles at hearing that. "I feel the same way. I just really want to get to know you better." Barry says. He instinctively reached out and touched her hair. Iris kinda liked that. It wasn't like how some people would reach out and touch her hair like she's a pony at the petting zoo. This felt seductive. Almost like foreplay.

"Me too. I think that's easy for us to do." Iris says as she smiles back at him.

"I think so too. I'll be here for almost a month. That's plenty of time."

"But what if we don't like each other? We'll be stuck in this house together." Iris says, though she doesn't think it's possible that she and Barry will dislike each other.

"That's impossible, Iris. I already like you. I liked you even when you were aiming a lamp at me." Barry says and they both laugh.

"I'm never going to live that down, am I?" Iris asks.

"Nope. Never." Barry says.

"What about you sniffing your sweatshirt?"

Barry suddenly stopped laughing. "Wally told you that I didn't do that." He says to his defense.

"I know he did, but I've known Wally 20 years. I know when he's lying. And you're a terrible liar, Bear. Plus, I did the same thing when I got back to my room." Iris confesses.

"What? Why?"

"Do you even have to ask? Plus I have a little confession to make." Iris says.

"I'm all ears." Barry says happily.

"I know Wally said this isn't a double date, but I'm considering it our first date."

Barry started wagging his invisible tail. "I'm glad you say that because I was thinking the same thing."
"Great. It's a date." Iris says happily.

They kind of just stood there and stared at each other for a while. Iris still had the fridge open, neither one of them had gotten a drink yet.

Iris finally pulled herself out of her trance of staring at Barry. "So, um. I think I'm going to head on up to my room and wind down before our date. I need time to make myself look pretty." She says.

"You don't need time for that. You already are." Barry says.

"Thanks, Bear." She replies. "And you say that even when you've seen me with my sleep bonnet on. A relationship isn't real until you've seen that." Iris says and she knows she's talking too much. Talking about relationships already.

"Well, I guess it's real then."

They soon got back into their staring game. Iris realized just how messy they were being. She needed to get away from Barry because she seriously was about to kiss him. She didn't need Wally to walk in on that.

Barry was glad that Iris broke the stare off because he was about to kiss her. He wanted to very badly. But he'd wait for that. Plus he didn't think it would be good for them to just kiss in the kitchen. Who knows when Wally would come stumbling in?

"So, I'll see you later?" Iris asks, though it's not really a question.

"Yup. I'll see you later." Barry says

Iris smiles and actually waves before she goes to leave the kitchen. She knew Barry could surely make his way back to Wally's room on his own. She was still smiling and thinking about Barry when she walked into her room and found Wally sitting on her bed. "Wally! Hey! What's up?" Iris asks as she walks toward her bed.

Wally gave her that look. "What's up? You know what's up. Where's Barry? I'm sorry, Bear." He adds just because he can.

Iris ignored his little Bear remark. "He's in the kitchen. We were just getting something to drink." Iris says.

"Sure you were." Wally says with much sarcasm.

"What is the big deal, Wally?" Iris asks, though she knows what the big deal is.

"Eddie." Wally says.

_Oh God, here we go._ Iris thinks to herself. She knew Wally would bring him up eventually.
"I'm sorry for leading you on."

Chapter Summary

A little bit of angst. A little bit of Wally and Iris, Barry and Iris, and Barry and Wally.

Chapter Notes

During the text messages, Iris is in Italics, Barry is bold.

Anywho, feedback is greatly appreciated. Kudos are hugs.

Iris decided to brace herself from the lecture she was about to receive. And she wasn't even getting it from her father. She was getting it from her overly protective big brother. She didn't want to hear what he had to say though. She had been listening to Wally her entire life. Listening to him try to dictate her life to her. And she was actually sick of it. But she decided to humor him anyway. She walked back over to her bedroom door and closed it so that Barry wouldn't overhear things he shouldn't.

Iris sighed out of pure exasperation. "Ok, what about Eddie?" She asks, though she knows.

Wally just deadpanned her. "You know what." He replies.

"Ok, but what does that have to do with Barry?" She asks.

"It has everything to do with Barry. He's my friend and I'd like to keep it that way." He replies and is starting to look at his little sister like she's lost it. He can't believe he actually has to have this conversation with her.

Iris scoffed and then frowned. "Barry and Eddie are two different people, Wally. I'm sure you know that."

"Yeah, they're two different people. I know that. But you aren't. You're still my little sister, Iris." Wally counters.

"So what? I'm not the same person I was when I was 16. Neither are you. Well, you're still trying to dictate to me what I can and can't do even though I'm an adult now." Iris says a bit harshly.

"I'm not trying to dictate anything to you. Even though you're an adult, you're still my little sister. But I've made it clear that you are off limits to my friends." Wally says.

"That sure sounds like dictating to me." Iris adds with a touch of sarcasm.

"Again I say, Eddie. Have you forgotten what happened with him?" Wally asks quizzically.

"No, I haven't forgotten. But it's ancient history. Eddie and Barry are two different people. Isn't that
clear? I don't even know Barry that well, and I know that."

"Yeah, they're different. But they're both my friends. Well Eddie was. I don't wanna see the same thing happen with Barry." Wally says.


"I want you to stop flirting with Barry and leading him on. That's what I want you to do. I figured I'd get better results from telling you to knock it off than from telling him that you're off limits. I told him you were off limits before we even left school. I guess that has gone out the window since he has now met you. He's already looking at you like he's in love. I certainly can't blame him because you've been laying it on thick." Wally replies with his own touch of sarcasm.

Iris folded her arms across her chest. "What's that supposed to mean? I'm not leading him on." She seriously resented him thinking that she's leading Barry on.

"The way I look at it, you are. Smiling at him until he turns red. Touching him. Flirting. And that." Wally says as he points to the sweatshirt she's wearing. "You're wearing his sweatshirt. Sneaking off to the kitchen with him when you thought I was sleep. You're doing all of this and he's actually taking you seriously."

Iris exhaled again out of pure frustration. "I'm not leading him on, Wally. Why would you even think I would do something like that?" She inquires as she throws her hands in the air. Her big brother was being a big asshole at the moment.

"I'm sorry. I thought you only liked pretty boys. Didn't know you liked nerds. Good to know." Wally says, his sarcasm never leaving him.

"Whatever, Wally. You just had to find a way to cut me about Eddie, didn't you? Yeah, he was pretty, but I do not only like pretty boys. Why wouldn't I like Barry? So what if he's a nerd."

"If I had known you'd be doing what you're doing, I never would have brought him home with me." Wally says to his defense. "And no I don't not think he's cute but dudes aren't my type."

"So you only brought him home because you thought I wouldn't like him? So what are you trying to say? That he's not cute or something because that bullshit. That's awful, Wally. It's awful and you know it." Iris states surely. Her big brother is seriously getting on her nerves.

"Yeah, that's why I brought him home. And because he didn't want to go home to his family. It's not awful. Barry is my friend and roommate. I don't want you dating my friends." Wally says to his defense. "And no I don't not think he's cute but dudes aren't my type."

"What about Linda?" Iris asks, her ire starting to subside because Wally really has no argument. Yeah he can bring up the Eddie thing, but that was nearly 4 years ago. She's over it and he should be too. "You're dating her and she's my friend. What if I say I don't want you dating my friends?" Iris questions.

"Linda and I have been together for years and she didn't start out as your friend. I'm probably going to marry her. So we're not breaking up and causing tension between you and her. So, that's different. You flirting with Barry will cause tension between me and you and me and him."

"And how do you figure that?"

"Because I do. Because I told him that you're off limits. Because you know I don't want you dating
my friends. Because Barry doesn't have that many people in his life. He had some really bad shit happen to him when he was younger. I don't want to end my friendship with him when you guys go sour. I'll have to kill him for hurting you or I'll have to look at him if you hurt him."

"Look, Wally." Iris began and tried to find her words. "How are you so sure that things will go sour? How do you know we won't really hit it off and be together for years and eventually get married like you and Linda? How do you know your friendship with him will have to end?" Iris asks.

"You just met him hours ago, Iris. And now you're trying to say you'll be together for years? Do you even hear yourself?" Wally asks almost incredulously.

"Do you even hear yourself? You sound like a hypocrite." Iris counters surely.

"Iris, why do you insist on fighting me on this? I've made it clear where I stand. Years ago I made this clear. You ignored me about Eddie. Look what happened. Are we gonna have to go through that again, just with Barry?" Wally asks.

Iris sighed. She really didn't want to hear this crap from Wally. She really didn't. Now he's laying it on thick telling her about bad shit happening to Barry and him not wanting to lose him as a friend. He was hitting below the belt and she hated that. She didn't want to come between him and another friend. Especially one as great as she thinks Barry is. She wanted to smack Wally for putting her in this position. He was telling her to choose between him and Barry. Of course she'd choose her brother. Of course she would. Wally knew that.

Iris just looked at Wally and the expression he had on his face. The last thing she wanted to do was jeopardize her relationship with her brother. He was her best friend. She felt like she had lost out on something again. All because he didn't want her to date his friend. She made that mistake once before and it cost her a lot. She didn't want to go through that again. But she wanted Barry. And she had to let that go. It seemed so unfair. So unbelievably unfair. And cruel. If she could hate Wally, she'd hate him for this.

"Fine, Wally." Iris says. She wanted to hit Wally and kick herself for letting him get to her this way. But it was her fault too. She never should have went there with Barry. She knew how it would turn out. She couldn't help herself though. He was the cutest thing in her life at the moment. She'd have to get over thinking he's a human puppy. She'd have to stop calling him Bear and thinking that there was something definitely sexy about him. Give it all up. Because her big brother is an asshole, overly protective hypocrite that she loved dearly.

"Fine, what?" He asks.

"Fine, I won't flirt with your friend anymore." Iris replies dourly. She was a little saddened and a lot mad at Wally and wanted him out of her face and her room.

"Good. Look, I'm not trying to dictate your life to you. I'm just trying to protect you. I don't want you getting hurt by another guy I know. Can't you just understand that? It's my job as your big brother to protect you." Wally says.
"Yeah." Is all Iris says. She was done listening to Wally. For now, she was mad at him. It's been a long time since she's been mad at Wally. She felt it was long overdue.

Wally stood and walked over to her. He almost had to pull Iris into a hug. She was stiff and standoffish. He knew she was mad at him, but he knew she'd get over it. He and Iris could never stay mad at each other for long. He'd take her being mad at him for a little while over her getting hurt again. Not that he thought that Barry was a bad guy that would hurt Iris, but you never really know what people are capable of. He didn't think Eddie was a bad guy either. "I know you're mad at me, but I won't apologize for wanting to keep you safe." Wally says.

"Yeah." Is all Iris says again.

Wally hugged her tighter and slowly released her before kissing her on the cheek. He soon left her room. Iris went over to lock her bedroom door. She then went and collapsed on her bed. She hated feeling the way she was feeling. It shouldn't be this way. She was mad as hell at Wally, and there wasn't a thing she could do about it at the moment. She also felt like crying. She really felt like she had missed out on something great. She was confused as to why she was feeling that way when she had just met Barry hours ago. He shouldn't be that under her skin in such a short time. But she figured she would get over it quickly. It was no big deal.

Then why do I feel like it is? Iris asked herself as she buried her face into her pillow.

Barry was a little lost in thought and mesmerized by watching Iris walk away. He liked her. He really did. And she liked him too. He wasn't used to liking beautiful girls and having them like him back. He could really get used to this. He felt like he should thank Wally for bringing him home with him, and he did. He wanted to thank Wally, but knew that he couldn't because he told him that his sister was off limits. He really wanted to try and honor that request, but it was proving to be a difficult thing for him to do.

He finally did reach into the fridge and grabbed himself something to drink. As crazy as it was and sounded, he did feel like he was home. He felt incredibly welcomed by the West family. He thought of how it was amazing that he could feel like a part of the family with virtual strangers than with his own family. That amazed him and threw him for a loop.

He opened his soda and just started to look around. He looked at the little notes held up by magnets on the fridge. He saw the list Iris mentioned and chuckled to himself. He really wished that he could put her on the list. He really wanted Iris with no limits or stipulations.

Barry had a lot of thoughts running through his mind. He was surely falling for Iris. It was hard not to. He wished that Wally had never told him that she's off limits. He wished that he had never agreed to it. He wished that he had gotten to the house first, met Iris, then decided to go against his wishes. If he had known Iris would be that great and gorgeous, he would have flat out told Wally no.

Now he had to either pass up a relationship with a great girl, or ruin a friendship forever. He really didn't want to lose his friendship with Wally. Wally was a great friend and roommate. A great teammate also. Wally was a great motivator and pushed his teammates further than they thought they could go. He's the one that got Barry into lifting weights also. Even though Barry was tall and quite lanky, he also had a lot of lean muscle. Barry had always been fast, but he become
unstoppable when he reached college and got that different training. Now he was the fastest one on
the team. They started calling him The Flash because of it. And that was from Wally's team
captain influence. He took a special interest in Barry because he was his roommate and knew what
a good guy he was, despite the tragic things that happened to him.

So now Barry essentially had the agonizing choice of keeping his friend, or dating Iris. Life
seemed so unfair.

Barry finally made his way into the living room. The room he just casually walked through a few
times. He looked at the mantle above the fireplace and saw photos of the West family. He saw Joe
and Kristina's wedding photo and saw just how much Iris looked like their mother. She was
beautiful too. He saw a family photo of all of them. Wally looked to be about 6 years old and Iris
was probably about 4. He smiled at how cute he thought she was then. She was beautiful now, but
she was an adorable little girl. He knew he would have liked her even back then if they had met as
kids. He saw what was probably a Halloween picture of Wally dressed as Batman and Iris dressed
as Wonder Woman. He saw other photos of Wally and Iris' cap and gown pictures. One of Wally
with a medal around his neck. Then he saw one of Iris in a cheerleading outfit holding pompoms
and smiling widely. Her smile lit up the entire picture. He should have known she was a
cheerleader. She had the look and personality for it.

Yeah, he really had a thing for Iris. It was kind of like having a crush at first sight, even if she was
aiming a lamp at him. He looked at her and was a goner. Then he touched her and that made it
worse. He already felt this deep connection to her that was totally strange to him considering they
just met. As a scientist in training, he knew there were laws and explanations for everything. But
just looking at Iris, watching her smile, hearing her laugh, he knew that that wasn't science. He
couldn't explain the way he already felt about her. All he knew was that he had a major case of the
feels whenever he was around her. Even now just looking at her picture. He had major feels just
being up in Wally's room hoping he'd get a glimpse of her. And then he did. He took a chance
telling her that he wanted her and it didn't blow up in his face. The huge problem was that she was
his roommate's and friend's little sister that was off limits to him. He hated that Wally had to group
him in with all of his other friends. Barry knew for certain that he would never do anything to hurt
Iris. Why would he? He wasn't that kind of guy. He could already tell how awesome and special
she was. She was indeed incredibly beautiful. He had no reason to want to hurt something so
beautiful. He wished there was a way to make Wally understand that.

But how does he do that without ruining his friendship with Wally? He really did look up to him as
an older brother even if he was just two years older. Wally was a great friend. Why couldn't he
keep his friendship with Wally and date Iris? It seemed like he had to choose all or nothing. Not
having either would be like having nothing. He wondered how he'd remain friends with Wally and
then have to let go of what he felt for Iris. And hear that she met some dude years down the line
and that she's marrying this dude. Or get with Iris and have to end his friendship with Wally. Have
things be awkward between them if he and Iris lasted. How could that work?

Barry knew that he was jumping the gun thinking about the future like that. He really couldn't help
it because it seemed like Iris left an imprint on him that he would never be able to shake. He was a
goner, and he was screwed.

Wally returned to his room with a sort of heavy heart. He hated feeling like he had to be the bad
guy in this situation. But he had no choice. And he hated that as well. He wanted his sister and his
friend to be happy. He just couldn't shake someone hurting his sister. Had she and Eddie listened to
him, it wouldn't have happened. He does know that Eddie and Barry are two different people. He
knows that. He knows that Barry really is a good all-around guy and friend. But so was Eddie. He was his friend for a long time. So it's possible for Barry to do some bad shit to Iris like Eddie did. He didn't want to think that about Barry, but people are capable of anything.

Plus he had to deal with the fact that Iris is mad at him. He had to force her to hug him. And that's saying a lot because Iris is a really touchy feely person that loves to hug. She was as stiff as a board when he hugged her. He and Iris were super close and that hurt him. It really did. Because he was going out of his way to make sure that nobody else hurts her and he wound up doing the same thing. But he knew that Iris' anger towards him would be short lived. She'd get over it soon. They just couldn't stay mad at each other for too long. His sister was his best friend and part of him. He needed them to get past this soon.

Then he had to think about his friendship with Barry. He seriously really liked the dude. Barry was great. He couldn't even blame him for being attracted and in to Iris. Couldn't blame him at all. He knows the guy doesn't give himself enough credit. Sure Wally teases him about being a nerd, but that isn't a bad thing at all. Barry was just easy to tease. It was all in fun. Barry knew he was a nerd and didn't get offended about the nerd jokes. He never did. That's the kind of guy Barry is.

Way down deep, deep in the back of his mind, he hoped that Iris would eventually get with a guy like Barry. One that he knows won't abuse her or cheat on her. If Barry wasn't his friend, he'd be all for it. And as unfair as it was, Barry and Iris had to pay for Eddie's mistake. He couldn't tell Barry that though. He just had to remind him that his sister is off limits, though it seemed like that really went in one ear and out the other with Barry. The dude was already sprung. Wide open. It was actually comical the way he lit up around Iris. Wally felt like a dick for taking that away from him. The dude deserved some happiness. But Iris came first. Always did, always would. She was the most important thing in the world to him. Before his father and Linda. He had to protect her. He had to.

Wally tried not to let what just occurred between him and Iris get to him too much as he walked back to his bedroom and collapsed on his bed. He was glad that Barry wasn't yet back in his room so he wouldn't know he was gone and not sleep like they thought. Wally knew that their month off would be an interesting one.

Barry finished with his mini tour of the West house and went back upstairs to Wally's room. If he was being completely honest with himself, he wanted to go to Iris' room instead. She practically invited him. He wanted to spend a lot of time with her. In due time, he could.

He walked into Wally's room and found him sprawled on his bed just where he left him. He knew nothing of the conversation Wally had with Iris. He took the time to sprawl out on the air mattress that he had. He needed to clear his mind. Iris was taking up too much space in it. He needed to take a nap and escape reality for a moment. Too bad all he did was dream about Iris. The girl just took up residence in his mind and refused to leave. He wondered if there was anything he could do about that. He knew it was probably pointless, but he could at least try. Things weren't so black and white when it came to his crush on and attraction to Iris. He wished it were simpler.

He rolled over after he woke up and Wally was gone. He looked at his watch and saw that it was nearly 4. He wondered where all that time went, but got excited thinking about the activities that Wally had planned for them. He was willing to go anywhere as long as he got to be near Iris. He was all for having fun, but just getting close to her was good enough for him. He figured that he needed to get up and get dressed soon. He wondered what to wear. Iris did say she was considering this their first date. He wanted to impress her since she's only seen him in pajamas. He thought about Wally teasing him about his sweaters and wondered if he should wear one. He didn't want to look like a total dweeb even if Iris did tell him that he's an adorable nerd.
He got up and started going through his suitcase when Wally walked in, almost fully dressed.

"I see Sleeping Beauty finally decided to wake up." Wally jokes.


"Well, I see you're getting clothes which is good since we need to be leaving soon. You know where the bathroom is." Wally says as he sits on his bed.

"Yes, Dad." Barry joked as he continued to get what he needed. He retreated to the bathroom and started to feel his excitement get the best of him. Iris was just rooms away, and he couldn't wait to see her again. He got in the shower and started to imagine what she'd wear. He too had only seen her in pajamas. He wondered how she looked in her regular clothes though he knew she'd look amazing in anything. He was going on a date with a gorgeous girl that liked him. Life was sweet. A little unfair, but sweet.

He finished up his shower, the rest of his grooming and dressed before leaving the bathroom. He was giddy. He hoped it didn't show too much and Wally said something to him about it. He really couldn't help himself. He walked into the room and found Wally on his phone. He finished getting dressed and was tying up his Converse's when Iris walked by Wally's room. He noticed that she was dressed in a pair of pajama bottoms, a tank, and a short robe. She had on bunny slippers and her hair was in a ponytail. He saw that she was no longer wearing his sweatshirt. He wondered why and wondered why she wasn't dressed. Maybe she was running a lot later than he was. He looked at her try to avoid looking in Wally's room while she kept walking. Luckily, Wally spotted her.

"Hold on, Linda." Wally says as he sits up. "Iris. Wait!"

Iris heard him and really wanted to ignore him, but she didn't want to make a scene in front of Barry. She didn't want to make him uncomfortable. She backed up and stood in the doorway. She desperately tried to avoid looking at Barry. Hell she didn't want to look at Wally either. He was on the chopping block. She was seriously not about to say anything, but she had to. She would do her best to fake it in front of Barry. "Yes?" She asked.

"Why aren't you dressed yet? I told you we were leaving around 4." Wally says.

"Oh, I'm not going." Iris answers and she felt Barry really looking at her.

*She's not going? Why?* Barry thought to himself. He looked at Iris and could tell she was trying to avoid looking at him. He was confused as hell. She was just telling him that she wanted him and this was their first date hours ago. *What happened?*

Wally looked at Iris like she was crazy. "What? What do you mean, 'You're not going?'" He asked.

"Exactly what I said. I'm not going." She repeats. She felt Barry's eyes boring in to her. She knew he was wondering why she said she wasn't going. She knew he was confused. She would be too.

Wally sighed. "Why not, Iris?" He asked.

Iris was now the one looking at Wally like he was crazy. She was wondering why he had the audacity to ask her that. He knew why. He's the reason why she's not going. *No real reason. Just decided to stay in. You know, catch up on a little Netflix.* She replies.

"Netflix? You wanna catch up on Netflix when we were thinking of going to the movies?" Wally asked with much sarcasm.
Barry finally stood and Iris took in what he was wearing. She subtly watched him walk over to his suitcase and crouched down to put things in it. He had on black jeans, black Converse's, black sweater, with a white tee just slightly peeking from the bottom of his sweater. She saw how broad his shoulders were and the defined muscles in his arms in the sweater and she had to admit that the boy looked good. He looked damn good. Damn Wally, she thought to herself.

"What's the big deal? I don't wanna go. You guys have fun without me. Tell Linda I said I'll call her later." Iris says and then she's off.

Wally and Barry looked at each other in utter confusion. Wally put his phone back to his ear. "Linda. I'll text you when I'm on my way." He says and hangs up. He gets up and leaves his room to follow Iris.

Barry really didn't know what to do. He didn't know if he should follow Wally, or stay in the room so that he and Iris could talk. He felt like going after her himself, but thought better of it. That would not look good. Wally would surely kill him. He wanted to know what had gotten into her. This was supposed to be their first date. What happened? Barry wondered again.

Iris made her way to the kitchen. She was standing in front of the fridge when Wally came in. He looked at her for a moment before he spoke. "Why aren't you coming?" He asks.

Iris wanted so desperately to ignore him. But it was no use. Might as well get it over with. "I already told you why I'm not coming." She replies. She reached in and got a yogurt and a bottle of water and went to the drawer and got a spoon.

"I'm not buying your excuse for not coming." Wally says.

"I don't know what to tell you, Wally." She counters.

"So this is about that conversation we had earlier, isn't it?" He asks though he knows. He knew she was mad at him, but now she's just being ridiculous.

Iris deadpanned Wally as she placed her water on the counter and then took the lid off her yogurt. She put a spoonful in her mouth as her way of answering him. She didn't want to talk about this. She was doing what he asked. She didn't understand why he wasn't happy about her not coming.

Wally just continued to look at Iris. He knew his little sister was headfast and stubborn. She had always been that way. Now he wasn't in the mood for it. "Iris." Is all Wally says.

Iris ate another spoonful of yogurt and looked at her big brother. "What, Wally?" She finally asks.

"Why are you acting like this? We were supposed to go out and have fun. I thought you missed Linda and wanted to see her." Wally states.

"Acting like what? Can't I just want to stay in? I'm on break and I just want to relax and watch Netflix. And I do miss Linda. I miss her a lot, but we can hook up another day. Tell her that, will you? We can have a girl's day." Iris says and smiles. She finishes her yogurt while Wally just watched her throw the container in the trash and put the spoon in the sink. She grabbed her water and left the kitchen without a word and went back upstairs. She was heading back to her room and she really dreaded walking past Wally's room. She didn't want to see Barry.

Barry saw her walk past the room and couldn't help but call her name. "Iris."
Iris hated that he called her. She couldn't ignore him like she was doing Wally. He did nothing wrong. Besides be a cute human puppy that was looking kind of sexy in his street clothes. This sucks, Iris thought. "Yes?" She asks expectantly.

He looked at her and stood and walked over to the door. "What's going on?" He asks.

"Nothing." She lies.

Barry just looked down at her. The short and incredibly beautiful girl standing in front of him. He wanted to touch her. He slightly shook his head to let her know he didn't believe her. "Nothing? Are you sure it's nothing?"

"Yes, I'm sure. I'd just rather stay home." She lies again. She was looking forward to tonight and thanks to her meddling big brother, that was all a done deal. She hated that she had to do this, but it was for the best. They both had to let it go.

"Why doesn't that sound like the truth?" Barry asks.

Iris shrugged and forced herself to smile. "Beats me."

Barry eyed her carefully. He knew he didn't know Iris that well, but he sensed that she wasn't being honest with him. She was smiling but it didn't reach her eyes. He has already memorized her smile and it didn't look anything like this. Iris smiled with her whole face. This was fake, like she was putting on a show.

"I thought this was going to be our secret first date?" He asks and wonders what response he'll get from her now.

Iris felt a little tug in her chest at him asking her that. She wanted that to be the case. She was looking forward to it until Wally had to ruin things for her. "It was. I'm sorry, but I don't think it's a good idea. I'm sorry for leading you on." She says. She reached her hand out and rubbed his arm. Probably shouldn't have done that, Iris thought to herself. She rubbed his arm affectionately and smiled again. She started to walk away as Barry watched her walk down the hallway. Seconds later, Wally came upstairs.

"Just give me a few minutes to talk to her." Wally says to Barry as he heads in the same direction Iris went.

Barry was severely confused. He had no idea what happened. It seemed as if Iris didn't even want to talk to him. He knows he didn't do anything, so it didn't make sense. Especially her telling him she's sorry for leading him on. He didn't know how to process that. He thought she wanted him.

Barry then did something he knew was wrong as hell, but he honestly couldn't help himself. He walked to Wally's bed and grabbed his phone. He immediately went to his contacts and got Iris' number. That's all he wanted. He had to find a way to at least talk to her. He quickly put her number into his phone and put Wally's phone right back where it was. He had no intention of violating Wally's privacy in any way, he just needed to talk to Iris and get to the bottom of things.

Wally walked right into her room and shut the door behind him. He watched her walk over and sit on the side of her bed. He walked over and stood in front of her. "What gives Iris?"

"Nothing gives. Shouldn't you be leaving soon?" She asks in a calm tone.

"I'll leave in a few. Why are you doing this?" Wally asks.
"Doing what?" Iris asks as she feigns ignorance. She reached on her nightstand and grabbed her phone.

"Acting like this. Saying you're not coming. You were happy to come earlier. What gives now?"

Iris sighed. "Wally, what is the big damn deal? You told me to stop flirting with your friend. That's what I'm doing. I'm just doing what you asked. That's all." She answered almost bitterly.

"Yeah, I don't want you flirting with my friend, but you can still come. You guys can still be friends. That's what this was anyway. Friends hanging out." Wally says.

"Of course Barry and I can be friends. He's a great guy. But I'm not coming. I'm not in a friendly mood right now. I don't want to spoil anyone's fun." Iris says. She smiled and then looked down at her phone as her way of dismissing Wally.

Wally just stared at his little sister. He really couldn't believe she was acting this way. All he did was ask her not to flirt with Barry and lead him on. Now she's blowing things way out of proportion. Especially since he's doing it to protect her. "Iris. This is not what I meant and you know it. You're being ridiculous." Wally says.

"I don't think I'm being ridiculous. I'm being respectful. That's what you wanted, right?" She asks with much venom and sarcasm as she looks up at him finally.

Wally was now frustrated with Iris. He sighed. He knew he wasn't getting anything out of her. "Iris…"

"Wally…I think you should be going. You don't want to keep Linda waiting. Don't forget to tell her what I said. Have fun." Iris says without even looking up from her phone.

Wally admitted defeat and decided to leave Iris alone. He left her room without a word and went to his. He found Barry looking like a wounded puppy. He decided to ignore that look on his face. "I hate to break it to you Barry, but you're going to be the third wheel. She's really not coming," He says. He watched the look of disappointment really cover Barry's face.

"Great." Barry says sarcastically.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know my stubborn little sister would flip the script like that." Wally replies as he gets the rest of what he needs to leave.

Barry was disappointed as hell. He was really looking forward to this moment. Now Iris isn't coming and he had to be the third wheel on a date with a couple that's been together for years. This is just great. He wondered what in the hell happened to make Iris want to change her mind. He felt like changing his mind too. He didn't want to go with Wally and Linda. He wanted to go on his secret first date with Iris. He was so happy about it earlier. Now he felt like Iris. He knew Wally wouldn't be on board with him staying home. He knew that was wishful thinking. He really needed to know what changed her mind.

"What made her change her mind though?" Barry asks Wally.

Wally took in how despondent Barry was. He knew he couldn't tell him the truth. Well he could, but didn't feel like going there. Iris had already taken him there with her actions. He shrugged. "Who knows? She won't give me anything." He lies.

Barry immediately knew that Wally was lying. He knew his roommate better than he thought he did. He now knows that Wally must have said something to Iris. It's the only thing that made sense.
He wasn't imagining what was going on between them earlier. He figured Wally must have talked to her while he was sleep or something. He knew that Wally said his sister was off limits, but he didn't think he would talk Iris out of coming on a secret date with him. He understood that Wally cared about his sister, but he couldn't help but harbor some resentment towards him for that. He knew that Iris wanting him too was too good to be true.

Barry ignored everything that was going on in his mind and put his poker face on. "Well, I hope we can still have fun. Even if I am the third wheel. I don't have to come if you just want to be alone with Linda." Barry offers hoping he'll take him up on it and he can stay there with Iris.

Wally knew what Barry was trying to get at and he wasn't falling for it. "No, it's fine. I can be with Linda later. I'm going to see if I can get her to talk to Iris. They're really close so she might be able to get through to her."

"Great." Barry says and hopes that Linda can get through to Iris.

"So, are you ready to go?" Wally asks.

"Yup." Barry lies.

Wally heads out of his room and Barry follows. They both head down the stairs and grab their jackets. They're in Wally's car in what seemed like seconds. Wally took out his phone and texted Linda. Barry waited until he was driving to pull out his phone and do the same.

Iris was busy stewing in her room, continuing to be mad at Wally and playing on her phone. She was bored as hell and thought that even though she wasn't going out with them, she could still go out with her friends. She was deciding which one to call when she got a text from a strange number.

*Why aren't you coming?*

She had a feeling who it was, but she wanted to be sure.

*Who is this?*

**Bear.**

*How did you get my number? I know Wally didn't give it to you.*

*I may have went through his phone to get it. Don't tell him that.*

Iris smiled at that.

*I just didn't want to.*

**But you did earlier.**

*I know.*

**So what happened?**

*Nothing.*

Barry felt like screaming. Or putting his fist through something. Iris was being totally uncooperative.
That's a lie.

It's not.

Iris, be honest with me. Wally told you not to come, didn't he?

No, he didn't.

You're kinda breaking my heart, Iris.

Don't say things like that.

Well, you are. I was looking forward to our secret date.

I was too. :

Why the sad face?

Iris felt another tug in her chest when he asked that. God, Barry was great. And she couldn't have him.

Because I have to give you up.

No, you don't.

But Wally….

Fuck Wally.

Iris bust out laughing at seeing that.

:)

Wally was focused on driving, but he still noticed that Barry was on his phone texting someone. He seriously wondered if it was Iris.

Sorry.

It's fine Bear…Barry. It was funny.

Can you please come?

I can't Bear…

Why not? Were you really leading me on like you said?

No!

Then what is it?

I can't have you.

Yes you can.

I won't be able to flirt with you.
Then don't.

*Can't help it.*

Iris smiled to herself when she sent that. Barry's texts instantly made her feel better.

**I can't help flirting with you either.**

*I really like you, Iris.*

*I really like you too, Bear.*

**So... can you come? Please? Do I have to send you a sad puppy dog face? Cause I will.**

Iris laughed at that. She really considered Barry her puppy.

Ok.

**Ok, what? You're coming or you want the sad puppy dog face?**

*I'm coming. But we can't flirt though.*

I'll try my best.

Ok.

Iris texts him her last reply before she drops her phone and jumps up happily from her bed and walked to her closet to find something to wear.

Barry smiled to himself and cheered internally he almost forgot all about Wally driving next to him. Wally knew he was texting Iris. He just knew it.

He glanced over at Barry and saw how happy he suddenly became.

"You're texting Iris, aren't you?" He asks, though he knows the answer to his question.

Once again, Barry looked like a deer caught in headlights.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading. I hope some of you enjoyed it.
"Is something going on between you two?"

Chapter Summary

Girl talk. Guy talk. Couple talk. And a double date.

Chapter Notes

Again, during the text messages, Iris is in Italics, Barry is bold.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Barry decided that even though he's a terrible liar, he was going to lie his way out of what Wally just asked him.

"No, I'm not texting Iris. I don't even have her number. I was texting my friend Felicity. You know the blonde one that wears glasses in my Organic Chemistry class? I was just seeing if she got home safe." Barry lies right off the top of his head. He figured he'd at least try to get good at and used to lying, especially to Wally. He was really going to have to be careful and really think on his feet for quick lies to tell him.

"Oh, the hacker chick." Wally says, though he doesn't believe Barry for a second.

"Yup. That's her." Barry says.

"Is something going on with you two?" Wally asks just because.

"What? No. We looked down that road and decided we're better off as friends. Felicity is great though. Plus I think she's kind of into that guy Oliver on the football team." Barry adds easily, hoping Wally believes his lie. That part actually is true, but Felicity isn't even on his radar.

"Everybody is in to Oliver." Wally says and then laughs.

"Don't I know it." Barry says a little bitterly so that Wally can at least think he has a thing for her.

They rode in silence a little more until he pulled up in front of a house. "I'll be right back." Wally says and he's out the car in seconds.

Barry took this time to go ahead and sit in the back so that Linda can sit next to Wally. He figured that was the gentlemanly and right thing to do. As soon as he was settled, he thought of Iris. Who was he kidding, he always thought of Iris. He decided to make the most of his time and text her again.

What are you doing?

Iris was still looking through her closet for the perfect thing to wear when she heard her phone chime, alerting her of a text message. She took a few steps backward and grabbed her phone from her bed. She smiled when she saw that it was Barry. Her Bear.
Trying to find something to wear. What are you doing?

I'm sitting in Wally's car waiting for him to come back with Linda.

Oh.

So you really are coming?

Iris smiled again at his excited nature.

Yes. I'm really coming.

Barry seriously couldn't contain his excitement. He and Iris were going on their first date. He wished that they could be alone. He imagined all the things they could do if it wasn't a double date. He waited before texting her again to give her time.

Did you find something to wear yet?

Nada. I have to find the perfect thing. This is my first date with this amazing and adorable guy.

You know you'll look great in anything though, right?

Of course. You've seen me in my pj's and my hair bonnet. The only way to go is up.

I can't wait to see you.

Barry smiled so hard his face almost cracked at texting Iris.

Iris put on a huge smile at that. It was almost tragic that Barry didn't see her smile.

I can't wait to see you either.

Really?

Yes really.

Barry was about to text something else when the passenger door opening startled him. He saw who could only be Linda get in the passenger seat. Seconds later Wally was in the driver's seat.

"Barry, this is Linda. Linda this is Barry." Wally says.

Linda turns to face Barry and smiles at him. She stuck out her hand. Barry did the same.

"It's nice to meet you, Barry." Linda says.

"It's nice to meet you too. I've heard a lot about you." Barry says sincerely as they release hands.

"I've heard a lot about you too. I hope the things you heard were all good things." Linda jokes as she taps Wally on the arm.

"Nothing but good things." Barry confesses truthfully as he smiles at her again.

"So, are you ready to have fun? Sorry you're the third wheel. I know how that can be sometimes." Linda says.

"Yeah, I'm ready to have fun. And that's ok. I've been the third wheel before." Barry says even
though he isn't going to be the third wheel. He was ecstatic that Iris changed her mind and would be coming.

"About that. I want you to talk to Iris. See if she'll change her mind about coming." Wally says as he puts his seatbelt on and starts the car up.

Linda put her seatbelt on as well. "I'll try. What's gotten into Iris? I would've thought she'd be happy to come. I miss her."

"Who knows. But yeah she misses you too." Wally says though he knows. Barry knows as well, but it's water under the bridge now. She said she was coming and he couldn't be more excited than he was at that moment. He had to do it now before he got overly chipper when he saw Iris again. He had to put on an act for both their sakes. "So, I'm going to swing back past there and have you talk to her. Is that ok with you, Barry?" Wally asks as he pulls off.

"Sure. That's fine with me." Barry replies and it really is. He wondered if he should warn Iris first. He decided to text Iris again. It would look suspicious if she was already ready when they got there.

"You say that now, but you don't know how long it takes Iris to get ready. If she changes her mind, that is." Wally says as he looks through the rearview mirror.

"It's ok. I can always play a game or something on my phone." Barry says as he goes to text Iris.

We're on our way back to the house.

Iris looked up when she heard her phone chime again. She was stepping into her favorite pair of jeans. The ones that made her ass and everything else look amazing.

She grabbed her phone and read Barry's message.

What? Why?

So that Linda can talk you into coming tonight.

Ok.

Do you think it'll look suspicious if you're already ready to go? I had to lie to Wally and tell him I was texting a girl named Felicity.

Iris ignored that first question altogether. Barry had sparked her interest.

Who's Felicity?

She's just a friend from school.

Are you sure she's just a friend?

Barry smiled at that. Made his whole face smile the way Iris does.

Are you jealous Iris?

Yes.

Iris texted back and grinned at that. Of course she wasn't really jealous. She really liked Barry
though. Really did. She knew he liked her too.

There's no reason for you to be jealous. I only have eyes for you.

I bet you say that to all the other girls.

What other girls?

I like you too, Bear.

Barry blushed this time at seeing that. Blushed until he turned red.

I really like it when you call me Bear.

I'll keep that in mind.

Iris looked around her room for a minute. She was debating whether to not look too good on this secret date. She and Barry were supposed to stick to not flirting with each other. If she goes all out like she normally would, that might not fare well. She wondered if it would really matter when Barry saw her in her pajamas and they still managed to flirt with each other. Granted she has seen him dressed better than he was that morning when she scared the hell out of him and during the day. She really liked what she saw. Barry seriously had some underlying sexiness to him. She had a feeling he didn't know just how sexy he was. Sure, he's a nerd. Who doesn't love a nerd? Nerds can be hot too. She found intelligence attractive anyway. Plus he ran. According to Wally, he's the fastest one on their team. She found that sexy too. She had a feeling there was more to Barry than meets the eye.

She decided not to be too flashy. Barry might not be able to handle her being too flashy. She would just wear something simple. She saw the way he turned red in her presence. She wasn't naïve. She could tell that he liked her and liked looking at her. She didn't want to give nosey Wally any more ammunition. He was already watching what she did. Maybe it would be different since Linda would be there. She really hoped they were going to the movies. Maybe they could secretly hold hands. Iris liked that idea. She also liked the idea of them going bowling. Or karaoke. She had visions of doing a duet with Linda like they have from time to time.

Iris decided that it was best it looked like she wasn't even thinking of going. Wally could come to her room first even if he knows she's mad at him. She would take her jeans back off and put her pajama bottoms back on. It wouldn't take her that long to get ready anyway. The most time she'd be taking is doing her hair. She sat on her bed and grabbed her phone again.

Are you guys near here yet?

Honestly, I have no idea since I'm not from here. Why?

Because I have to get undressed so I won't draw attention to already being ready to go.

Visions of her getting undressed flashed through Barry's mind. He's sorry he even went there, but he truly couldn't help himself. In spite of that, the last thing he wanted to do was just get Iris undressed. She was worth more than that to him. Plus they just met. He'd be lying to himself if he said he never wanted to go there with her, but he knew that would take some time if they ever got that far. He really got lost in thought thinking about that when he got another text message.

You're thinking of me getting undressed, aren't you Bear?

Iris grinned to herself at sending that. She imagined her Bear, her cute but sexy human puppy
grinning himself and turning red at the thought.

Guilty as charged.

Sorry.

I want more than to just see you get undressed.

He felt like it'd be best for him to be as honest as possible with Iris since he'd be doing a lot of Lying to Wally.

Iris smiled at that herself. Barry was so freaking awesome already.

I appreciate that. There's no need to apologize. I know I'm irresistible. ;)

That you are. ;)

Barry was so lost in thought and from texting Iris that he didn't realize they were back at the West house. He wondered if he should stay in the car. He saw Linda and Wally getting out and decided he'd get out too. Pretend he had to go to the bathroom or something. Plus it was cold out. He didn't just want to sit in a car. They all walked up to the front door and entered. Barry just went to sit on the couch. He really would get lost in a game or something on his phone.

"Should I go right up?" Linda asks Wally.

"Yeah. Hopefully she doesn't bite your head off." Wally says as he goes over and sits on the couch too. He turned the tv on because he didn't know what was going to happen.

Linda made her way upstairs and went to Iris' bedroom. She knocked and hoped that Iris was in a good mood. "Iris? It's me." She says.

Iris got giddy at seeing her friend and possible future sister in law again. She really did miss her. She dropped her phone on the bed and went to answer the door. "Linda!" She says as she throws her arms out and pulls her into a hug.

"Iris! I missed you." Linda says as they hug.

"I missed you too." Iris admits as they continue to hug like old friends and sisters. They finally released and Iris just smiled at her. "So, what brings you by?" She asks, feigning ignorance to the real reason Linda is there.

"Wally thought I should come and try to convince you to come with us. What happened? What made you change your mind?"

Iris pulled Linda into her room and shut and locked the door. "First, you have to promise not to tell Wally." She says knowing she will. There are plenty of girly things she and Linda have shared throughout the years.

"Wally thought I should come and try to convince you to come with us. What happened? What made you change your mind?"

"Of course. Wally might be my boyfriend, but you're my friend and my sister." Linda says.

"Well, I take it you've met Barry." Iris says.

"Yeah. He's nothing like I imagined him to be. When Wally said he was a huge nerd, I pictured Poindexter from the Revenge of the nerd movies." Linda says and they both laugh.
"I know. Me too. He's much cuter than I thought he'd be." Iris says as she smiles.

"Is something going on between you two?" Linda asks quizzically.

"Yes. No. Maybe." Iris says and she and Linda laugh again.

"Oh boy. That means something is. I take it big bad Wally isn't too happy about that." Linda says as she goes to sit on Iris' bed.

Iris started to get undressed again. It wasn't weird at all for her to get undressed in front of Linda. They had done that plenty of times before. Plus she wasn't totally naked. No different than a bikini at the beach. She stepped back into the jeans she had previously removed. She could have kept them on if she knew it would just be Linda coming.

"You know it." Iris replies.

"What happened?" Linda wonders.

"Well, it's not even a long story, well it kinda is, but this morning, I ran into Wally's room and jumped on him in the bed thinking it was him. He got back so late that I didn't know he was with you. Anyway, imagine my surprise when I found Barry instead of Wally." Iris says.

Linda knew there was more to the story. "Go on."

Iris put her silver and white striped tee shirt over her head before continuing. "Well, Barry scared the hell out of me. I picked up Wally's lamp and was ready to hit him with it." She says and she and Linda laugh. "Then he introduced himself, and I'm serious Linda, I felt electricity and warmth surge through me when I shook his hand. Then I noticed how cute he is. Plus he's got a great body under all that. Would you believe he has a damn six pack?" She asks as she grabs her sparkly silver Uggs and puts them on.

"Really? A six pack? Wow. Wally did say they work out together and he's the fastest one on their team." Linda counters.

"So I should thank Wally for that body?" Iris asks and she and Linda crack up laughing.

"Nevermind. He might turn green and wreck things if I tell him that."

"So, what else? You can't just leave it there." Linda says.

"I know." Iris says as she grabs the matching silver sweater and puts that on her bed and takes her hair out the ponytail. "Well, we just introduced ourselves, he started rambling, and he actually called me pretty. He apologized for saying that because Wally told him I'm off limits. So, I went back to my room and went back to sleep. A few hours later, I went down to the kitchen. You know how I like to wear Wally's clothes?" Iris asks as she starts to comb her hair after plugging up her flatiron.

"Yes. I do too. Guy stuff is more comfortable than ours." Linda replies.

"I know. Well, I had on what I thought was Wally's sweatshirt. Turns out it was Barry's. He turned red after Wally pointed it out. Anyway, I started to cook breakfast and had Barry help me. Wally was seriously suspicious because he knows I like to cook alone. He and Dad left me and Barry alone in the kitchen. We just got to talking and I brought up seeing me in my sleep bonnet and joking that I knew he didn't know what it was. I asked him if he had ever dated a black girl before and he admitted that he didn't but he would. He told me that he would totally date me. I admitted the same. Major flirting. Wally caught us and pointed it out, but he wasn't mad. We both agreed
that we'd stop flirting since Wally would kill us both." Iris paused and started to do her hair.

"So, what else happened?" Linda asks. She thought this story was getting good.

"So we hugged it out, and I seriously felt like I was missing out on something. We had breakfast and we both found ways to touch each other under the table. I went to my room and thought for a bit. I went to Wally's room and found them playing video games. Wally brought up us going out, but made sure to tell Barry and I that it wasn't a date. I left his room, went back to mine, then a little later, I was going to the kitchen and found Wally sleep and Barry on his laptop. We went to the kitchen and flirted again. I almost kissed him." Iris admits.

"Almost?" Linda asks.

"Almost. Well, I wanted to. Now here comes the fun part." Iris says and playfully cringed and Linda laughed.

"The fun part has Wally written all over it, doesn't it?" She asks with a smile. She knows how her boyfriend is.

"Of course it does. So when I came back to my room, Wally was here waiting on me. He brought up Eddie." Iris says and pauses for effect because Linda knows about Eddie.

"Oh boy…." Linda says and exhales.

"Yeah. He told me to stop flirting with Barry and leading him on, like I would do that. Threw Eddie in my face and gave me this long speech about how Barry might be taking me seriously, and already looks at me like he's in love, and that he doesn't want to lose his friendship with him like he did with Eddie. How he's seriously forbidding me from dating his friend. He pretty much gave me an ultimatum though he didn't say that. So I decided I was mad at Wally and not going to come tonight. And now here we are." Iris says as she continues to do her hair.

"Wow. That's something. So you really like this guy, I suppose." Linda says.

Iris smiled just thinking of her human puppy, Bear. "Yeah, I really do. Even if I did just meet him."

"Well, you know how Wally is…."

"I know. That's the bad part. I don't wanna be mad at Wally. I don't want to come between him and Barry. I just like the guy. A lot. He likes me too." Iris counters a little sadly.

"Well, he won't be here that long. Do you think you can get over it?" Linda asks in wonderment.

Iris thinks for a moment. "Honestly, no. I already feel like he has a special place in my heart. It's so weird. It actually physically hurt me to say I wasn't coming. I actually apologized to him for leading him on, though I wasn't. He was deeply confused because we had both decided that this would be our secret first date. He looked so sad when I told him that. It hurt to make him think I was leading him on." She says, again a little sadly.

Linda really looked at Iris and saw how blissfully happy she was just talking about Barry. And how sad she got. "Then I don't think you should let it go." She confessed truthfully.

Iris looked over at Linda. She was happy to hear her say that. "But Wally. You know how he is." She says.

"Fuck Wally." Linda says and Iris looks at her with wide eyes. "I mean that in the best way
Iris thought of Barry saying the exact same thing. "Wow, Linda." Is all Iris can say at the moment.

"I know how Wally is, and I love him dearly. I love how protective he is over you. Makes me think he'll be a good father one day. But you're just his sister, not his property. I get him wanting to protect you. I really do, especially after Eddie. But you have to live your life, Iris. Wally has told me about Barry and I've heard nothing but good things. Why should you pass up a great guy because of Wally? Does he expect you to not ever date? That's ridiculous and hypocritical considering he has me." Linda says and Iris could seriously hug and kiss her for that.

"I kinda told him the same thing." Iris says.

"Well, then I think you and Barry should do what you and Barry want to do. Wally will just have to get over it." Linda says. "Or you can always do it behind his back."

Iris again looked at Linda and laughed. "I thought of that." She admits.

"Then, there you go. Your secret is safe with me. You know that." Linda says.

"I do. I appreciate and love you for that." Iris says.

"I love you too. You're my sister. I will always be here for you. Even if Wally and I end. You will always be my friend and sister." Linda says.

"I feel the same way." Iris says and smiles. "Thanks, Lin."

"Anytime."

"Well, I am almost done. I just have to do my makeup and we are out of here." Iris says. She finishes up her hair, put on her silver necklace and earrings, and grabbed her makeup bag and went to the bathroom. She didn't do much, just her eyes and her lips. She looked at herself in the mirror and had to admit she looked pretty great. She went back into her room and put her sweater on.

"How do I look?" She asks Linda as she turns around.

"Amazing. You might give that poor little nerd down there a heart attack." Linda says and she and Iris crack up laughing.

Barry and Wally just sat and watched some college football on tv while Linda was upstairs with Iris. He already knew Iris had changed her mind, but it was fun to play along.

"She's been up there for a while. Maybe that's a good sign." Barry says hopefully.

"Yeah, I hope so. I don't think it's fair for her to sit in the house while we're out having fun." Wally says. "Or maybe they're just talking about us."


Wally looked at Barry and the hopeful and hopeless expression on his face. His sister had him
wide open. He couldn't blame him though he felt a little sorry for him. "Because that's what girls do. Especially those two." He replies.

Barry chuckled at that. "So they're really good friends then?"

"Yeah. They're like sisters. They became really close when Linda and I started dating." Wally says and couldn't help but think of the irony in that. He and Barry could possibly become like brothers if he and Iris dated. They were already friends, roommates, and teammates. Wally just couldn't wrap his mind around that. He didn't want his friend dating his sister. He didn't understand why that was so hard for people to understand. It was in the Big Brother Rule Book. Essentially Big Brother 101: Protect your sisters at all costs. He had to. Sure they had a police detective father, that could protect them from anything, but Wally felt like it was his job as Wally West, big brother to Iris West to protect her. And even though Iris is his little sister, he looked up to her and admired her. She was such an awesome person. He loved everything about her, even her stubborn side. She was the strongest person he knew and just an all-around joy. He loved and cherished his sister dearly and felt that he got lucky in getting her. From the time she was born, until now. It amazed him how she was the one to really help him and his father cope with their mother dying. Iris was never sad for too long, or at all. She would always brush that aside. She didn't like people being unhappy around her either. Her spirit was just too bright for that. That's why it pained him to see her upset earlier. It didn't sit right with him. And he really couldn't go out and have a good time knowing Iris was sitting at home miserable. It just didn't feel right to him.

"That's great. I wish I had had a sister or brother. I often wonder why my parents didn't have more kids." Barry says.

"I wish you could've had a sibling. They're awesome. But hey, you have me. I'm your honorary big brother." Wally says and truly means that. Barry needed that. He was a great guy and needed people in his life.

"Thanks. We do have a striking family resemblance." Barry jokes and Wally laughs.

"Yeah, we're almost identical." Wally jokes and he and Barry laugh again.

Their laughing is interrupted by female laughter coming down the stairs. It sounded really great to both of their ears. Iris and Linda made their way downstairs and both guys stood. Barry turned to look at Iris and almost passed out. Iris looked breathtakingly beautiful. She was just wearing jeans, a shirt, and a sweater, and she looked amazing. He felt his heart do a couple of laps in his chest. Wally noticed how dumbstruck Barry was at seeing Iris.

"Wide open," is all he could think.

"So, you changed your mind about going?" Wally asks.

Iris smiled widely, though it was for Barry. "Yes."

"I was quite convincing." Linda says as she playfully nudged Iris.

Barry was still in a trance. Iris felt prettier at Barry looking at her. He wanted to tell her how great she looked, but decided against it. He'd wait until nobody else could hear.

Linda saw how in awe Barry was looking at Iris and thought it was the cutest thing ever. Iris was grinning too. She could already see that they both had it bad. She was right about Iris giving the poor nerd a heart attack. He was definitely sprung. She almost wanted to laugh, but it was cute to see.

"So, have we decided where we're going?" Iris asks cheerfully.
Wally looked at Linda, then at Barry. The dude was still out of it. He could probably suggest that they go dumpster diving and he’d be all for it because of Iris. "No, not yet. Throw out some suggestions." Wally says.

"How about we go bowling and to a movie?" Linda suggests, while trying to help Iris out. She'd give her and Barry a chance to get close.

"I say that's perfect." Iris says.

"I agree." Barry says after his daydream.

"Then it's settled. Bowling and the movies. We can get food at the alley. They have the best chicken fingers." Wally says.

Iris clapped her hands and smiled. "He's right, they are the best. Are we taking one car?" She asks, though she asked that before.

"No. I already told you that you can drive your car." Wally says.

"Who's riding with me?" She asks.

Wally looked around. He wondered if he should suggest Barry, so that he and Linda could be alone. But that left Barry and Iris alone. Or suggest Linda so that he can keep them apart. Before he could get his thoughts together, Linda answered for him.

"Barry can. That'll give us alone time. No offense Barry." Linda says and smiles.

Barry lit up like a Christmas tree. "None taken." He says truthfully. He was so happy you could literally see stars in his eyes.

Iris was happy as hell that Linda suggested that. She loved Linda for being on her side that way. Wally decided to let it go. He did want to be alone with Linda. He couldn't control everything Barry and Iris did. Iris already knew how he felt and knew she'd honor that out of her love and respect for him. There wasn't much they could do anyway. They'd be in the same car, but he was making sure that either Iris followed him or he followed her.

"Great. Let's go." Iris says as she walks over to grab her jacket and threw it on.

Wally opened the door for everyone and locked up. Iris almost skipped to her car, with her happy puppy following closely behind. She and Barry got into her car. She started it up and looked over at him. He was the cutest thing walking. She smiled at his enthusiasm.

"You look great." He says happily. "Really great."

She smiled wider if that were even possible. "Thanks, Bear. You look great too. Really great. I wanted to tell you earlier."

"You did?" He asks in awe.

"I did." She says and smiles. She put her seatbelt on and Barry did the same.

Barry just kept looking at her and how absolutely beautiful she is. Her beauty was unmatched because she was beautiful on the inside as well. "You're really beautiful Iris." He says as his heart cheered for joy. He knew he had just told her that she looked great, but he had to tell her again.

"Thank you, Bear. You're really handsome yourself." She admits and smiles at him. She had
visions of kissing him dance in her mind.

"Thank you, Iris. I appreciate that. I told you beautiful girls don't always tell me that I'm handsome."

"Well, you are. I'm just telling you the truth." Iris says and smiles. She saw Wally pull off and she did the same. She followed him at a safe distance.

Barry was still in awe at looking at Iris. He stared at her full lips and seriously thought she had the prettiest lips he had ever seen. If he was lucky he'd get to kiss them. Then he thought of other things and remembered the pictures he saw earlier. "So you were a cheerleader?" He asks playfully.

Iris smiled and briefly glanced over at him. "I still am." She says and winked at him. "How did you know that? Wally told you?"

"No. I saw the picture in the living room." He replies. "So you're an actual cheerleader at school?"

"Yup. I've been doing it forever. How long have you been running?" She asks casually to get to know him better.

"Forever too. It kind of started by accident." Barry says.

"Accident?"

"Yeah. As you already know, I'm a huge nerd-"

"Adorable nerd." Iris corrects him and glances over at him.

Barry blushed. "Thanks. Well, I used to get chased home from school. Pretty fun, huh?"

Iris shook her head and smiled. "Hey, it is what it is."

"Well, my father got tired of me running from people and taught me how to fight. Then he put me in soccer. I didn't have enough coordination for that, so I took up track. Have been ever since."

"That's great, Bear. I guess it all worked out now that you're the fastest person on your team. That's amazing. They even call you The Flash." Iris says and smiles.

"What do people call you?" Barry asks.

Iris giggled. "Rosie. Because my name is Iris and I'm always happy."

Barry giggled too. "That fits you."

"It's really just the people at school. My dad and everyone else just call me Iris. Wally used to call me Irey when we were younger, but he let that go."

"Can I call you Rosie, then?" Barry asks.

Iris looked over at him and his adorable as hell face. "Of course. You can call me anything you want. I call you Bear." She says.

Barry felt like being bold. He wasn't imagining the vibes Iris was giving him. "Can I call you my girlfriend?" He asks hopefully and nervously. He prayed that she didn't turn him down.
Iris felt butterflies in her stomach. Her heart was actually doing cheers. She looked over at him again. "Yes. You can call me your girlfriend."

Barry internally celebrated at her saying that. "Good." He says. He's the happiest he's been in years.

"That doesn't even feel weird considering we just met and know hardly nothing about each other." Iris says.

"It doesn't feel weird. It kinda feels like destiny." Barry states happily.

"It does." Iris says. She then does something incredibly bold herself and reached over and put her hand on Barry's thigh. It almost, but not really, amazed her how strong his leg felt. Well, he is a runner, she thought.

Barry again celebrated internally. He placed his hand on top of hers. He felt so much warmth run through his body at Iris, his girlfriend, touching him.

"You do know we have to keep this a secret, right?" Iris asks, never taking her eyes off the road.

"Yeah, I know." Barry replies. "I'm a bad liar though."

"I know." Iris says and they both laugh. "We just have to be careful. We don't want Wally losing it. He'll kill you." She joked, though she was serious.

Barry gulped. "I know. I don't want to go against him but I can't pass this up." He says.

"I agree. I was really sad earlier thinking I had to give you up."

"Me too."

"So, I guess we really need to get to know each other since we're a couple now. Wow. That's crazy. But we're young and in college. That's what this time is for." Iris says.

"Yeah. Though I don't get nearly as crazy as the people at our school." Barry admits.

"Me neither." Iris says and laughs. "I mean, I have fun. I'm a cheerleader, I kind of have to. But some people go all out."

"I'm actually surprised you aren't dating one of the jocks at your school. Being you're a cheerleader and all." Barry says.

"I am dating a jock. A nerdy jock." She says and looks over at him and smiles again. "He just goes to another school."

"Nerdy jock sounds like such an oxymoron." Barry says and he and Iris laugh.

"It does. But I'll take it. Ok, so favorite things. I'll go first. Favorite color is red, food is brownies, I'm like obsessed, movie is The Wizard of Oz, holiday is Christmas, my favorite thing to do is cook and write. It's a tie. After cheering of course."

"You do know that brownie's aren't really food, right?" Barry teases.

"You, hush." Iris says.

"Well, my favorite color is red too, food pizza, movie, Harry Potter, holiday is Halloween, favorite
thing to do is read and run. It's a tie."

"When is your birthday?" Iris asks casually.

"January the 14th. When is yours?"

"June 24th. You're 20 right?" Iris asks.

"Yup. I'll be the big 21 next month. You're 20 too? I know Wally said you're a sophomore."

"Yes, I am. I can legally drink soon." Iris joked and they both laughed. "What do you like on your pizza?"

"Pepperoni and jalapenos." Barry answers.

"Really? This can never work." Iris jokes.

"Then I will never eat another slice of pepperoni and jalapeno pizza as long as I live. I'll give it up for this." Barry says.

"Aww, you don't have to do that. I was just yanking your chain." Iris says and laughs.

"What are you majoring in?"

"Journalism."

"That's perfect for you."

"Thanks. I think so too. I can't believe you're double majoring in Chemistry AND Physics. You really are a genius, aren't you?" Iris asks playfully.

"I guess you can call me that. My dad was a doctor, so I guess I get it from him."

"Do you want to be a doctor?" Iris asks.

"Yes and no. I want to be a scientist."

"Like Bill Nye?" Iris asks.

"Not necessarily. I just want to work in a lab."

"Do you want to be a mad scientist, Barry Allen?" iris asks playfully.

Barry started to laugh at that. "Are you teasing me, Iris West?"

"Nope." She says and giggles.

"No, I want to be a forensic scientist. I'd love to work for the FBI."

"That's amazing. What's your middle name?" Iris asks.

"Henry. That's my dad's name. My mother was Nora." Barry replies. He didn't want to add more not knowing what Iris knows about his past. Though he doesn't like to go around broadcasting that his father was wrongfully convicted of killing his mother and is sitting in jail because of it, but he'd tell Iris anything she wanted to know.

"Mine is Ann. Our mother's name was Kristina Ann. Why do you go by Barry and not Bart?" She
inquires.

"I don't know. My parents just always called me Barry." He replies.

"Well, I'm going to call you Bear. You know, since you like it and all." Iris says and smiles.

"I'm going to call you Rosie." He says and brightens just a little bit at that.

They rode in a comfortable silence for a little while. "You know you're gonna have to help me with Chemistry when I take it right? I now know there's a good reason I put off taking it."

"I'll be happy to help you." Barry says and smiles.

They ride a little more and pull up into a parking lot at the bowling alley. Iris had to remove her hand from Barry's leg to park and turn off the car and hated to do that. They now had to stop doing things like that while they were around Wally. She hoped that it wouldn't be too hard.

She looked over at him and smiled one last time. "It's showtime." Iris says. She grabbed her purse and got out the car and Barry followed. They walked up to Wally's car while he and Linda were getting out. "You guys ready to bowl?" Iris asks in a chipper tone.

"Yup. And you're going down." Wally says happily. He and Iris always trash talk when they go bowling. He was happy that she wasn't mad at him anymore.

"Oh, you are so going down Wally. You can't beat me." Iris says.

"I'm going to crush you." Wally says to his energetic little sister.

"We'll see about that." She says as she grabs Linda's arm and hooked it through hers and they walked off.

Barry and Wally just looked at each other and shrugged. They just followed their women into the bowling alley. Barry tried desperately not to stare at Iris. He couldn't help it. She was so gorgeous. And she was now his girlfriend. He felt like he was either dreaming and about to wake up, or he had hit the lottery or struck gold. If he was dreaming, he didn't want to wake up because this was sweet. Never in a million years would he have thought that he'd go home with his friend Wally, meet his little sister, hit it off with her and make her his girlfriend. Things like that just didn't happen to him. He asked a gorgeous and great girl to be his girlfriend and she said yes. He had to keep her a secret, but he could deal with that. What was going on with him and Iris was between them. Hopefully, they really got along, fell in love, and lasted. Then there wouldn't be anything anyone, meaning Wally, could say.

They walked into the bowling alley and were glad to see that it wasn't too crowded in there. They stopped at the counter. "So how are we doing this?" Wally asks.

"Get two lanes. That way we can compete." Iris says.

"So, it'll just be me and Linda against you and Barry?" He asks.

"No. We're going to do something different. We can play three games. You and Linda against me and Barry, me and Linda against you two, and then me and you against them. I figure I'd beat you twice, and then be on your team." Iris says and Linda and Barry laughed.

Barry really loved seeing the playful banter between Wally and Iris. He loved their relationship even if Wally was too protective over her.
"You sure are talking a lot of trash, shorty." Wally joked as he went up to pay for the games.

"I am not short!" Iris exclaimed in protest.

"Yeah, you are. I'm short and you're shorter than me." Linda joked.

"What about you, Barry? Do you think I'm short too?" She asks.

"Ummmm... Most people are short to me since I'm 6'2". Barry says.

Iris really doesn't know why, but she got a little turned on at Barry saying he's 6'2". She already knew he was tall, but just hearing his height made something ignite inside of her. "Wow, you're nearly a foot taller than I am." She says as she smiles at him.

"What are you, 5'3", 5'4"?" Barry asks.

"Yup. 5'4". I'm probably gonna have to stand on a box next to you." She jokes. She was thinking that she really might have to if she wanted to kiss him. Or she'd have to stand on her tip toes. Maybe she could just kiss him when they're laying down. *It won't matter the*, Iris thought and got lost in thinking that. She didn't notice that they all were staring at her.

"Are you ok, Iris?" Linda asks in mock concern.

Iris smiled. "Yeah, I'm fine. Just thinking of strategies to beat you guys." She jokes.

"It's shoe time." Wally says to interrupt that after he paid for their lanes.

Iris, Barry, and Linda walked up to the counter and got their shoes. "What are our lanes?" Iris asked.

"7 and 8." Wally says.

Iris grabbed Linda's arm and again pulled her off. She wanted to do that with Barry, but she knew she was being watched and had to be on her best behavior.

Iris wanted to tell Linda that Barry asked her to be his girlfriend, but decided she'd keep that part to herself. That was her and Barry's secret. Since it was just so fresh and new, they'd keep it to themselves. If it didn't work out, she wouldn't have to hear 'I told you so' from anybody. Especially Wally. He would flip if he knew they were a couple. She had a hard time believing it herself since they just met that morning. She was drawn to Barry for some reason. She felt a deep connection to him and really couldn't explain it. *But isn't that what happens when you meet someone?* She thought to herself. She couldn't help how she felt. If she and Barry were making a mistake, then it was their mistake. They were young. Now is the time to do crazy things like get with a guy you just met. She wouldn't do that with any other guy though. Wally knew him and he wasn't just friends with anyone. He brought him home for a reason. Iris liked to think that he brought him home for her.

She turned and saw Barry and Wally walking up to them. She again felt a little tug in her chest at seeing him. Barry was definitely adorably sexy. She couldn't get over how good he looked in that sweater. She already knew what was under it, and she really liked what she saw. Her Bear was kinda hot, if she did say so herself.

Barry's heart again did laps in his chest at seeing Iris smile at him. He already adored her. He could spend the rest of his life looking at her and that smile that would make the sun jealous. Iris was beautiful and she was his. His Iris.
Iris sat down to take off her boots and put her god awful bowling shoes on. Barry sat beside her on the bench and did the same. He forced himself not to sit too close. He wanted her to sit on his lap.

Wally and Linda did the same on opposite benches. "So are you guys ready?" Linda asks once her bowling shoes are on.

"Yup." Iris says.

"Which team is going first?" Wally asks.

"Ladies first. Them against us." Barry says.

Iris playfully bounced up and down and grabbed Linda. "Let's beat these boys, Lin." Iris says.

"My pleasure." Linda says.

"You're talking trash too?" Wally playfully asks and Linda just winked at him.

Barry sat down to man the score board. He put everyone's names in while he subtly watched Iris get her bowling ball. *God, she's hot. He thinks. She's fucking hot and she's my girlfriend.*

Iris glanced over at Barry and just took him in. Yup, she really liked Barry. Enough to make him her boyfriend. She got her ball and went to their lane.

"How did you enter our names?" Iris asked.

"I did it alphabetically. You then Linda. Me then Wally. It's your turn." Barry says as he stands and walks up and grabs a ball too. He walked up to their lane and looked over at Iris. He subtly winked at her and Iris started to blush. She was glad Wally couldn't see that. "Ladies, first." He offers.

Iris rolled her ball and hit a strike. She jumped up and down and Barry desperately wanted to pull her into his arms. "Beat that, Flash." She says playfully.

Barry himself rolled a strike. "You were saying?" He playfully asked Iris as they went back to their seats.

"That was just lucky." She says.

Wally and Linda got their balls and walked up to the lane. As soon as they were focused on bowling, Iris touched Barry. She needed to touch him. Barry entered their scores and smiled up at her.

They got into a mini stare off and weren't even paying attention to Wally and Linda. Linda cleared her throat and got Barry's attention. "You're lucky I caught that and not Wally."

"Right." Iris says. "Good job hitting that strike."

"We're tied because Wally got one too."

"Alright. He's playing hardball. We gotta beat them." Iris says.

"Hey. I'm sitting right here." Barry jokes.

"Sorry, Bear." Iris says and notices her slip. She awkwardly smiled at him and got up from her seat. "My turn."
Wally walked up to the table. "Is anybody else hungry, cause I'm starving."

"Yeah, I kinda am. And it's my treat since you paid for the games." Barry says.

"Well hand over your money, Allen." Wally says.

Barry laughed and dug in his pocket for his wallet and gave Wally his credit card.

"I'll go since I know what everybody likes." Wally says.

"I'll go with you." Linda says to be alone with Wally, and to leave Barry and Iris alone. She grabbed his hand as they walked up to the food section.

Barry got up and walked up to Iris near the ball return. He stood dangerously close to Iris. "I guess we have to wait until they come back."

"I guess we should." Iris says and returns to their seats. She sat down and again Barry sat dangerously close to her. He put his hand beside him and Iris did the same. She slowly interlocked their fingers. She again felt warmth. *I'm going to marry him*, popped into her head. Why she will never know.

Ironically, Barry was thinking the exact same thing. *I'm going to marry her.* The thought ran through his head and he looked over at Iris. He seriously wondered if she knew what he was thinking. He hoped not, because that could scare someone you just met. He wondered why he thought that though. He just met her and wanted to marry her.

He looked over at her and smiled. "Iris…" Barry began. *Do I tell her? I shouldn't tell her this. It will send her running.* He just got her. He didn't want to scare her off.

"Yes, Bear?" Iris asks as she looks at him and smiles. Her earlier visions of kissing his face flashed through her mind. Visions of marrying him too. This is crazy as hell, she thought. Pure insanity. She wanted to laugh at how off kilter she was at the moment.

"I'm…I…" He tries to say but can't really form the words. He wanted to tell her that. Other things too. The bad things he was thinking. He doesn't want to send her running. She really would think he was the weird white guy she found in her brother's room.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed it. Reviews and kudos are hugs!
"I think I can arrange that."

Chapter Summary

More of the double date, more girl talk, more couple talk.

Chapter Notes

Thank you for reading. I hope you all enjoy this latest chapter.

P.S. I know y'all hate Wally but I promise he means well. No different than Joe on the show. I didn't mean to make y'all hate him. :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Barry decided to take back telling Iris what he's thinking. He knew he'd really ruin things with his premature declaration. He didn't want him and Iris to be the shortest relationship in history. They had time. He'd be there for a month. Granted Wally didn't find out about them and kick him out the house. He would make the absolute most out of getting to know her better. She was the loveliest thing in the world to him. And out of all the bad shit that happened to him, his getting scholarships and going to college excluded, he already knew that Iris would most definitely be the best thing to ever happen to him. She gave him an energy he had never felt before in his life. He wanted to write to his father in prison about her. He couldn't tell anyone else in the world about her, but he could tell his father.

He just looked at her and the expectant look on her face. He knew she was wondering what he was going to say to her. He couldn't tell her this. He just couldn't.

"Um…Nevermind." He says.

Iris looked at him a little suspiciously. "Are you sure?" She asks.

"Yes, I'm sure. It wasn't important anyway." He took the time to rub his thumb over her hand. He liked how small her hand was compared to his. He liked how small she was compared to him. She actually was short, despite saying that she isn't. Barry kind of liked that she was short. He felt like he could protect her for some reason.

"Ok." Iris says and decides to let it go. She had the good thought that he would tell her if it was something really important. She was really curious as to what he was going to say to her. She knew it couldn't be what her crazy mind had concocted. She and her crazy little mind of hers had threw together that she would marry Barry one day. Sure she believed in romance and fairytales, just a little, but to actually think that she would marry the stray puppy Wally brought home less than a day ago. Less than a day ago and he was already her boyfriend. How crazy was that? She did give a little thought to them actually not liking each other and being stuck in that house together. But somehow, she didn't think that would be the case. Barry came into her life for a reason. She had to believe that. She could have gone forever and not met Wally's roommate. But she did and was instantly drawn to him. She couldn't help that. Neither of them could. She couldn't help being
attracted to the adorable nerd in Wally's room. Now he was her boyfriend. He was her boyfriend and she hadn't even kissed him yet. She needed to do that soon. That might be a deal breaker.

"I just realized something." Iris says after their short silence.

"What's that?" Barry asked as he continued to stroke her hand with his thumb.

"We're a couple." Iris says.

"We are. Are you regretting that? Did I ask you to be my girlfriend too soon? Will this be the shortest relationship in history?" Barry rambles on in a joking tone, though he would be crushed if she said yes.

"No. I'm not regretting it. You didn't ask me to be your girlfriend too soon. But we're a couple and we haven't even kissed yet." Iris says.

"Do you want me to kiss you right now? Because I will." Barry offers.

Iris started to blush. She did want him to kiss her right then and there. But he couldn't. "Yes, I want you to kiss me right now. But you can't. You know that."

"Wally isn't even around right now." Barry points out.

"Oh, yes he is. He'll pop up as soon as your lips touch mine." Iris says surely.

Barry opened his mouth to respond, and sure enough, Wally and Linda were walking up to them. He and Iris immediately snatched their hands away from each other. They both wanted to continue holding hands, but that was impossible. They both then thought of the movie they'd go see. Iris immediately started hoping that Wally and Linda wanted to see something different than her and Barry.

"Hey, you guys." Linda says happily. She thinks she saw them move their hands away from each other, but she can't be too sure. Iris and Barry were ridiculously cute. Their attraction to each other was evident and again, ridiculously cute. They had a lot of chemistry too. So much so that she felt it. It's like you could cut it with a knife. Iris was always happy and bubbly, but she somehow seemed happier around Barry. And he was seriously smitten and happy around her. The boy's ears stayed red. Linda saw the way he looked at Iris and could tell he had it bad. Iris too. The funniest part was how subtle they thought they were being. The good thing is Wally isn't as observant as she is. Sure he noticed something, but he didn't talk about it in depth. He probably really just thought that Iris was honoring his request to not date his friend. Iris always listened to Wally, so she knew he thought that this time wouldn't be any different.

"Hey, Lin." Iris says and smiles.

"Hey, Lin." Barry repeats and they all chuckle

"What did you guys get? I'm starving. All I had was a yogurt hours ago after the huge breakfast I fixed." Iris says.

Wally kind of just stood there and watched what was going on. He thought that Iris and Barry were sitting pretty close, but at least they weren't touching. He felt like a dad chaperoning his daughter's date. He has no idea why he feels that way, but that's the way it was.

"I got us all chicken fingers and fries. Plus some mozzarella sticks and onion rings to share." Wally says as he hands Barry his credit card back. "It should be ready soon." He and Linda could have
waited, but he felt the need to check on Iris and Barry. He wasn't going to do that anymore and just enjoy their time out together. He wanted to savor all his moments with Linda because they'd be going back to school soon enough and he'd have to go without seeing her at least until Spring Break.

Iris stood. "Well, I guess we can take our turns while we wait. I didn't wanna go and have you think I cheated." She says as she walks up to the ball return.

Barry had to force himself to not follow Iris with his eyes. She just looked so ridiculously good with those jeans on. He had the impure thought of wondering what was under them. He shook the indecency from his mind and stood too.

Linda looked on at how cute Barry and Iris were. She thought it was a shame the way they had to fight their attraction to each other around Wally. She figured it was time for Wally to let that crap go. She saw that it was physically hard for them to not look at each other. Though Barry's eyes did roam and linger when he thought no one was looking. And Iris. With her being such a hands on person, she knew it was killing her to not touch Barry the way she wanted to. It was still cute to watch them fight it. They couldn't be more obvious with their feelings of attraction.

Iris grabbed her ball and Barry did the same. "You know, you should quit now. You're not gonna win." She says playfully as she heads for her lane.

"You sure talk a lot of trash, don't you Iris?" Barry asks.

"I can't help it. Bowling is my thing." She says. She rolled her ball down the lane and hit another strike. She again jumped up and down and it made Barry's pulse quicken. He could look at Iris forever. "See, Barry. I'm good."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah." He says and walks up to his lane. He rolled another strike too. "See, Iris. I'm good."

Iris smiled widely. "Don't use my words on me."

"Don't keep talking trash, then." Barry says.

To anyone else, they were just trash talking. It was pretty clear they were flirting to Linda. It was actually hilarious. "I guess it's my turn." She says as she walks up to get her ball.

Wally knew Iris talked a load of trash every time they went bowling, but for some reason, it seemed like more than that. Iris seemed happier to him. That made him feel good. The fact that Barry was the reason for her increased happiness unsettled him a little. He brushed it off because they were there to have fun. He was spending time with the two women he loved dearly. He had missed the hell out of Iris and Linda. He was going to make the most of it.

Linda rolled a spare. She mouthed 'Sorry' to Iris, but Iris didn't even care. She just shrugged and smiled at her.

Wally took his turn and rolled another strike. "Ok, we're going back for the food." He says and grabs Linda's hand.

Barry manned the score board and Iris just casually watched him. She liked this guy. "Are you having fun?" She asks.

He looked up at her and could swear he saw diamonds around her. He smiled at her. "I'm having a lot of fun. A great time. The only thing that would make this better is if we were here by
ourselves." Barry says.

"I know. Wally is giving this a huge buzz kill. I think I'll have to talk to Linda about taking him somewhere so that we can be alone."

"You think she'll do that?" He asks hopefully.

"Yes. I kinda told her a few things about us." Iris says and smiles.

"And she isn't going to tell Wally?" He inquired in concern.

"Nope. Linda and I are very close. She's like my sister. She's awesome and she's on our side. She won't tell Wally." Iris confessed.

Barry lit up a little at that. "That's great. Really great."

Iris lit up a little more too. "It is." She says.

"So, you really want us to be alone?" He asks.

"What are you thinking? I'm not that kind of girl, Bartholomew Henry Allen." She teased.

"Did you just call me by my whole name? Really?" He asks quizzically.

"Yes, I did." Iris says and smiles.

"I wasn't trying to suggest anything. We just met. I think that's moving too fast. Don't you think?" He asks in concern.

"Yeah, I do. I was just joking before. I knew you weren't trying to suggest we sleep together or something. We're already moving fast enough. Even for the fastest guy on his track team." Iris says.

Barry breathed a sigh of relief. "Good. I thought you thought the wrong thing. I do want another hug. A kiss maybe." He says as he playfully winks at her.

"I think I can arrange that." Iris says and beams at him.

"Arrange what?" Wally asks. He's eating the remainder of a French fry. How he managed that with his arms full of food and drinks they don't understand.

Linda sat Barry and Iris' food down on the table. She subtly looked at Iris and wondered what she would come up with.

"Barry was just wondering if I would fix French toast again for breakfast sometime soon." Iris lies quickly and swiftly.

Barry smiled awkwardly up at Wally. "What can I say? I can't pass up home cooked meals. You know how our meals are." He says.

"Yeah, I do. I've been dying for Iris' cooking." Wally says and sits down.

"Who taught you how to cook?" Barry asks casually.

"Our Grandma Esther." Iris says happily. Grandma Esther was a huge asset to the family after Kristina died. She started teaching Iris to cook at a young age. She taught Iris everything she knows
which made Iris a terrific cook.

"I swear I'm looking forward to Christmas dinner." Wally says.

"Even though I've never had it, I am too." Barry says and smiles.

"Yeah, you need a Christmas meal. Put a little meat on those skinny bones." Iris jokes and pats his stomach. She almost forgot about the six pack for a minute. It startled her how rock hard his abs really were. She got the naughtiest thoughts ever and thought of how much fun she could have with Barry's body.

She removed her hand quickly, because she didn't mean to touch him. Not at all. She seriously couldn't help herself.

Barry was glad she touched him, he just wished it could've not happened around others. Especially others like Wally. He got aroused at her rubbing his abdomen. He had sick, really sick and impure thoughts about her hand going lower. He knows he turned red. Knows he did.

He decided to play that off and not draw too much attention to his arousal. "I do not need any meat on my bones. I have to stay thin to run." He was becoming increasingly more aroused and needed to step away for a moment. "I'll be right back. I need to wash my hands. Who knows what's on those balls." He says awkwardly, turns redder, and walks away.

Linda subtly looked at Iris and smiled. These two were the cutest, most awkward things walking. Poor Barry was tripping all over himself. And Iris was just like a little ball of enthusiasm and energy. How she managed to be bubblier and more fun loving was seriously beyond Linda.

Iris took in how Linda was looking at her. She needed a distraction. She needed a girl talk sessions pronto. "I have to go to the ladies room." She says and abruptly stands up. She grabbed Linda because she needed her at the moment.

Linda had a feeling Iris would do that after what just happened. "Do you really need to go or did you just need to get away?" She asks as they walk towards the bathroom.

"A little bit of both." Iris replies truthfully.

"I figured that."

Barry got himself together in the bathroom and actually did wash his hands. He was getting anxious. He walked back to their areas and only saw Wally stuffing his face. "Where are the girls?" He asks as she sits down and starts to eat too. He wondered if he should wait for Iris and Linda. But he decided to go ahead and eat since Wally was.

"They went to the ladies room. You know how girls are. They have to do that in teams." He jokes and Barry laughs.

They finally make their way to the bathroom and Iris and Linda both go in. They were standing at the sink washing their hands when Iris turned to face her. "You have got to keep Wally occupied. Like, really. I mean really keep him occupied." Iris says in a hurry.

Linda burst out laughing at that. "Really? I figured that too. Do I even have to ask why?"

"I'm not going to sleep with him, Lin. At least not yet. But, damn, I want to." Iris confesses truthfully.
Linda laughed again. "Yeah, I think he wants to sleep with you too. Though that isn't all I feel. The guy is already sprung. He looks at you like actually hung each star in the sky. He's got it bad. You do too. I feel like Wally and I are intruding. It's a good thing Wally isn't as perceptive as I am, Iris." She says.

"Oh, goodness. Really? I'm really trying to fight it. I'm not touching him nearly as much as I want to. I can't believe I just met this guy this morning. I feel like I've known him forever. What the hell is going on?" Iris asks.

"I don't know. I remember the first time I saw Wally. He kind of took my breath away. It was my first day of high school and I saw him. Wanted to look at him forever. Do you look at him like that?" Linda asks.

"Yes. I could look at his adorable nerd face forever. I just always want to reach out and touch him. It feels electric when I touch him. Like there are actual sparks. While you guys were getting the food, we held hands." Iris says.

"I knew I saw your hands break apart when we came back. I knew I saw that. I thought I was just imagining it and let it go. I don't think Wally saw." Linda says.

"I hope he didn't. Lin, I had the fleeting thought that I was going to marry him. Isn't that weird?" Iris asks.

"Not to a hopeless romantic like me. I thought that when I first saw Wally. I still think that. I am going to marry him." She says. "As soon as he asks."

"You're not helping." Iris says and they both laugh.

"I'm just being honest. I don't know why you're freaking out. I think you're really going to have to put forth some effort to keeping this thing a secret. Because right now, you aren't doing a good job. I see heart eyes on both of you." Linda states with conviction.

"This is going to be hard, Linda. He's staying at the house. While we were cooking, I swear I was thinking that I could tuck him away in my room. How can I do that with Wally hating the idea and being in the house too?" Iris asks.

"Well, I'm going to do what you asked. I'll keep him occupied. I'll keep him out of the house as much as possible. You are the sunniest, most outgoing and fun loving person I know. And it's worse now that he's here. He might be your soul mate, Iris."

Iris giggled. "He might be. And it's the weirdest shit ever. I just met him!" She exclaimed.

"But isn't that how it's supposed to be when you meet someone? You should be giddy. And want to touch them and see them again. Spend all your time with them. So what you just met him? Who wants to meet someone and not feel anything? That's when you should be worried." Linda says.

Iris thinks for a moment. "You're right. Thanks Lin. Now let's go before they think we got lost in here." She jokes.

"You're welcome. My motives for wanting to keep Wally occupied are totally selfish." She says and playfully winks at Iris.

"Well thank goodness for that." Iris says and they both giggle. They lock arms again and walk back to the table. They find both guys stuffing their faces, which was to be expected.
"Took you two long enough." Wally says between bites.

"Hush, Wally." Iris playfully retorts.

"We weren't even gone that long." Linda adds.

"Yeah, just long enough to talk about us." Wally says.

"We were not talking about you two." Iris lies. She looked down at her adorable puppy and felt all warm and tingly inside. She just started to eat her food while the others did the same. They really needed to get this double date on the road. They needed to finish bowling and head for the movies. Then after, Iris was looking forward to some alone time with Barry. Get to know him better, actually touch him without Wally's disapproving eyes staring at them. She could actually spend some time in his arms. She's been thinking about that since she met him. She wondered if she would feel the same way if she and Barry had met under different circumstances. What if he had gone to her school and been in one of her classes? What if she just met him randomly at the mall or something? At the gas station while she was pumping her gas? At the gym while she was working out? Would she still be this drawn to him? This attracted? This giddy and ready to touch him at all times?

Who knows? Maybe she would. Maybe she wouldn't. All she knows is that now she really likes this guy and is happy to have met him. She hated that he was Wally's friend, but there isn't a damn thing she can do about that. Not a damn thing. Wally would just have to be in the dark about them. It was better that way.

"Does anybody have any idea of what movie they want to see?" Linda asks casually.

"Not really." Iris answers. Then she thinks for a minute. "No, I've got it. I want to see Magic Mike XXL."

They all look at her. A grin starts to form on Linda's face. "Oooh, good idea Iris. I'm in." She says.

Wally was now looking at Linda like she had lost it. "The movie about the male strippers? No way I'm going to see that." He says.

"What? It's just a movie." Iris says. She was completely joking, but the look on Wally and Barry's faces was indeed priceless.

"Just a movie? You expect us to sit through a movie where dudes take their clothes off? Really, Iris?" Walls asks incredulously.

"Fine. Linda and I will go see that, and you two can go see something manly." Iris jokes. She took in the look of horror on Barry's face. She figured he wasn't at all cool with that idea.

Barry looked at Iris and thought she was deviating from the plan too much. How would they hold hands in two different theatres? And as bad as he wanted to hold her hand and be close to her, he wasn't going to see a male stripper movie. No way, no how.

"And leave you two alone to drool over those dudes in that movie? I don't think so." Wally says while shaking his head.

"What's the big deal?" Linda asks, while joining in on the fun Iris is having at the guys' expense.
Barry still has not said anything. He's just eating his food. He felt the same way Wally did.

"What's the big deal? Really? I'm not letting my girl and my sister watch a movie where some dudes take their clothes off for women. Nope. Not happening. Right, Barry?" He asks as he looks at Barry to help him out.

"Uh….I have to agree with Wally. I …know neither one of you is my girlfriend or sister, but….yeah….I agree." He says and turns red from the lie and the situation at hand.

"Fine. We'll just go see it one day on a girl's day." Iris says and goes back to eating her food.

"Still unacceptable." Wally says.

"Why?" Linda asks.

"I just told you guys why." Wally says almost sternly.

"Ok, but what if you and Barry wanted to go see Magic Makayla or something? We'd let you and we wouldn't be upset." Iris says.

"Iris. I just know you have to be kidding now." Wally says as he deadpans her.

"I was kidding, but good to know where you two stand."

"You are just full of surprises today, aren't you?" Wally asks.

Barry breathed a sigh of relief for some reason. He just had the thought in the back of his mind that if Iris wanted to see a movie like that, and he looks nothing like the guys in the movie, that she might not really find him to be attractive. He couldn't be a stripper, even in his wildest dreams. He grabbed one of the mozzarella sticks and dipped it in the sauce as a distraction. Iris really threw him for a loop with that Magic Mike thing.

Iris watched how Barry became a little uneasy about her talking about a stripper movie. He seemed lost in thought. She watched him go for a mozzarella stick and eat it, sloppily, and drip sauce down his mouth. She instinctively reached her hand out to wipe his mouth.

Her action surprised everyone involved. She wasn't supposed to do that. Barry seemed to enjoy it. But she felt Wally looking at her. She just grabbed a napkin and wiped the sauce from her fingers. She felt Wally's disapproving eyes staring at her.

Wally just looked at Iris and the thing she just did with wide eyes. He actually watched her rub sauce from Barry's mouth. And he seemed to enjoy it. He just stared at Barry and Iris in disbelief. He knew his sister was a touchy feely person, but this was almost shocking to him. "Really?" He asks.

"What?" She asks in an innocent voice.

"What? What are you, Barry's human bib?" He asks.

"No, Wally. It was just a reflex. No big deal. Shut up." Iris says tensely.

"I'm pretty sure Barry is capable of wiping his own mouth."

"Sure he is. I wasn't implying that he couldn't. I thought I told you to shut up." Iris says as she scowls at him.
Wally watched Barry turn 50 shades of red. He didn't want to make the dude feel worse. He then looked at Linda, who miraculously looked like Iris was looking. He thinks he made everyone else uncomfortable with his reaction. He decides to lighten the load. "I'm just kidding, Iris. Can't I get you back for messing with me?" He asks.

"Of course you can. It wouldn't be us if you didn't." She needs this bowling extravaganza finished so they can end this chaperoned secret first date. "You guys ready to finish bowling?" She asks and stands.

"Definitely. We can really get the game going now that eating is out of the way." Linda says as she stands too.

"Yup. It's time for the real game to start." He says distractedly. Iris kind of riled him up. He was ready to end this damn double date. Pull Iris into his arms. Touch her and have her touch him.

"Barry, it's time for us to beat these girls." Wally says and stands.

"You're not going to win, Wally. Just accept that." Iris says playfully. She's glad the tension of what just happened has left the atmosphere. She didn't mean to touch Barry and wipe his mouth. She really didn't. She just wanted to touch him all the time. She couldn't help it. She walked up to the ball return and got her ball.

All eyes were on her as she walked up. Wild horses couldn't make Barry stop looking at her. She was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. She truly was. He walked up to get his ball as well.

"You need to accept that your big brother is better than you are." Wally calls at her.

"You two are relentless." Linda jokes to help lighten the mood even more. She knew Iris was a little perturbed by her actions. They both knew how Wally was. She also knew he was trying to mask how he was really feeling. This was already a mess. She hoped it didn't get messier.

"Hey, there's no rivalry like sibling rivalry." Wally says.

"And I'm clearly the better sibling." Iris jokes and Barry and Linda laugh.

"Just shut up and bowl, Irey." Wally counters.

"Oh my god. You haven't called me Irey in years."

"You haven't gotten on my nerves this much in years."

"I'm telling Dad." Iris jokes and they all laugh again.

Barry loved the banter between Iris and Wally. It really made him wish he had a sibling to fight and bicker with. It gave him more insight into his new girlfriend and friend. Despite their bickering, anyone could see that Iris and Wally loved each other a lot. He wished he had that. He really did. The people that cared the most about him were gone and sitting in a jail cell. But being with them made him feel like he was a part of their family. He and Iris had to make it. They had to.

He got his ball and walked up next to Iris. "After you, my dear." He whispered.

"Don't try to sweet talk me." She whispered back and then winked at him. She rolled another strike. She jumped around excitedly. She waited until Barry rolled his ball to yell out, "Gutter ball!"

It didn't matter because Barry still rolled a strike. He cheered in triumph. "I see that didn't work."
He says to Iris on their way back to their seats.

"It will next time." She says once they're seated. While Wally and Linda were up, she took her hand and rubbed his thigh. That set off a spark in Barry. She had riled him up again. He quickly put in all of their scores and looked over at Iris who had her poker face on. She just stood and walked up to the ball return when Linda and Wally were finished. Barry quickly followed her and snatched her ball from her hands. He held it up over his head. It was the cutest thing ever to see her jump to try and reach it. He wanted so badly to bend down and kiss her through her cute attempts to get her ball made him want to continue. "Give me my ball! That is so unfair. You know I'm vertically challenged." Iris says as she jumps again.

"No, you're just short." He jokes.

"I am not short!" Iris says and jumps up again.

"Yes, you are. It's cute. Actually, I find it a little sexy." He whispers under his breath and lowers the ball and gives it to her.

Iris smiled once she finally got her ball back from him. "Thanks. I think the fact that you're tall is a little sexy." She whispers under her breath as well.

"You have no idea how badly I want to kiss you." Barry whispers again.

"Yes, I do. I badly want you to kiss me." She whispers as well.

Wally and Linda watched the exchange in silence. Linda hoped that Wally wouldn't blow up because Barry and Iris were clearly flirting with each other. Sure it was just fun and playful flirting, but there were pheromones running heavily between them.

"They're just playing. Let them have their fun." Linda says as she grabs his arm.

He looked down at Linda. "I am." Is all he says.

After much trash talking, flirting, and playing, Linda and Iris won the first game, though the guys insisted they let them win. Wally and Iris won the second game. Barry and Linda were no match for that competitive duo. And Barry and Iris won the last game. Iris won with every team she was on.

"Can we all just acknowledge that I am the queen of bowling? Can we?" Iris asks as they change back into their regular shoes.

"I want a rematch." Wally says to his defense.

"Sure, you can have a rematch. I'm going to win then too. Face it Wally, I'm the queen of bowling." Iris says happily.

"You're the queen of trash talking, that's what you are." Wally says.

"Yeah, you are. How can the smallest person have the biggest mouth?" Linda jokingly asks.

"What about you, Barry? Care to join in?" She asks once her jacket is on.

"Uh…nope. I agree with you. You're the queen of bowling. No doubt about it." Barry says.

"See there Wally and Linda? Even Barry knows the deal and I just met him." Iris says as they head for the door. She wanted to kiss him for agreeing with her.
"He just doesn't want to hurt your feelings. He'll feel the same way we feel once he really gets to
know you." Wally says.

There was actually no doubt about that. Barry was already feeling something for her. He had no
choice in the matter. He liked Iris a lot. He had the time of his life bowling with her.

They all walked out to the cars. Barry had to strongly resist the urge to grab Iris' hand. Iris
practically bounced to her car and once they got in she just turned to look at him. "So, did you have
a great time?" She asks.

"I had the best time. The only thing that would make it better is if Wally wasn't there." Barry
confesses truthfully.

"I know. But we have a movie to go see, and then there's later." She says and starts the car up.

"Oh yeah, I forgot about later." Barry jokes.

Iris looked over at him and smiled. "You did not forget about later and you know it."

"You're right, I didn't. I can't wait until later."

"Neither can I. And Wally won't be there. Yay!" She says and claps and Barry can't help but laugh.

"I just thought about something though." He puts on his seatbelt just as Iris does.

"What?"

"Your dad. Will we have to hide from him too?" Barry questions in concern.

"Yes, but it'll be easier with him. He works a lot. Plus he minds his business. We still have to be
discreet and respectful." Iris says and pulls off because Wally did. She again followed him at a safe
distance.

"Ok. Cool. I was a little worried about that."

"Yeah, he's protective over me as well, but he's not as bad as Wally. I guess he would be worse if
there was no Wally. Having them look out for me is a blessing and a curse." Iris admits.

"I get that." Barry says.

"That's a relief." Iris says. She again reached over and placed her hand on Barry's thigh.

"Are you trying to rile me up again?"

She glanced over at him and took in the expression on his face. He looked as content as she felt.
"Rile you up? What are you talking about?" She asks in mock confusion.

"What am I talking about? You really don't know?" He questions almost incredulously. He couldn't
believe that she had no idea what she was doing to him. How she was making him feel.

She rubbed her hand along his thigh. "Nope. I have no idea." She never takes her eyes off the road
as she's stroking his thigh.

She knew exactly what he was talking about. He was willing to play her little game. "Really?"

"Nope. No idea, Bear." She keeps her eyes on the road and continues to rub.
Barry then decided to really play her game. He reached his arm towards her and started to rub her thigh. Iris let out a small gasp at him touching her. She was going to try and pretend that she didn't notice his hand there. He started to rub his hand as well. It felt so good to actually touch her. Iris started to enjoy him rubbing her thigh. So much so that she swerved her car. "Are you trying to get us killed?" She asks once she recovers and pretends that his hand isn't there.

Barry removed his hand. "No, I'm not trying to get us killed. Sorry."

"There's no need to apologize. I'd be all for it if I wasn't driving."

"Well, we will be at the dark theatre soon." Barry says.

Iris briefly glanced over at him and smiled. "Yes, we will be. And Wally won't see a thing."

"He sure saw a lot at the bowling alley."

"Yes, he did. I really didn't mean to touch you that much. I couldn't help myself. I feel this overwhelming urge to put my hands on you all the time." Iris admits.

"Really? Well, I have this overwhelming urge to hold you in my arms and kiss you." Barry admits himself.

"Oh my god, Barry. I'm almost about to say to hell with this movie and go home. But Wally would surely follow me there. It would be pointless. I want to do that so bad. I just wish he would really spend the entire day and night with Linda."

"Have you thought about telling her that?" He asks.

"Way ahead of you, Bear. Way ahead of you. I'm so glad Linda is on our side. I love her."

"I'm glad she's on our side too. Linda seems pretty cool. I like her. She and Wally make a cute couple."

Iris looked over at Barry. "Not cuter than us." She says and smiles widely.

"Of course not. I can't imagine a couple cuter than us."

"That's because it's impossible." Iris says and playfully winks at him.

"So since we got us not seeing Magic Mike out of the way, what kind of movie do you want to see?"

"Something Wally won't want to see. I know you know him well enough by now to know what he won't like. I'd be willing to see a zombie movie or something because I know he won't want to even though I hate zombie movies."

"Yeah, this really isn't going to work. I love zombie movies." Barry replies.

"Damn." She says and laughs. "Well I guess I'll have to force myself to watch one."

"For me?"

"For you." She smiles and he blushes.
When Wally and Linda settled in his car he started it up and just sat there. She could tell he was thinking about something. She already knew what.

"Penny for your thoughts." She says as she looks over at him.

"Did it seem like we were intruding on Barry and Iris' date to you?" He asks.

Linda almost didn't want to have this conversation. She knew how Wally was and how he felt about that, and didn't want to get on his bad side. "No. Not really. It just seemed like they were having fun getting to know each other." She lies. She figured she had to.

"I thought that too at first, and then something just changed. I really felt like we were the third and fourth wheels, which doesn't make sense. But it's like we were training wheels on a bike that should come off since the kid already knows how to ride. Does that make sense to you?" He asks as he looks over at her.

It made perfect sense to Linda because she did feel like they were intruding. Barry and Iris were clearly on their first date. A little awkwardness, then that went away after they got more comfortable with each other. Then it started to feel like Barry and Iris were already a couple and had been for a while. It did feel exactly how Wally described though they were on a date too. They had been together so long that their dates felt really natural and nothing to make a big fuss over. Which meant they knew each other really well and hoped that Wally didn't pick up on her lying.

"It makes sense, but I didn't feel that way. Not entirely." She says regrettably. She didn't want Wally to feel like he was losing his mind, but she didn't want to give him any ammunition to go postal.

"What do you mean?" He asks as they buckle up and he pulls off. He looked in his rearview mirror and saw Iris pull off as well.

"I mean, I saw instances where it looked like they were flirting with each other, but that's all." She lies again.

"Oh you mean when she rubbed his stomach, or when she wiped his mouth off. Can't forget he played keep away with her ball. That's classic flirting." Wally says just a little tensely.

Linda almost sighed. "No, not those parts because I know how hands on Iris is. The ball part did seem like flirting. That's why I told you to let them have their fun." She lied once again because Wally was more observant than she gave him credit for.

"Yeah, we know Iris is a toucher. I don't think Barry can handle that. I can't blame her for the ball part. I guess maybe she really did pay attention to the talk we had." Wally says.

"What talk?" Linda asks feigning knowledge of said talk.

"I told her to stop flirting with him and leading him on. I told him she was off limits, but I doubt he can stick to that because of how Iris is."

"Is that why she said she wasn't coming earlier?" She asks though she knows the answer to that.

"Yeah. And she was mad as hell at me. I had to force her to hug me. I didn't like that at all." He
"I'm sure you didn't." They drive in silence for a bit, just listening to the music. "Can I ask you a question?"

"Yeah."

"Promise not to get mad?" She asks and Wally looks over at her.

"Yeah."

"Would it be so bad if they did get together?"

Wally looked over at Linda. He looked in his rearview mirror and saw Iris' car but couldn't really see anything but her and Barry. He looked back at Linda and didn't say anything.

"Forget I asked." Is all she says.

Both cars continued to drive along until they got to the movie theatre. Barry and Iris found Linda and Wally waiting on them in front and Iris could tell Wally had a lot on his mind.

"What's wrong with you?" She asks.

"What? Nothing." He lies. He sized Iris and Barry up. He didn't care what Linda said. Those two were flirting heavily. He was already feeling like they were intruding again.

"You are such a liar." Iris replies.

Wally decided to change the subject. "So, what movie are we going to see?"

"I want to see Jurassic World." Linda says, hoping that Barry and/or Iris won't want to see it.

"I'd like to see Terminator Genisys." Iris offers. She subtly looked over at Linda.

Wally knew exactly what they were doing. Iris and Linda were surely up to something. They probably planned ahead and came up with that either in the bathroom or iris' room before they left. Pick different movies so that they'd have to separate. Oldest trick in the book, and he wasn't falling for it. "What about you Barry?" He asks casually.

"I think I'm gonna go with Iris' pick and vote for Terminator Genisys too. You know I love Terminator movies."

"Yeah, me too." Wally says, and he does. But this was purely selfish. He was doing this essentially just to fuck with Linda and Iris. He was throwing a monkey wrench into their plan. "Sorry Linda. You got outvoted. We'll come and see that another time." He grabs her hand in his and smiles before heading for the door.

Iris, Barry and Linda exchanged glances before she started to walk away with Wally. Iris and Barry reluctantly followed. Wally was at the ticket booth paying for his and Linda's tickets. When he saw
Barry and Iris walk up, he just smirked at them. "You can pay for your own date." He says sarcastically to Barry and pulls Linda with him.

"He is being such a dick." Iris says. "I want to slap him."

Barry just looked at Wally walk off. He had a plan. A small mischievous grin formed on his face. "I have an idea." He says as he looks down at Iris.

"You want to get tickets to a totally different movie, don't you?" Iris asks.

Barry was a little taken aback because that's exactly his plan. "How did you know I was thinking that?"

Iris grinned. "Because I know how to read people. And that would really sock it to Wally and his condescending ass."

Barry looked up at the screen and then his watch. "Actually, there is a Jurassic World starting around the same time. Are you up for that?"

"I'll see anything as long as we can see it alone. I can't wait to see the look on Wally's face." Iris exclaims happily.

Her excitement made Barry giddy as well. "Me neither."

"Do you want me to buy the tickets since you got the food?"

Barry looked at her like she had lost it. "Are you kidding? I'd be a terrible boyfriend if I did that." He says and pays for their tickets. They walk up and stand a few people away from Wally and Linda. Iris playfully waved at Linda to distract herself from wanting to hold Barry's hand. He was trying to think of how Wally would handle them one upping him. It might not go over well. "Wally's going to kill us, right?" He jokes.

"Yup. But right now, I'm not worried about Wally. He should focus on Linda. He hasn't seen her in months. She should be his main priority."

"I agree because you're mine."

Iris looked up at him and smiled. "And you're mine. I'm about to take the name Wally out of my vocabulary. I know he feels the need to chaperone, but we are not his kids."

"Right. So we're making a pact? No more Wally talk?"

"No more Wally talk." Iris says and lightly brushed his arm.

They started taking tickets for the movie, and they finally got up to where Wally and Linda were standing in line for popcorn and drinks. They all got what they wanted and Wally and Linda headed off towards their theatre. Wally finally noticed that Barry and Iris weren't behind him and Linds.

"Where are you two going?" He asks rather abruptly.

"Oh, we decided to see something different." Iris says and smiles widely at her overprotective brother.

Linda seemed impressed and smiled. She admired them pulling one over on Wally. He looked at Barry and Iris and the smiles on their faces. He then looked at Linda and saw that she had a small smile on her face. She seemed amused. "Whose idea was that?" He asks. He had to give it to them,
it was pretty clever.

Iris smiles some more. "Mine."

His eyes seemed to bore into Iris. He looked at Barry and gave him the stare down. "Like I said before. You are just full of surprises tonight, aren't you?"

"Wally, I have no idea what you're talking about. Come on, Bear." She says and pulls him with her.

Wally watched in almost disbelief, mixed in with a little bit of admiration. He knew his sister was feisty when she wanted or needed to be. He knew she really would be once he goes to plan b of keeping her from dating his friend.

Chapter End Notes

…Once again, I hope you enjoyed. Reviews and kudos are hugs!
"I kinda want you to keep me."

Chapter Summary

The rest of the date and more.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to those who are liking this story as much as I like writing. It really means a lot. I truly work hard to bring you a great story about Barry and Iris and it's greatly appreciated to those that can see that.

During texting, Iris is in Italics, Linda is bold.

There's a brief sample of Lady Gaga's "Edge of Glory" lyrics in here. I own no rights to those.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Wally continued to stare at Barry and Iris walk off in disbelief. He really had to give it to them. It was extremely clever. Maybe his egging Barry on about paying for his own date bit him in the ass. He didn't think Barry had the balls to do that. But this had Iris written all over it. Iris did what she wanted, when she wanted. She was headstrong, ambitious, and independent. He loved that about her. Plus her fun loving and outgoing personality. She was fiery and feisty when she wanted to be also. She was definitely going to be feisty when he did other things to keep her from dating Barry. It had to be done.

"That was interesting." Linda says to break him from his reverie.

"Yeah, it was." He replies almost bitterly.

Linda picked up on his tone. "You aren't upset are you?" She asked in concern. She hoped he wasn't. There really was no reason for him to be upset.

"No, not upset. I can't explain how I feel." He retorts honestly.

"You feel like you got beat at your own game, don't you?" Linda asks in an amused tone.

Wally looked down at her. He had to laugh. "Yeah, that's exactly how I feel."

"You've gotta admit, it was pretty funny and totally unexpected. Iris is a spitfire." Linda says.

"Yeah, it was pretty funny. It'll be really funny when I throw a thorn into whatever else she and Barry have planned." He says as they head towards their theatre again.

Linda felt uneasy. "What do you mean?" She asks. She doesn't like the sound of things.

"I guess I'm going to have to put more effort into keeping them apart." He says.
Linda sighed. "Wally…"

He looked down at her again. "What?"

"Look, I get that you want to protect your little sister. I love her like my sister and don't want to see anything bad happen to her. But I haven't been with you since August. I didn't expect to spend our only time together babysitting Iris and Barry. We need to spend time alone. I like spending my time with you." She says.

Wally listened and thought she really had a point. He didn't want to babysit Barry and Iris. He wanted to spend as much time with Linda as possible. He hasn't seen her in nearly 6 months. So she's right and he feels how she feels. But Iris. What was he going to do about keeping Iris safe? "This is my own fault. I never should have brought Barry home with me." He says gravely. He instantly feels like trash for thinking it and for saying it. He knew Barry didn't have anyone and he was trying to help him out with that. He felt like an inconsiderate and selfish dick for thinking that and for telling Linda.

"You don't really mean that, do you?" She asks tentatively.

"No, I don't. I just didn't think it would be like this. I didn't think Iris would like Barry. I mean as a friend, yes. But not like I can tell she likes him. I didn't think he was her type." Wally confesses truthfully.

"Sometimes things don't work out the way that we thought or even hoped that they would." She says.

"You're right."

"Now can we enjoy the rest of our date and this movie? Please?" Linda asks and smiles.

Wally finally smiles too. "Yes. Let's enjoy the rest of our date." He says as he leans down to kiss her on the lips before they head inside their theatre.

Once they were fully out of Wally's eyesight, Barry adjusted the huge popcorn and drink in his arm and slipped Iris' hand in his free one. Iris actually started to swing their arms as they headed for the door to their theatre.

"Did you see the look on Wally's face?" Iris asks in an excited tone.

"Yeah, that was awesome. Right now it's funny. I'll get scared later." Barry says.

"I'm not thinking about Wally. I'm not scared. You shouldn't be either." She says to assure him.

"He's going to kill me though, Iris. He'll go easy on you because he loves you and you're a girl. He told me you were off limits and I-" Barry rambles on and Iris is really not in the mood to hear it. She pressed Barry against the wall, stood on her tip toes and crashed her lips to his. She wished she wasn't holding a soda and prayed that her purse stayed on her shoulder, because she needed her hands to be free. Barry too wished he wasn't holding the now ominous large tub of popcorn and his
drink. He wanted to drop it and pull Iris into his arms. Neither one of them paid the people walking past them any attention. They were that lost in kissing each other. As soon as he got used to the sensation of her lips kissing him and how it felt electric, she pulled away.

"Do you still want to talk about Wally?" She asks as she stares into his eyes. So kissing Barry wasn't a deal breaker. Though she caught him by surprise, kissing him was great. She wanted another one. Several more. She was going to really enjoy kissing Barry many more times to come.

"Fuck Wally." Barry says and Iris smiles.

"Good answer." She says and pecks him on the lips again.

"You have no idea how bad I want to say fuck this movie and just leave. No idea, Iris." Barry says.

"We don't have to do that. We have a dark theatre. Plus we have all night." Iris says happily as she walks up the aisle and heads for the stairs. They needed to sit on the back row so that people wouldn't see them.

"All night?" Barry asks as he follows her.

"Yes. All night." She says once she's seated on the back row. There were others on their row at the end but Iris did not care. She put her drink into the cup holder and waited for Barry to sit down. She took out her phone to put it on silent.

Barry was a little unsteady on his feet. He was a little, no a lot riled up by that surprise kiss. Wally was right. Iris is full of surprises. He really liked that. He liked it a lot. He liked her a lot. He sat down and did the same thing with his cup and placed the popcorn in his lap. "Iris, what did you mean by all night?" He asks a little timidly.

"Oh, you're sleeping in my room tonight." She says casually as she puts her phone away inside her purse.

"I am?" He asks in surprise. More like shock.

"Yes, you are." She says and smiles at him. She grabbed the popcorn and put it in her lap. She was just eating away and playfully ignoring the look on Barry's face as he stared over at her. "You need to turn your phone off or put it on silent." She says absently and continues to eat popcorn.

"Right." He says and does that. He dug into the popcorn as well and started to eat. "I have a question." He says after several minutes of comfortable silence.

Iris looked at him and smiled. "Shoot."

"How am I going to sleep in your room tonight?" He asks in childlike wonderment. It was almost funny. No, it was funny. Barry was inherently adorable and becoming increasingly so.

"Oh, well I know Wally is probably going to stay with Linda tonight again, and my dad will be in his room. I'll have to sneak you in, but he's a heavy sleeper. Why? You don't want to?" She asks.

"What? No! Of course I want to. Do you think I'm an idiot?" Barry questions.

"No, I don't think you're an idiot. This seems like a win win situation for us all. We have more things to talk about." Iris says happily.

Talk. Right. She wants to talk. Barry thought to himself. He knew them sleeping together was
totally out of the question. They had only known each other a day. But still. He's a guy and his girlfriend is hot. He might be an uber nerd, but he isn't naïve about these sorts of things. He had urges like any other college aged guy. It wasn't heavily on his mind like the guys on the team, but it was there. He was glad that he had Wally as his roommate. He didn't have girls running in and out of their room. He loved Linda and was committed to her. So it made things easier on both of them. It would be the same way when they went back. There was no way in the world he would cheat on Iris when he got back to school. That just wasn't happening. He's not that kind of guy. And he especially wouldn't do that to Iris and really have Wally kill him even though they're dating in secret. Barry immediately stopped thinking of Wally and went back to thinking about Iris and them spending the night together. He had never done that before. He was getting anxious.

"Right. Talk. You're right." He says as the lights go down and the theatre starts to get quiet. He can see the lights from several phones as people either turn them off or put them on silent. The previews start to play.

Iris giggled and looked over at him. "What's wrong?"


Iris giggled again. She leaned over and whispered in his ear. "Did I make you nervous, Bear?" She asks.

"What? No." He lies.

"You are. It's ok. You don't have to sleep in my room tonight if you don't want to." Iris says a little sadly, though she's yanking his chain.

"I want to!" He practically yells, and he's grateful that no one says anything. Probably because it's during the previews. He lowered his voice. "No. I want to. Don't ever think that I don't want to. I do. I really do, Iris." He says.

Iris leaned back over and kissed him on the cheek. "Good. I want you to."

Just that small kiss on the cheek has riled him up again. He has flashes of that first kiss she surprised him with. It literally made him weak in his knees. The only downside was that he was holding something and couldn't hold and caress her like he wanted to. But they had later. He could hold and caress her later. Hopefully with less clothes on. He was thinking about that and not even paying attention to the movie though he wanted to see it. He didn't give a shit about those dinosaurs at the moment.

Neither did Iris. She was trying to distract herself from jumping in Barry's lap by eating popcorn and focusing on the movie. She had that kiss on her mind. Damn Barry was a good kisser. A really good kisser. Their kisses could only get better in her book. Once they were able to get closer and free their hands. She wanted to put her hands all over Barry's body. Her adorable and sexy nerd human puppy, Bear with the body of an athlete. She was getting turned on just thinking about it. She knew she had to control her emotions at the moment before she got so turned on that she decided to sleep with Barry. That would come in time. They just met. But he was a little sexy to her and she was finding it hard to resist him. She really, really wanted to jump in his lap. Kiss him deeply and passionately while she sat in his lap. Have him take his shirt off so that she could rub his six pack. A six pack. This dork had a damn six pack. He had a great body under all that nerd. Nobody would expect that. Nobody would. She felt like she had hit a gold mine. What if he doesn't know what to do with the body he has? I'm just gonna have to teach him. She thought. Iris scoffed and lightly laughed. Barry looked over at her because that wasn't exactly a funny part in the movie.
Barry leaned towards her. "What's so funny?" He asks.

"You have a six pack." Is all she says. She takes a sip of her drink because she was feeling hot though the theatre wasn't.

"Uh…yeah. I guess. You noticed?" He asks.

Iris looked at him. It was easy to make out his features even though it was dark. She looked at him like he was crazy and the innocent little smirk he had on his face. He couldn't be even cuter if he tried. "Of course I noticed. I'm not blind." She says and smiles at him.

Barry blushed. Turned red in that dark theatre. Iris had checked him out when they first met. He didn't think she did. He definitely checked her out. He couldn't help himself. She was gorgeous. And she was now his girlfriend. Who was now thinking about his six pack. But wait. She laughed. *Does she think it's funny? Does she think I'm funny? Is it funny that a nerd like me has a six pack?* Barry wondered. He was afraid to ask, but he needed to know. He leaned towards her and whispered. "Iris?"

"Yes, Bear?"

"Why were you laughing about me having a six pack? Why is that funny to you?" He asks though he's afraid to hear the answer.

Iris lightly giggled and looked at her adorable Bear. "I was laughing because I was thinking that most people wouldn't expect that and that I had hit the jackpot. Then I started to laugh because… Nothing. It's silly." Iris says. She's smiling so he doesn't think it's anything bad.

"Please tell me." He says.

Iris exhaled. "I was wondering if you knew what to do with the nice body you have. I'm so embarrassed." She says.

"You shouldn't be embarrassed, Iris. I think that's great." He says and smiles more.

"Good." She says. She slides closer to him and grabbed his arm and put it around her. She lightly rested her head on his shoulder.

Barry took his hand and grazed Iris' arm. He was happy as hell to have her in his arms. He now wanted that damn movie to be over even though he's enjoying it. He's ready to get their "sleepover" started.

Iris felt all warm and tingly inside from being in Barry's arms. It felt just like she thought it would. She felt comforted. She also felt a little turned on and needed to put that away. Pretty much the only thing she and Barry could do right now was kiss. She certainly wasn't going to sleep with him this soon, no matter how much she liked him and wanted to. It was way too soon to think those things anyway. She seriously couldn't help it because Barry seemed to have this affect on her. She never wanted him to be out of her sight and she never wanted to stop touching him. Or kissing him. That kiss was quick and spontaneous but she enjoyed it so. She really did. Her human puppy was a good kisser. He really was despite her catching him off guard. The kiss was still a great one and she'd cherish it. She was glad she got the desire to do it. It didn't matter that he didn't kiss her first. Didn't matter at all. She let out a sigh of contentment at being in his arms. The end to an eventful day. Well not end just yet, because they still had things to do when they got home. She seriously hoped that her dad was already asleep when they got there. It would make things so much easier. And thank God Wally's meddling ass wouldn't be there. She was looking forward to this moment.
Nothing and nobody was going to ruin it.

Barry somehow pulled Iris closer to him. He wished they didn't have that arm rest separating them. He seriously wanted Iris to sit on his lap. He had the strong urge to do that. He wanted this movie to be over. He knew they would have to face something from Wally when it was over. Barry wanted them to make a mad dash for it right then and there. He had the sinking feeling that Wally would come to the house just to check on them. He knew Wally would do that. He could be a pain in the ass when he wanted to be, but Barry thought that's how it would be if he actually did have a brother.

He wondered just how much of a pain in the ass he would be if he saw him and Iris as they were then. If he saw them like that. Sitting closely with his arm around her and her head on his shoulder. If he saw them kiss. If he heard them talking about their plans for the night. If he knew they were boyfriend and girlfriend. Barry really tried to put that out of his mind, but he couldn't help but think of that. Wally meant business when he said that Iris was off limits. Barry had a little bit of trouble actually sticking to that. He couldn't help himself. Couldn't even if he tried. He didn't want to try though. He wanted Iris and he got her. She was going to be a part of his life. Barry casually glanced down at Iris. He smiled before kissing her on her forehead.

Iris looked up at him with stars in her eyes. She smiled at his polite gesture. He looked at her and kind of got lost in the moment of staring deeply into her eyes. He gently cupped the side of her face with his other hand and pressed his lips softly to hers. This kiss felt magical. They totally got lost in the moment of where they were and the people around them. They felt like they were in the theatre alone. Barry hungrily kissed Iris but gently nipped at her lips. He pulled her bottom lip into his mouth and savored that moment. He practically devoured the lips he's been dying to kiss. After their time lost in each other, Iris slowly pulled away. She didn't want to but she needed to come up for air. She again smiled at him and stared into his eyes.

"I could really get used to that." Iris says a little breathlessly.

"I really could too. I'm so glad I met you, Iris."

"I'm so glad I met you, Bear." She then returned her head to his shoulder and stayed like that as they enjoyed the rest of the movie. They were both starting to get anxious as the credits started to roll and people filed out of the theatre. They walked down the steps and the aisle hand in hand and broke away as soon as they reached the door.

"Ok, so that movie was great. Not as good as the first one, but great." Barry says excitedly. He needed to talk about that as a distraction before they saw Wally and Linda again. "Even if it wasn't genetically accurate because the Indominus Rex isn't a real dinosaur and the Velociraptors would not hold their front limbs like that. If they really did use reptilian DNA to clone and recreate dinosaurs, they wouldn't look like that and a lot of them wouldn't have feathers…" Barry rambled on and Iris looked at him and laughed. "Sorry, I'm going full on nerd, aren't I?" He asks playfully.

"You're an adorable nerd." Iris says.

"Thanks. Sometimes I get a little carried away. So did you like the movie?" He asks.

"I really liked it. I agree that it wasn't as good as the first, but I enjoyed it. Plus the female dinosaur was a bad ass. Until they killed her." Iris says and smiles.

"Yeah, she was. Kind of like you." He jokes.

"I am a bad ass. I wouldn't terrorize a theme park though. I don't think." She says and they both
laugh. "But keep that in mind and never make me upset. Then I'd have to go theme park on you." She joked.

"I will keep that in mind."

They continued to talk about the movie while they waited for Linda and their chaperone. Luckily for them, their movie ended only minutes after theirs. They saw Linda and Wally walking towards them hand in hand. Wally had an interesting and unreadable look on his face. He saw Iris and Barry talking animatedly about the movie they just saw.

"Hey, you guys." Linda says.

"Hey. Did you enjoy your movie?" Iris asks.

"Yes. It was awesome. How about you?" She asks.

The guys have not said anything. Wally is sort of giving Barry the stare down. And it's hilarious.

"It was great. You'll enjoy it when you come back to see it." Iris says.

Barry became increasingly uncomfortable at Wally giving him the stare down and flinched. He rubbed the back of his neck and then his hair. Wally finally broke out of his trance and then looked at Iris. He knew that idea was all her.

"I'm glad you two enjoyed your movie." He finally says.

"Thanks. This was fun. We should do it again soon." Iris says. She knows Wally is still upset about what she and Barry did and she does not give a damn.

"Yeah, we really should." Barry says. He's glad that Wally isn't staring at him anymore.

"So, what are your plans for the rest of the night?" Iris asks as her signal to Linda. She'd better be taking Wally with her. She'd better be.

"Oh, we're going to my house. Right, Wally." Linda says as a statement and not a question as she tugs on his arm.

"Right." He says. He'd deal with Iris the next day.

"Great. Well, have fun." Iris says and goes to hug Linda. She whispered "Thank you" in her ear.

"We still need to have our girl's day, Iris. Text or call me. We have to let these boys fend for themselves." She joked as they broke the hug.

"Of course. We can come and see Magic Mike." She jokes and Wally looks at her. "What? You're not stopping us from seeing that, Wallace."

"Wallace? Really?" He asks.

"Yes. You're acting like a Wallace right now. Bye, Dad." Iris says as she goes to hug him.

"I think I'm going to have a talk with Dad about grounding you." Wally says.

"Good luck with that." Iris says.

"Alright man. I'll see you tomorrow." Wally forgot about his conflicting feelings and embraced
Barry into their regular handshake and brotherly hug. He too took his time to whisper in Barry's ear. "My sister is still off limits."

"Gotcha." Barry says and doesn't mean a bit of it. They broke apart and Iris and Linda were just looking at them. "Linda, it was really nice meeting you. Can't wait to do this again."

"Likewise, Barry." Linda replies and smiles. They all head out the theatre to their cars.

Iris was relieved as hell that their night with that other couple was finally over. She breathed a sigh of relief. Barry looked over at her and laughed. He felt the same way. He totally understood how she felt. While their night was fun, it was an experience. He did want to hang with Wally and Linda again, but seriously preferred to be with Iris alone.

They finally got to Iris' car and she had an idea.

"Hey, do you wanna drive?" She asks. She kind of just wanted her boyfriend to drive her for some reason. She has no idea why she feels that way, but she does.

"You really want me to drive your car?" He asks.

"Sure. Why not? You are my boyfriend now, right?" She asks playfully as she walked to the passenger side.

"Of course I'm your boyfriend now. I will be until you tell me not to be anymore." He says and winks at her.

Barry being the true gentleman that he is, opened the door for her. "Awww, you're so sweet. I think I'll keep you." She jokes as she settles in the car.

Barry quickly hurried around and got in the driver's side. He had to seriously adjust the driver's seat since he's so tall. He looked over at Iris and the amused expression on her face. "Still gonna say that you aren't short?" He asks in a joking tone.

"I am not short." Iris says surely.

"You are. Look how far back I had to move your seat."

"I'm not short though, Bear."

"Yes, you are. And it's adorable." He says and starts the car up. They both put their seatbelts on and he looked at her again. "You do know that I really have no idea where I'm going, right?"

"Yes. I'll give you directions. Or do you just want to find your way on your own? I know how guys are about following directions." Iris joked.

"Ouch." He says and laughs. "It would be kind of fun for us to just drive around though."

"It would be. It will really give my dad time to get to bed and stay there." Iris reached for the radio. "Plus, you can hear me sing. Wanna hear me sing, Bear?"

"Only if you can." He says and laughs and pulls out of the parking lot.

"What kind of music do you listen to?" Iris asks to make conversation.

"Lady Gaga, Maroon 5, Beyonce, Kendrick Lamar, Drake...." He goes on and looks over at Iris and the surprised expression on her face. "What?"
"What? That's the kind of music you listen to?" Iris asks quizzically. She's surprised to say the least.

"Yes. Why are you so surprised? Because I'm white?" He asks playfully.

"Yes." Iris says and they both laugh. She's joking and hopes he takes it that way.

"Did you forget that Wally is my roommate? We listen to a lot of the same things." 

"I'm just poking fun at you, Bear. It's not even the fact that you're white. Music is selective. I just thought you'd probably listen to like Mozart or something because of the nerd thing. That's all."

"I do listen to Mozart. Sometimes. I listen to a lot of different things. What about you?"

"Pretty much the same thing. I listen to Nicki Minaj, and a lot of Britney Spears. Don't judge me." She jokes.

"Of course not. I like Nicki and Britney too. Plus I like 3 Doors Down, Bruno Mars, and Coldplay."

"I love Coldplay and Bruno Mars!" Iris says and claps her hands in excitement.

"Good. That's just more things we have in common."

"Oh, I almost forgot." Iris says as she pulls out her phone.

"Almost forgot what?"

"I almost forgot to text Linda to let her know to text me when Wally is on his way. Can you imagine if he catches you in my room?" She asks a little lightheartedly, but she's also serious. Wally will lose his shit if he catches Barry in her room.

"I can imagine, and I really don't want to really find out." Barry says.

"Me neither." Iris says as she texts her.

_Lin?

A mere minute later she got a reply.

**Yeah?**

_I need you to do me a huge favor._

**What?**

_Text me when Wally is on his way home._

**Of course.**

_Thanks. I don't wanna start World War 3. :)_

**NP. We wouldn't want that. :)**

"Alright, done." Iris says and puts her phone away. She was excited and anxious. Also a little nervous, but she wasn't going to let her nerves interfere.
"Good." Barry says as he continues to drive. He has absolutely no idea where he is or even where he's going. He just knows that he's enjoying spending time alone with Iris. Alone. They didn't have anyone watching or chaperoning them. It felt great. And then he was going to spend the night in her room. He hoped that didn't turn out to be a disaster. He was getting more anxious by the minute. He was becoming a little impatient. He never should have suggested that they just drive around.

"Well, Bear. I think you've stalled long enough. Are you ready to go home yet?" Iris asks seemingly out of nowhere. She played a song just for him. And to see if he was lying about being a Lady Gaga fan.

There ain't no reason you and me should be alone  
Tonight yeah baby, tonight yeah baby  
But I got a reason that you-hoo should take me home tonight

I need a man that makes it right when it's so wrong  
Tonight yeah baby, tonight yeah baby

Barry briefly took his eyes off the road and looked over at her. He couldn't believe she was singing that. "What? I was not stalling." He replies truthfully. He wasn't stalling at all. He couldn't wait to be with her.

Iris continued to sing.

Right on the limit's where we know we both belong tonight

It's time to feel the rush to push the dangerous  
I'm gonna run right to, to the edge with you  
Where we'll both fall far in love

"Iris, I get it. You can stop singing now." Barry says to no avail. She continued to sing. He sang along. He figured that would get her to stop.

I'm on the edge of glory and I'm hangin' on a moment of truth  
Out on the edge of glory and I'm hangin' on a moment with you

Iris looked over at him in shock. She had no idea Barry could sing. Well, how could she? She just met him. "You can sing?" She asks in surprise.

"Yes, I can sing." He says. He discovered his amazing singing voice in middle school when he was forced to be in the school play. 13 year old Barry was a lot more awkward and shy than 20 year old Barry. He became a little less shy and awkward when girls started to like him because he could sing.

"Wow. Any other hidden talents I should know about?" Iris asks and realizes how it sounded the minute the words left her mouth.

Barry looked over at Iris and again had impure thoughts running through his head. He started to get nervous, and now wasn't the time for him to get nervous. "I don't know. I guess we'll both find out." He says to trash talk through his nervousness, hoping Iris hasn't picked up on it.

"Are you nervous, Bear?" She asks. She had to admit that she was nervous too.

"No, why do you ask?"
"Are you sure? You've almost been a nervous wreck since I told you that you were sleeping in my room tonight."

"I'm always a nervous wreck. Have you met me?" He asks sarcastically.

"Yes, I've met you. I was kidding, you big dork." Iris says and laughs.

He briefly looked over at her again. He was liking Iris more and more. It couldn't be helped. She was an awesome girl. He wondered how he got this damn lucky. Maybe the fates had started to change and decided that he needed good things in his life. Having two distinct members of the West family come into his life had already changed it for the better. He seriously didn't want to let the one sitting next to him go.

"Did you just call me a dork?" He asks in a faux hurt tone.

"No, I called you a big dork." She says and deadpans him.

"Ouch."

Iris giggled. "Awww, my poor Bear is hurt. I'm sorry." She started to bat her eyelashes at him.

Barry became a little shook up by how pretty, and sexy he thought Iris looked when she did that. This girl was really putting him through the ringer. "I don't accept your apology." He lies.

Iris batted her eyelashes more. "Really?" She asks as she slides closer and started to rub his thigh. "You really don't accept my apology? Really, Bear?"

The combination of her looking at him like that and rubbing his leg was maybe a little too much for him to handle. "Uh….I do accept you apology." He says.

"Good."

"So, I really need directions to your house, like right now." Barry says hurriedly.

"About time." Iris jokes and gives them to him. They actually weren't even that far from their house. About 20 minutes later, Barry pulled onto their street and drove right past the house. "You passed it. You really don't remember, do you?" Iris asks.

Barry put the car in reverse. "Nope, all these houses look the same to me. Give me a little credit."

"I am. It's right there."

Barry parks and after what seemed like a long day for them, they're finally home. She was glad as hell she didn't see Wally's car. She didn't trust that he wouldn't sneak home just to aggravate her. She was also glad that the house was dark. She of course saw her father's car. She touched the hood when they walked past it and was relieved to feel that it was cool. She hoped Joe was dead to the world as they walked up to the door.

She started feeling antsy as they walked through the door. It was about to get real. She was again relieved that she had the sort of buffer of her dad being home so that they wouldn't go too far. She hoped that she was strong enough to maintain that. She didn't want to ruin what they just started by sleeping with him way too fast. She did not need any unnecessary tension in the house.

"So, do you want anything from down here?" She asks as she locks up and puts her keys away.

"Not that I can think of." Barry replies. He's starting to get antsy too.
"Good." She says and starts to make her way up the stairs. "Well, I'm going to take me a much needed hot shower. If you're thinking of doing the same thing, I can go after you since you are a guest. If my dad wasn't sleep, I could use his."

"Ladies first. I can wait." He says as he follows her and desperately tries to focus on the steps and not her ass in front of him.

"Always a gentleman. I'll try not to use up all the hot water." She jokes.

"No, that's ok. I probably need a cold shower anyway." Barry blurts out.

Iris turned to look at him. She just laughed. "I'll see you in a few." She says and disappears into her room and Barry goes into Wally's.

Iris sat on her bed to think for a moment. She casually glanced at Barry's sweatshirt that was sitting on her bed and smiled. She wasn't going to put any more pressure on herself. She was going to enjoy the night and let the cards fall where they may. She started to get undressed and tried to not let her nerves get the best of her even though she just decided not to put any more pressure on herself. She just put on her robe and quietly walked to the bathroom. She put on her shower cap and quickly hopped in the shower. She tried not to be fully aware of the fact that she was naked and Barry was in the next room waiting on her. Barry was starting to make her feel things. Feel things deep down to her bones and also her lady parts. She wanted Barry to touch her lady parts. She started to feel naughty for even thinking such things, but it couldn't be helped. Barry had a hold of her already.

Barry settled in Wally's room while he tried to get himself together. He was anxious and deeply turned on. He needed to get that under control before he went into Iris' room. He didn't want to try anything indecent. Not with her father in the house. Not with Wally's swift and stiff warning, though he was selectively deciding to ignore that. The main thing that would stop him is them just meeting. It was way too soon for that if he wanted it to last, and he wanted that more than anything. As far as he was concerned, Iris was the girl for him. He did not want anybody else.

He sat on Wally's bed and got lost in thinking about Iris. He thought about the kisses they shared and how he couldn't wait to kiss her again. He got aroused thinking about it and laid back on the bed. Iris was beautiful and a dream come true. She was gorgeous and everything he could ever hope for in a girlfriend. Even more. She scared the hell out of him the first time they met, and made his heart feel the same way when he looked at her. He already knew that leaving her the nest month was going to be a hard thing for him to do. But he wouldn't change meeting her for anything in the world. And Wally had the nerve to tell him that she's off limits. No way he was following that. No way, no how.

Iris finished up her shower and went to Wally's room. She stood in the doorway and saw Barry laid back on the bed. She had the sudden urge to run up and straddle him. He didn't even know she was standing there. She wondered if he was asleep.

"Hey." She says and he very cutely jumped. She smiled at his actions.

He sat up and stared at her. She was standing in front of him in her robe and he desperately tried not to think of her naked underneath it. No use, that's exactly where his mind went. "Hey."

"So, bathroom's free…" She says and kind of lingers in the doorway.

"Ok….Thanks." He replies and just stares at her standing in the doorway.
"Well…I'm gonna go." Iris says and slowly walks off. She needed to get dressed immediately.

Barry chuckled and made his way into the bathroom as well. He got in the shower and started to think of Iris. Thought of touching her. He didn't want to do something gross like touch himself in an unfamiliar bathroom. He kinda felt like he needed to so that he wouldn't walk into Iris' room with a loaded gun.

Iris walked into her bedroom and locked her door. She immediately walked over to her bed and fell straight back on it. She stared at the ceiling for a few minutes. She let out a sigh. She was exasperated and confused. She undid her robe and wondered what she should put on. Should she go the safe route and put on some granny panties that she never wanted Barry to see? Or something cute, girly, and sexy? Something sexy might get her in trouble, but she just couldn't put on some granny panties. She just couldn't. She completely covered her body in lotion and put on some yellow lace undies, some short sweats and a tank. That was good enough for the festivities ahead. She sat on her bed and tried not to get too caught up in the moment. She was nervous. She just sat there and waited.

Barry finished up his shower and dressed in some pajama bottoms and a tank. He shut Wally's door and almost ran to Iris' room. He lightly knocked on her door.

Iris actually felt butterflies when she heard him knocking. She quickly got up and went to the door. She in no way, shape, or form wanted her father to catch Barry coming into her room even if he already was sleep. She exhaled and opened the door. She practically yanked Barry in and locked her door.

Barry looked around her bedroom and immediately thought her room was all her. Well, what he knew already. Her room was very girly and decorated with red, black, and white. The black furniture, with the red, black, and white bedding was seriously Iris. The way she was fiery and bold. He saw the pompoms hanging on her mirror and several pictures throughout her room. He really liked the red wall with white flowers painted on it. "I like your room, it's very you. Even my sweatshirt seems to go with the décor."

"Thanks. What can I say? I like red. And I like guy stuff." Iris says as she walks over to sit on the bed. Barry followed and sat on the bed next to her. She then got on her bed up near her pillows and made room for Barry even though she thought them being close on her bed was dangerous territory. Barry was still sitting in his same spot and she wondered if it would be better if he stayed there. She turned on her tv to break up the quiet. She realized she and Barry were very alone with nothing to do. Things could get messy. "Anything in particular you'd like to watch?" She asks as she skims through the guide.

"No, not really."

Iris continues to look. She comes up on The Breakfast Club and can't believe her luck. She loves that movie. "Ooooh. The Breakfast Club. And it hasn't even started yet." She exclaims in excitement. "Is that ok with you? I kinda love that movie."

"It's perfectly fine with me because I kinda love that movie too." Barry decided to be bold and got on iris' bed up near her pillows next to her.

"I was wondering what you were waiting for. I made room for you." Iris teased.

He really made himself comfortable as he settled on her bed. Iris appreciated that. He propped himself up sideways on his elbow and Iris did the same. They kind of gazed at each other for a moment, no a long time. Both became increasingly aware of them being on Iris' bed, but decided to
dance around that elephant in the room. They needed to talk. And fast.

He grabbed her stuffed turtle and started to play with it. "Friend of yours?" He asked playfully.

"Yes. I've had McSnurtle the Turtle since I was little. I always sleep with him. My dad took him from me once when I was younger because I broke his Duke Ellington, "Live at the Blue Note" vinyl. Wally got in trouble for that too. We never touched his records again."

"McSnurtle the Turtle?" Barry teased as he waved it at her.

"Are you making fun of me, Bartholomew?" Iris asked.

"Nope. Especially since you called me Bartholomew." Barry says and they laugh.

"Good. Because you are not allowed to make fun of me or McSnurtle."

"Why would I want to make fun of something as cute as you and McSnurtle? You're cuter than McSnurtle by a long shot." He says and smiles at her.

"You are just turning out to be the best boyfriend ever, aren't you?" Iris asks.

"Yes. I kinda want you to keep me." Barry says honestly.

Iris looked at him and the sincere look on his face. She again felt warm and tingly all over. Barry was doing something to her. She was doing something to him as well. He looked at her and how simply radiant she looked even now.

Iris needed more distractions before she pounced on Barry.

"Wanna play 5 questions you've never been asked?"

"Sure. Is anything off limits?" Barry asks tentatively.

"Um….I'm not sure yet. It depends on what you ask me. I'll go first. How old were you when you stopped believing Santa was real?"

"8, I think. I was devastated when I found out from the kids at school."

"What's your favorite candle scent?" Iris asks and smiles.

"What? I'm a guy, Iris. Not really into candles." He says and laughs.

"Hardy har. Some guys like candles. What's the worst grade you've ever gotten on a test?" She asked, though she just knew he was going to say something like, B.

"As far as I can remember, a B." Barry answers and Iris makes a face. "What?"

"I knew you were going to say B. I could kill you." She says and they both laugh.

"I told you I was a nerd." He says to his defense. He was enjoying this little game they were playing.

"Do you know any triplets?"

"No. Not that I know of. But I guess people would tell you that, right?"

"I know I would. How awesome would that be? Ok, last question. Who's your favorite person in
the world?" Barry just smiled and pointed his finger at her. Iris smiled so hard, her face started to hurt. "Awww, that is so sweet. Thank you, Bear." She says in a severely chipper tone.

"You're welcome. Just telling the truth, though. I guess it's my turn. What celebrity would you want to be your sister?"

"Beyonce." Iris answers truthfully and Barry knew he should have expected that.

"Figures. Do you prefer Titanic or The Notebook?"

"Oh, definitely The Notebook. They grew old together. It doesn't get any better than that." Iris says.

"What did you dress up as for Halloween when you were 8?" He asks.

"8? Probably Wonder Woman. I was a little obsessed with her for a while. Still am, truthfully."

"Can you do a split?" He asked, though he knew she must if she's a cheerleader. Really, he hoped she would show him instead of answering.

"Really?" She asks in a taunting tone. She knew he knew the answer to that.

He just shrugged, and the look on his face made her want to kiss him. "Hey, it's a valid question."

Iris just got out of the bed and easily did a full split. It turned Barry on and he knew he probably shouldn't have asked her that question. His girlfriend was beyond hot. And she was flexible. He almost groaned out of pure sexual frustration.

Iris quickly got up from the floor and back into the bed. "It's a valid question for a cheerleader. Right, Bear. I know what you're up to."

Barry scoffed and shrugged again to make himself look innocent, which he was not. "I have no idea what you're talking about, Iris." He lies. "Alright, last question. Would you sleep with the last person you texted?" He was getting bold as hell, but realized that he probably shouldn't have asked that since he doubts he's the last person she texted.

Iris took in the sheepish expression on Barry's face and was about to answer, then she realized the last person she texted was Linda. She rolled over and grabbed her phone from her nightstand and texted Barry before putting her phone back. "Yes." Is all she says. She knows that his phone is probably in Wally's room, and he had no idea she texted him. But her answer was true. She would sleep with him. Eventually.

Barry knew that without a doubt, Iris just texted him. He locked eyes with her and got that arousal feeling again. Deep down into his bones. That's how bad he wanted Iris. "Ok, so that game was fun."

"Yes, it was. Wanna play another?"

"Sure."

"Ok. 5 questions. Only yes or no answers."

"What kind of questions though?" Barry asks just to be sure.

"Anything you want to know. We each get 1 pass. Fair enough?"

"Fair enough. I'll start. Have you ever kissed a girl?"
"Yes."

"Have you ever slept with a friend's ex?"

"No."

"Have you ever danced naked?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever watched porn?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever been skinny dipping?"

"No. My turn." Iris says. She really has some question for her human puppy.

"Have you ever had a threesome?"

"No."

"Does watching girls kiss turn you on?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever had a lap dance?"

"No."

"Have you ever had a hand job?"

Barry turned red before answering. "Yes."

"Have you ever had sex with a friend's ex?"

"No."

"Wow, that was fun. Didn't think you had some of that in you, Bear." Iris says.

"I feel the same way. So you kissed a girl?"

"Yes. It was a dare. I got nothing out of it. Sorry to disappoint you since that's what you like." Iris jokes and giggles.

"Hey, I'm a guy and a lot of guys like that." He says to his defense. "I kind of want to play that again. How about you?"

"I agree. Only this time we both have to answer the question we ask. Agreed?"

"Agreed."

"I think we need to get one huge question out of the way first. Don't you think?" Iris asks.

He knew what question she was referring to. "Yes, I do."

"Are you a virgin?" She needed to know. For both their sakes.
"No." He answers truthfully.

"I'm not either. Please don't tell Wally." Iris says.

"Iris, telling Wally about either of our sex lives is nowhere near on my to do list. Your secret is safe with me."

"I know, just making sure. He's under the impression that I am and should be until I'm married." Iris confesses.

"I think he thinks I'm one too." Barry says and they both chuckle.

"Have you ever had a one night stand?"

"Yes."

"I have too. College will do that to you." Iris says and they laugh again. "Have you ever had sex in a public place? I haven't."

"No."

"Have you ever slept with a friend?"

"Yes."

"I have too. I can't think of anything else right now."

"I'll go then. Do you like being on top?"

Iris looked at him with wide eyes. "Yes."

"Yeah, me too. Both ways." He says.

"Would you have sex in a public place?"

"Yes. That seems exciting." Iris says.

"I would and it does."

He was feeling bolder and bolder by the moment. Iris made him feel less shy and awkward. He was greatly appreciative of that. He leaned forward and pressed his lips to hers. He took his hand and stroked the side of her face. Iris put her arms around Barry's neck and started to stroke. They were a mess of limbs and semi awkward touching near her headboard. Their kisses were forceful and necessary. They seemed to not be able to get enough of each other.

Iris moved her body to lay on her back and relax and felt her back connect with her bed. They were in unchartered territory. They were going at it like animals in her bed. He quickly broke the kiss and moved closer to her on the bed and softly pressed his lips to hers again. They both closed their eyes and got lost in kissing each other again. It again felt magical kissing her. He teased her lips with his a little. Iris parted her lips to gain better access to his mouth. She lightly stroked her tongue around his lips as she grabbed him to pull him on top of her. She needed to feel him be that close to her. She just needed him to. She figured she might regret it because maybe he'd think that was an invitation to sex, but she yearned to feel his body pressed on top of hers.

Barry was fully aware of his body on top of Iris'. He became so aroused that it actually hurt. Iris felt his erection press against her and it startled her but also turned her on. She reached for his tank
and started to tug on it. She needed him shirtless. Barry pulled away from her to remove his tank. He laid back on her and kissed her again. Iris touched everywhere her hands could. Barry's body was more toned than she initially thought. That and his erection pressed against her was making her extremely moist in the middle. They'd just have to stop before they went too far. As long as they both kept their pants on, everything would be ok.

Barry was aware of how aroused he was. He couldn't help it. He would have been worried if he didn't get aroused. Iris made him hornier than he had ever been in his entire life. He could definitely pitch a tent with what he had going on.

"Can I touch you?" He asks once he breaks the kiss again.

"Yes." Iris replied. She needed him to touch her. Was almost begging him to. He slipped his hand around to her back. He rubbed smooth skin and needed to touch more. He turned on his side and pulled Iris with him. He slipped his hand down the back of her pants and felt lace. He cupped her ass with his hand and almost groaned. He knew how badly he wanted to take her out of them.

Badly.

I won't.

I shouldn't.

Right?

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed. Reviews and kudos are hugs!
"But what does that mean?"

Chapter Summary

Barry and Iris alone together. Iris, Barry, and Wally the morning after.

Chapter Notes

My feelings about this story have totally changed. I have to give a special shout out and Thank you to Bladerunner, Bruna, Ishipit87, and Prettycitie. Thank you guys for your awesome comments of encouragement since the beginning. I would have stopped writing this story if it wasn't for you guys. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

And I apologize for the length of this chapter. I didn't mean to make it this long. It got away from me. :)))

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Barry was experiencing a whirlwind of emotions at the moment. He wanted to take all of Iris' clothes off and do naughty, extremely nasty things to her. Things he had never done before with any of the girls he slept with. Things he hoped the guys she slept with never did to her. Things that Wally would surely kill him for doing to his off limits little sister. He also wanted to stop what he was doing and leave her bedroom before they went too far. He didn't really want to stop, but he felt like it was the right thing to do. He almost wished that Iris had told him no when he asked if he could touch her. Wished that they weren't alone in her room on her bed. Wished they weren't kissing like their lives depended on it. Wished they hadn't just met that morning. Wished that they didn't have to keep their relationship a secret from her overly protective big brother. That would certainly make things a lot easier. If they had met months, even weeks ago, this would be a done deal. Iris would surely be naked by now. And they wouldn't be hiding like little kids. Although there was something incredibly sexy about them sneaking around.

He pulled away from the kiss. He stared deeply into her eyes. "Iris, should we stop?" He asks timidly. He really doesn't know what he wants her answer to be.

Iris smiles and doesn't answer him but lightly presses her lips against his. She swears she sees stars as they both deepen the kiss. Kissing Barry was unlike no other kisses she ever had before. She broke the kiss this time. "What do you think?" She asks. She felt that was a valid question. She had to gauge whether he wanted to go all the way. She's unsure of how she feels about that. She'd like to go there with Barry, really would, but felt it was extremely too soon. Whether he was her boyfriend or not. But kissing him and laying in her bed was changing her mind. It really was.

"I don't know, Iris. That's why I asked you."

"Can't we just keep kissing? I'm kinda enjoying it." Iris says and smiles at him.

"Of course. I'm kinda enjoying it too." Barry admits truthfully.
"Yeah, I can tell." She teases as she presses her body against his erection.

"Is my hard on turning you off? I'm sorry for getting excited." He says as he apologizes and turns red from embarrassment.

"No, it's not turning me off. Just the opposite." Iris says. His hard on really was turning her on. Especially since his hard on was bigger than she thought it would be.

Barry was glad that she said that. He was worried that his getting aroused had turned her off. He had no control over it because Iris was gorgeous, hot, and beautiful and she turned him on completely. Not just with her looks, but everything about her. She was the perfect girl for him. He went in to kiss her again. He couldn't get enough of her kisses. He surprised her by rolling them over so that she was now on top of him. She broke the kiss and adjusted her body on top of his and returned to kissing him on his lips. She started to move towards his neck and nibbled on his earlobe. She moved down a little and kissed him on his Adam's apple before nibbling on his collarbone. She took her hand and rubbed it across his perfectly toned chest. Barry's body was amazing and it was turning her on even more. She couldn't wait to get him out of those pajama bottoms. She broke the kiss again and smiled down at him as she straddled his waist. She was loving the way he looked up at her. He was loving the way she looked being on top of him. This night was getting better and better.

Iris just kind of sat there a moment and smiled down at him. He started to rub her thighs. He wanted her to take those damn sweatpants off.

"What?" Iris asks. She can tell something is on his mind.

He continued to rub her thighs through the soft and in the way fabric. He wondered how to ask her to take them off. She said she just wanted to continue kissing. "Nothing."

"Nothing? That's not true at all Bear, and you know it." Iris says as she looks down at her unpredictable and sexy human puppy.

"I don't want to say the wrong thing and have you kick me out." Barry admits.

"Were you about to ask me for a blow job or something?" She asks in a skeptical and reserved tone. Her look to him was questionable.

Barry stared up at her with wide eyes. "What? No! I was not going to ask you for that."

"Then what is it?" She leaned forward a little and rubbed his chest and abdomen. Touching him sent shocks through her. Him too.

He continued to rub her thighs. "I wanted to ask you to take these off." He says as he lightly tugs on them.

"Is that all? I can do that." She knew she was going against saying things would be ok if they both kept their pants on, but it was either that or take her tank off. And that would expose her naked breasts to him. She didn't think she was ready to go that far.

She climbed off him and Barry followed her with his eyes. She stood on the side of the bed and slowly, and seductively removed her sweat pants. He watched her every move. He got even more turned on at the sight of her yellow lace panties. The yellow looked really good against her skin. He wanted her out of them, but this would have to do.

Iris felt sexy with the way Barry was looking at her. She climbed back in the bed and returned to
straddling his waist. He took his hands and rubbed them up and down her thighs. He was glad that he could now feel smooth skin. Iris moaned at the feel of him touching her. His hands felt so smooth against her skin as he continued to rub on her. She really adjusted herself on him and could feel his burgeoning erection between her legs as she leaned forward to kiss him on the mouth again. They continued to kiss passionately as his erection seemed to grow. She could feel the heat and moisture radiating from her vagina and she understood just how bad her body wanted his.

Badly.

It awakened something in her. *I really shouldn't sleep with a guy I just met. Well, yes I can. I've done that before. But that was meaningless. I like Barry. I really want to sleep with him. I really shouldn't. I can't. But dear God, I want to. I can't though. Can I? Will it ruin us? Will we give it away that we slept together? Will Wally pick up on it? He'll beat the hell out of Barry and kick him out of the house.* Iris questioned herself but couldn't come up with an answer. If she didn't want to or wasn't going to, her body didn't get the memo. She thought she probably should stop, but she couldn't. *Wild horses couldn't drag her away from being in her bed with Barry.* She slid down his waist a little and leaned forward to plant kisses on his abdomen. His body was exactly how she likes it.

Barry almost lost it at her kissing his abdomen. He started thinking that maybe she was about to give him a blow job. Her being in that area almost drove him insane.

Barry felt a slight tug at his heart and a twitch in his pants when she moved forward and shifted her body so that she was laying directly on him, chest to chest. He wished that she was topless. Truly did. She started to kiss him again while he caressed her back through her tank. He figured it would be best if she kept that on. One of her breasts might end up in his mouth if she didn't. While they were kissing, Barry lifted his body with her on top of him and slid his pants down and kicked them off the rest of the way.

Iris got very afraid. His pants were off. He was just in his boxers. He was dangerously close to being naked. She wanted him naked because she wanted to do things to his naked body. Badly. Her human puppy was acting like a full grown dog now. She knew there was something sexy and ferocious underlying the nerdy persona he exuded. Either that, or he was just picking up or borrowing some confidence from somewhere.

"You do know you have to keep your boxers on, right?" Iris asks surely.

"Sure. I promise I'll keep them on. You have to keep these on as well." He says as he lightly tugs on her sexy yellow lace panties. "All bets are off if you don't."

"Same. Do not take your boxers off. Please. I don't think I'll be able to resist." Iris confesses truthfully.

"Cause that would be moving too fast, right?" He asks though he knows the answer.

"Yes. We just met. If I had met you a month ago, we wouldn't be talking right now. But it's getting harder to resist."

"I want to be with you so bad. You really have no idea, Iris. No idea." He states surely as he stared into her gorgeous face.

"I want to be with you badly too. We're on the same page with that. But I think us having sex now will fuck this up." She admits and feels bad for how she feels, but it's the truth. She didn't want to fuck things up with Barry. She really didn't. She knew he felt the same way.
"Iris, we don't have to have sex. Ok? I'm taking that option off the table." Barry says a little strongly. It was no longer up for discussion. It wasn't happening until the time was right.

"Ok. But what does that mean?" She asks in concern as she stares deeply into his eyes, looking for answers.

"It means that just because we're not going to have sex, doesn't mean we can't have fun." Barry says and playfully wiggles his eyebrows at her.

She giggled from his mannerisms. "Ok, what did you have in mind?" Iris asks. Maybe this wouldn't be pure torture after all. Maybe they could find ways to really touch each other without venturing into actual sex territory. It could be done. She had engaged in heavy make out sessions before. She was fully clothed then and so was the guy. Now they were both in their underwear and they were going to stay in place. There were ways to be intimate without having sex. She wanted to know what Barry had up his sleeve.

"Just tell me to stop if I'm going too far. Is that ok?" He asks and internally prays that she says yes.

"Yes, that's ok." Iris says. She was starting to get giddy. She really wanted to know what Barry had in mind.

"Good." He says and lifts his head up to kiss her. Something seemed to take over him when Iris agreed to it. He didn't have something totally off the wall in mind anyway. They had time for that. What he had planned wasn't at all innocent, but it wouldn't be considered sex by any means. He again surprised Iris by rolling them over again so that now she was on the bottom. That action excited Iris to her core. She wasn't expecting that at all. And Barry could tell that from the look on his face. That turned him on fully.

Iris was starting to think that her adorable human puppy Bear was using that whole nerd thing as an excuse to get over on people. Why she thought that, she didn't know. She knew that wasn't the truth. Her boyfriend was a huge dork and she loved that. She also loved that he had some sexiness that was underlying. He was totally like Clark Kent with that nerdy shit going on, and then turned into a stud when he took his glasses off and turned into Superman. But that wasn't it either. She had a feeling that he was usually dorky and awkward through encounters with females. Maybe she brought this out of him. If she did, she was totally getting a kick out of it. That's it. She made him turn into a stud and she was sticking with that.

Ironic as it is, Barry was thinking the same thing. He was never this bold and confident with girls. Never. It was just something about Iris. He hadn't had many girlfriends because he was an awkward nerd. He found a girl almost as awkward as him in high school: Becky Cooper. She was his first girlfriend. They did things like heavy petting and kissing and finally went all the way after their school's Valentine's Day dance. Becky soon became a nightmare after that. She demanded all of Barry's time. Literally smothered him until he couldn't take it anymore. He broke up with her after their graduation. He wasn't taking that kind of baggage with him to college. He was starting a whole new life and leaving everything behind: his tragic past of losing his mother and his father going to jail and being the guy that everybody looked at funny because they thought his father murdered his mother, and his family that believed his father was guilty too and never made him feel welcome in their home. He was leaving all of that behind, including Becky. He hasn't heard from or seen her since the summer before their freshman year. He told her it would be better to just go off to college as friends. They lost touch and Barry really hadn't even thought about her or it since then.

He got to school, made his mark on the track team, and really got into his groove of being a double major college student. He hooked up with a girl at school his freshman year. He was
actually kind of shocked that the girl was interested in him. He met her at a party one of the guys on the team was having. She came on pretty strong and Barry seriously couldn't resist having a girl come that strongly on to him. They both had been drinking that night, but they weren't drunk. All he ever learned about was that her name was Maggie and she was majoring in Psychology. It wasn't romantic, just a brief and awkward one night stand. They did what a lot of college students did. No big deal that he just chatted up to an experience. It wasn't anything worth telling the guys on the team about, though he isn't the type to kiss and tell. Then there was Alison Walker also from his freshman year. He met her in his second semester Biology class when they became lab partners, then friends. A few study sessions later, and they hooked up. Semi-serious, just a regular 'friends with benefits' kind of deal. That somehow just fizzled out when Alison met a guy that she wanted to get serious about and they had to call that off. They realized they were better off as friends and he still saw her on campus from time to time. They were often just casual and chatted briefly when they ran into each other.

Iris' encounters with guys really wasn't that different than Barry's experiences. Well, except for her encounter with Eddie. Eddie was Wally's friend. Iris thought he was gorgeous when she started going to the same high school as Wally. He was a pretty boy with pretty blue eyes. Eddie thought she was gorgeous too, even if she was kinda young. Not that young, because he was 16 and she was a 14 year old freshman, but he still thought she was cute. He made the mistake of mentioning it to Wally and he was not pleased. Wally said that his little sister was off limits and he meant it since she was a kid. He needed to protect her and he didn't want her dating any of his friends. He didn't want her dating anybody, and all the guys at the school knew that, but especially his friends. He knew how they were and he didn't want his sister caught up in that. He pretty much forbade Iris from dating Eddie and anybody else. Iris really liked Eddie and thought he was cute. She hated Wally trying to ruin things for her. She needed to protect her and he didn't want her dating any of his friends. He didn't want her dating anybody, and all the guys at the school knew that, but especially his friends.

Iris started to resent Wally for that because he was dating Linda. She didn't think it was fair that they could date and she couldn't. Linda became her really close friend, sort of like a sister because of them dating. She thought it was unfair that he was dating her friend, but she couldn't do the same. She and Eddie pretty much played the avoidance game for about 2 years. That is until Iris started to blossom and really became a knockout when she turned 16. Eddie didn't look at her as a kid anymore and wanted Iris. He watched her from the sidelines during games when she was a cheerleader. He finally decided he didn't care what Wally thought anymore. He and Iris started talking and flirting casually when Wally wasn't around. He found reasons to come over the house to see Iris. They got closer and Wally picked up on it. He again forbade Iris from dating Eddie. Told him to leave his sister alone. Eddie ignored that. He was almost 18 and did what he wanted. He encouraged Iris to go along with it and she agreed because her brother was a pain in the ass. Plus she really liked Eddie. He was really the first boy she ever had a serious crush on. He was a blue eyed babe. All the girls thought so. She liked that an older guy liked her. So they got closer and Eddie asked Iris for things a lot of teenage guys ask for. He wanted to have sex, but Iris wasn't ready for that. He asked for other things as well, like blow and hand jobs but Iris really wasn't ready for anything other than kissing. So he tried his hand at asking for nudes. Iris wasn't too sure about doing that at all. She felt like he was moving way too fast for her. She was only 16 and her father and Wally would kill her. Eddie hinted that she was a tease. He then brought up the nude pictures again. He convinced her take them and just not show her face. He promised he wouldn't tell or show a soul, and he meant that. So she sent him the nudes he asked for. He still wanted more, but that was good enough for him for the time being. He figured he'd try again asking for sex at a later date. He could be patient a little while longer.
They were still talking and kissing without Wally's knowledge. Iris wound up at Eddie's house one day after school. She had her friends cover for her. Eddie decided to try his hand again at trying to get sex from Iris. She still refused because she still wasn't ready. Eddie turned into a bastard and told her that she either had to have sex with him or he was showing everyone her nude pictures. He totally and completely emotionally blackmailed her. She was 16 and really wasn't ready. But she couldn't let those pictures get out. She was laying in Eddie's bed scared as hell and didn't know what to do. She then lied and said she would sleep with him before excusing herself to go the bathroom to "get ready". She was thankful that her phone was in her pocket because he'd sure wonder what she needed her phone to go to the bathroom for.

She did the last thing in the world she wanted to do and called Wally. He couldn't believe she was calling him from Eddie's bathroom. He came to Eddie's house in what seemed like seconds to Iris. Eddie was beyond pissed that she called her brother. Wally was beyond pissed that he had to come and get her. He was so disappointed in her and angry as hell at Eddie. Iris had never seen Wally that angry before. He and Eddie exchanged some pretty harsh words. That lead to them coming to blows. Wally seriously wanted to kill Eddie for doing that to his sister. And if that wasn't bad enough, he still threatened to show her pictures because his ego was so bruised. He decided to show them to a few guys at school just to fuck with Wally and show people that even though Wally told people to stay away from his sister, he managed to get naked pictures of her. They then had to involve Joe. He was more angry than Wally was. The good thing is Joe's a detective and he really put fear into Eddie. Since Eddie was now 18, he threatened to throw him in jail if he did anything with those pictures. He told him he'd have to register as a sex offender and be branded as a pervert forever. His politician father wanted no parts of that and the pictures were completely wiped from his phone. Joe made sure to have the force make sure they were really gone and nowhere on the internet. Eddie and his father were again warned that if those pictures ever saw the light of day, that they would both pay dearly for it.

The good thing in all of it was he didn't send them out to anyone, just showed them around. Wally got into more fights about guys mentioning those pictures. After he broke a guy's nose, it wasn't mentioned again. Eddie and Wally graduated and Eddie went away to college shortly after and Iris got over that ordeal. That caused a huge rift between Iris and Wally. They went without speaking for what seemed like an eternity to them both because they were so close. That summer before Wally left for school was pure hell in the West house. Wally was livid that she didn't listen to him and that she got hurt in the process. They eventually made up because it just didn't seem like reality for Iris and Wally to be at odds. Joe made them make up for all of their sakes. Iris and Wally got over it and went back to being peas in a pod. She was just glad that the entire school, Central City, and world hadn't seen those pictures. Her life could've been ruined over that. Wally still maintained his stance on her not dating his friends and never let up with that. He made her promise not to do anything as reckless and idiotic as sending a guy nude pictures of her body.

Iris did start to date boys at her school once Wally graduated and wasn't there to spy on her anymore. It became a lot easier with him away at college. She started dating a boy named Joshua Miller. They had been friends since middle school. He was her first real boyfriend and her first kiss. They had their first kiss at her friend Shelly's party in middle school. Spin the bottle made that happen. Joshua finally made his move when Wally was out of the picture. They dated for about a year and Iris actually lost her virginity to him. They stayed together for another year after that. They went to junior and senior prom together. They went their separate ways after graduation because he joined the army by following in his father's footsteps. He didn't want her to put her life on hold for him while he was away. He seriously loved Iris and didn't want that kind of life for her. He was an extremely intelligent dude at just 18 years old. It could have been his military upbringing. Though his father got deployed a lot, their family stayed put in Central City. Iris hoped that nothing bad would happen to him because he was her first love. She went away to college and
of course continued to be a cheerleader. It was in her blood. She started dating a guy from the basketball team named David Mosley. Iris slept with him a few times until she found out he had no intentions of only dating and sleeping with her. So she just casually dated, but she soon realized that college guys only wanted to sleep with people. She wanted no parts of that. Some of them were just vulgar and disgusting. Some wanted to sleep with her just because she was a cheerleader. So she didn't date for a while. Then she went out to a club with a few of the girls on the squad. She drank a little and met a guy named Shawn Casey. He offered to buy her a drink. Iris thought he looked a lot like a young Denzel Washington and was intrigued. He was also a basketball player at Keystone University and reminded her a lot of Joshua. He was extremely hot and Iris just wanted to sleep with him. He asked her back to his place and she wanted to go with him. She went back to his dorm with him and they had a one night stand. She quietly slipped from his room before the sun rose. It wasn't going to go anywhere. She told him her name was Kelly. It was just one night and something she would probably never do again. That was many months ago and now here she is with Barry.

The guy she wanted something meaningful with. She was a meaningful relationship kind of girl. But this guy made her want more than that. This guy she also desperately wanted to sleep with. That had some things he wanted to try with her. What, she didn't know. She was excited about it nonetheless.

He gently laid on her and started kissing her again. He hungrily kissed her full lips like he would never kiss them again. He only wanted to kiss Iris forever. If he had his way, it would work out that way. He kissed her cheeks and her chin. He just couldn't get enough. He started to kiss her lips again before moving to her neck. He sucked and kissed on her erogenous zone until she moaned. Barry was a really good kisser and good at that. Him kissing her spot sent shivers down her spine. She had to stop him. He might leave evidence of their tryst.

"Barry, wait. Hold up." Iris says, though she really didn't want him to stop. Him kissing and sucking on her neck made her feel it right in between her legs. She wanted more.

He stopped sucking on her neck and looked at her. "What's wrong?" He asks in concern. He hope he didn't go too far because he was just getting started.

"You can't kiss me on my neck like that. What if you leave a hickey? I'm sure Wally will notice. Not in the mood to deal with him." Iris says surely.

"Ok. Yeah, you're right." He says and frowns a little.

"I'm sorry that Wally is cockblocking us and he isn't even here."

"What if I give you some that aren't visible?" He asks with a glint of mischief in his eyes.

"What?" Iris asks.

"What if I kiss you places other than your mouth and neck?"

"Ok. That's fine." Iris says and gets turned on all over again. That gave them options.

He kissed her on her lips again, then he lowered his body and started to kiss her breasts. He didn't remove her tank, just kissed around it. He lowered it some and exposed one of her breasts. He almost turned into a 13 year old boy seeing a breast for the first time. Iris' breasts were perky and her nipples were ripe. He kissed one and then the other. He lightly licked her nipples and Iris wanted more. He must have sensed that and started to suck on one. He lightly bit it and teased it with his teeth. He hoped that she liked that. He saw that she liked that from the reaction he got
from her. He repeated those exact actions as he paid special attention to her erect nipples as he nibbled on both of them. He licked around the areola and took her nipple into his mouth. He licked and sucked on her nipples like he was hungry and they were food. He got more turned on when she moaned. It was music to his ears. He fondled and teased it with his tongue until he felt Iris tug on his hair and moaned again.

He lowered himself and went further south and started to kiss on her abdomen. He blew into her belly button and Iris quivered when she felt his fingers under the seam of her panties. He kissed the insides of her thighs and kissed her lips through her panties.

She lightly jerked from that action. She liked that shit. She liked it a lot. Never had that done before and she really wanted him to do more. She felt the moisture from his lips through the thin, lacy fabric. He stroked her outer lips through her panties with his thumb. He felt the heat on his thumb that caused his manhood to stir. He almost lost control when Iris moaned from his actions. He was getting ready to remove her panties when he hesitated. That was off limits and he foolishly forgot that for a moment. He came dangerously close to doing that. So, so close.

He wanted Iris badly.
Badly.

He moved his hand to rub on the inside of her thighs again and forced himself not to remove her panties. He got a bad feeling and he wanted to punch himself for how he felt. They never should have went this far. He knew he wouldn't want to stop, but he just couldn't help himself.

He had the girl of his dreams nearly naked in front of him and he felt like an idiot. What made him think he could resist her and move on in the first place? He isn't that foolish to think absolutely crazy things like that. But he had to take his strongly developing feelings and respect for her before his horny college boy dreams. Even though he was extremely aroused and wanted Iris more than he could describe, he knew he, they, couldn't do it.

Iris wondered why he stopped. Truth be told, she wanted him to take her panties off. But she promised she would keep them on. She still wanted to know what was going on. She looked down at him. "Why'd you stop?" She asks quietly.

He ran his hands through his hair in frustration, but managed to smile at her. He didn't want to make her feel bad. "I stopped because I was about to go too far." He confesses and smiles at her again. It may have looked like a cringe.

"How do you know you were going too far?" Iris asks. She sat up and looked at him.

"I know I was. I was getting ready to remove your panties. We promised we'd keep those on. I don't want to go too far and have you kick me out and break up with me." Barry admits truthfully.

Iris felt like she could just scoop Barry up and keep him with her forever. He was amazing. An awesome amazing guy, who seriously didn't give himself enough credit. She had no intentions of breaking up with him. None at all. Unless he did some truly unforgivable bullshit that she couldn't move past and then she had no choice. "I'm not going to kick you out or break up with you, Bear. That's the last thing I want to do."

Barry smiled at her. He leaned forward and gave her another kiss. "Really?" He asks just to be sure.

"Yes, really. Now you're a smart guy. A genius even. I'm sure you can figure out a way to do some
of the things you have planned without me having to get naked. I think that'll make things more
interesting and exciting. Don't you think?" She asks and winks at him. She gave him a quick peck
and laid back on the bed and pretty much braced herself.

"Ok. Well, telling me if I'm going too far still stands." Barry says. He made himself comfortable
beneath her. He took his hand and slid it under her and started to rub her ass. He started to play
with the bands of her panties and slipped his finger under them. He slid his hand down her ass and
stopped rubbed her slit. He slid his hand to the front and slipped it under the seam where her
vagina ended and her thigh started. He rubbed the crease and that turned him on. He slid his hand
further and rubbed smooth skin. "Is that ok?" He asks.

"Yes." Iris says. She wanted him to stick his fingers further, but she'd let him take his time. They
did have all night.

He used his thumb to slide her panties over some and rubbed her lips. God how he wished those
panties weren't in the way though they left something to his imagination. He rubbed his thumb
along her lips and lightly grazed her clitoris. Iris let out a small moan and Barry took that as his
sign to continue. He took his thumb and rubbed it in distinct circles on her clitoris. Iris lightly
jerked from the sensation. It felt really good. Not the same as when she touched herself, because
she knew her body better than Barry did at the moment. But this was hotter to her because it was
his fingers. His fingers that were touching her there. He rubbed his thumb up and down her
opening. He slowly stuck his thumb inside of her and felt his penis jump at how wet she was. Her
wetness was surprising and turned him on immensely. He almost came right then and there. He
moved his thumb in and out of her slowly. She moaned from his actions and that really made him
happy and so damn hot for her.

How did he get that lucky? How? To get a great girl like Iris, that was awesome, and beautiful,
smart, funny, friendly, loving, caring, an amazing sister and daughter. He assumed she was an
amazing friend because of how close she and Linda were. Flirted with him and fixed him breakfast.
She agreed to be his girlfriend. Told him she had no intentions of breaking up with him. Was
currently letting him explore her body. Liked him for the tall, lanky and gangly nerd that he was.
Made him feel special. Was genuinely interested in him as a person. How did he get so lucky?

He was never letting her go. If it was her or Wally, he was choosing her. He'd hate to have to lose
Wally, but he knew there wasn't another Iris in the world. He knew that. He didn't want to think
that Wally was replaceable, but Iris wasn't. No other girl could hold a candle to her. He had just
met her and knew for certain that he had met the love of his life at 20 years old. His father met his
mother at 18. They lasted until she died. Now him thinking he would marry her didn't seem that
farfetched anymore. He would do everything in his power to make sure they lasted. He'd make
sure they both graduated college and that would be the end of it. He didn't need to date or sleep
with a lot of girls to find what was right in front of him. He was a nerd and he was nowhere near
stupid. He knew a good thing when he saw it.

Barry changed his approach and stopped fingering her. He laid down and kissed the inside of her
thighs again. He sucked, licked and kissed that area and left several hickeys. No one would know
they were there but him and Iris.

Iris was seriously near and almost over the edge at him fingering her and kissing the insides of her
thighs again. Him sucking on that area made her want him to take her panties off and bury his face in her.
She really wanted that. She wasn't going to ask. She shouldn't ask him for a thing like that. Maybe
after they were together a little bit longer. Then she could return the favor. That seemed like a
naughty and fun thing for them to do.
Barry was a huge nerd, but he knew what he was doing when he touched her. He was doing everything right. She liked this huge dork. Her human puppy that was in dog mode. She couldn't wait to actually sleep with him. When they could learn and explore each other and find out what they liked. She was a hopeless romantic and the intimacy they were sharing is something that she really wanted. She wanted Barry with her forever. And she'd been told on more than one occasion that nerds make the best husbands. Her nerd was hot. Her nerd ran. He was still a jock. Her nerdy jock. She'd be a fool to let Barry go. He was hers and she was keeping him. Wally would accept it eventually. He would. They would still keep it a secret, but he would.

Barry put his face to her vagina again and kissed her lips through the fabric. Iris knew that for certain the next time they tried this, she wouldn't be wearing any panties.

This was extremely erotic to her and almost making her come apart at the seams. "Oh my god, Bear."

He looked up at her and smiled. "You like this?"

"Mmmmmhhhhhhmmmmm..." She moaned out. She really liked what Barry was doing to her. And he wasn't even actually going down on her. But this felt so good. He was teasing the hell out of her and it really made her thirsty for more. That's the good thing about it. It wasn't turning her off and making her want to yell at him for not pleasing her. It was doing just the opposite. It was making her hotter for him and the anticipation of when they really would do more things like this made her want to do things to him.

He went back to what he was doing and this time carefully slid her panties aside. He didn't completely expose her, but he showed enough. He almost lost it from the sight. Iris wasn't the least bit shy or embarrassed about this at all. She knew she had a great body. Barry pretty much had already seen her naked anyway. She just needed to keep what she had on on her body because they would definitely have sex if she was naked. No ifs, ands, or buts about it.

Barry placed kisses along the part of her vagina that was exposed and that almost drove Iris wild. "Oh, shit. Bear." Iris says as she slowly, but powerfully had an orgasm. It started out gentle, then hit her with a bang.

Barry knew he had her right where he wanted her. He'd go further soon enough. He slid her panties back into place and moved towards her. He laid next to her. He was hornier than ever. Iris brought out desires in him he never knew he had. He wanted to try everything with her.

Iris rolled towards him and placed a huge kiss to his lips. She wanted to do a whole lot more than kiss, but she'd wait until the timing was right.

"That was kinda fun." Barry says as he lightly breaks the kiss and stares at Iris.

Iris stared deep into his eyes. "It was." Is all she says before she goes to kiss him again. She lifted her leg and put it around his waist. She took her free hand and lightly stroked his chest. Yup, Barry was a lot more built than she thought he was. She stroked his abdomen and paid special attention to his six pack. She would never get over him having one as long as she lived. Barry just seemed to be so lowkey about all the sexy things about him. The things his fingers and his mouth just did to her. She never would've guessed that he had it in him.

She slid her hand down the front of his boxers and lightly grabbed him. Iris must have somehow sensed that he needed and wanted her to touch him too. She reached down and started to stroke him. He stared at her with wide eyes and broke the kiss again. "Are we having more fun?" He asks
playfully. He needed a quick distraction because Iris had his penis in her hand. He wanted to explode just from thinking about it.

"What do you think?" She asks as she winks at him and continues to stroke.

He goes back to kissing her, his erection becoming more defined. She felt the thick, prominent veins running through his penis and she seriously wondered just how long it would take for her to have it inside of her. Yup, Barry was definitely a little bigger than she thought he would be. She rubbed and massaged his engorged dick until it was at the point of eruption.

"I'm about to cum, Iris." He says as he gently pulled her hand away and released right into his boxers. This night was going better than he had hoped. He wanted to touch Iris again.

He slid his hand between her legs and slowly slipped his fingers inside of her. He noticed that she was wetter than she was earlier so that really let him know she was ready for him and wanted to do this. He stopped kissing her lips and went for her neck as he continued to finger her. He got more turned on when she moaned into his ear. He got hard again from touching her and her moaning. He fingered her some more as she continued to moan into his ear until he stopped and grabbed her by the waist and rolled them over.

She broke the kiss. "You're really good at that. Wow." Iris says as she leans up to kiss him again while pulling him down by his shoulders on top of her. They both felt electric shocks surge through their bodies. Their electric kissing continued as Barry pressed his body into hers. Iris felt his rock hard penis press against her and she was extremely grateful that they were both still wearing underwear because as close as he was to her, he would be inside of her if they didn't have that barrier of clothing protecting them.

Barry had to mentally plead with himself to force his arousal and his erection to go away. He needed it to go away. He couldn't go back on what he said earlier about taking sex off the table and then decide that he did want to have sex with Iris. Well, he already did want to have sex with her. He just didn't want to ruin the future he saw with her by having sex the first day they met. He would never, ever think less of her if she did sleep with him, but he really wanted to build something with her.

He also wanted to try and fuck her brains out after making love to her. There was a difference. But right now he'd have to settle for fingerling her. She seemed to like it and he got her off. That's the important thing.

Barry's fingers inside of her felt increasingly good. His combination of his fingers being inside of her and his thumb rubbing her clit did wonderful things to her. It felt amazing. Really good. So good that she had another orgasm. This one more powerful than the first. Her body started to jerk and she buried her face in Barry's neck.

"Shit….shh Bear." She says as she lightly bites his neck and moans into it. Her father was a heavy sleeper, but she didn't want to chance waking him. Especially if she was making that kind of noise. He really didn't need to hear her having an orgasm. Not at all. She wanted him to believe she was still a virgin right along with Wally. It was better that way. As far as she was concerned, she was one until she put on a white dress and had Joe walk her down the aisle. She hated that she really had to hide that part about herself, but it wasn't hard to hide. When she was younger it was because she lived at home. She was able to hide things from her father easily because he worked a lot and Wally was away at school. Things became a breeze when she went to college. Now she was sneaking and fooling around with her new boyfriend while her father slept down the hall. The thought of them creeping seemed to excite Iris. Different from when she was sneaking with Eddie. They never did as much as she and Barry did. Just kissed and he tried to get her to do other things
until he showed his true colors. This sneaking around was almost erotic to her. Plus Barry was a totally different guy than Eddie. She didn't think he would ask her to do something that she didn't want to do. She knew he wouldn't. He had plenty of opportunity to do so and he didn't. He could have persuaded her to go further. He could have just did what he wanted and taken her clothes off. He did none of that. That made her like him more. She wanted him to do far more than he did. In due time, they would. One day they'd do everything. One day they definitely would.

Iris came down from her orgasm high and moved her face from Barry's neck. He kind of felt like a champion for bringing that out of Iris. Twice. And she brought something out of him too. Their night was great. He didn't want it to end. He knew they'd have to cut that out once Wally brought his meddling ass home. Linda really needed to keep him occupied.

Barry removed his fingers from inside Iris slowly. He wanted to put more than his fingers inside her. He had to be patient. He just moved his hand to her ass and pulled her middle closer to his. He was still aroused, but he was used to it at this point. "I take it you liked that." He says as he placed a kiss to her cheek.

Iris took her face from his neck and looked at him. She gave him a sexy, devilish smile. "Hell yeah I liked that. You've got some magic fingers, Bear."

"I try." He says and they laugh.

Iris just quietly thinks for a moment. "You know, if somebody had told me a day ago that I'd meet a guy, make him my boyfriend, and fool around with him right now, I would have laughed in their face."

"I totally agree. I never expected to come home with Wally and meet you, and have you be my girlfriend. I just thought we'd become friends too and that's it. Plus Wally told me you were off limits and I really wanted to go by that. But I can't." Barry admits.

"I can't either. I know I'm not supposed to date his friends." Iris says. She wondered if she should tell him about the Eddie thing. *Did he have a right to know? Was it his business? It happened so long ago, though.* She doesn't care what he's done before he's met her. As long as he doesn't have any diseases, she doesn't care what he did in his past. *But does Barry have the right to know this? That I "dated" another of Wally's friends.* She didn't want him to think that's a trend of hers because it isn't. She liked and knew Eddie more than 4 years ago. She was a kid then. A stupid kid that learned from her mistakes. *But what if Wally tells him and he takes it the wrong way? What if he tells Barry the story to get him to stay away?* She was confused and did not know what to do. Maybe she would ask Linda. She always gave good advice.

"Well, I'm glad we're breaking Wally's rule together. Can you imagine how awful it would be if we didn't feel the same way?" Barry asks.

"What do you mean?" Iris inquires.

"I mean, what if I developed a crush on you and you didn't like me back? Or I just go against you and Wally and tell him to hell with his rules and that I'm dating you anyway?"

"What if I liked you and you didn't like me back?" Iris proposes and looks at him.

"Impossible." Is all Barry says.

"Why is that impossible?" She asks in wonderment.

"Have you seen you?" Barry asks almost incredulously.
"What's that supposed to mean?" Iris asks as she stares into his adorable face.

"It means that you're a gorgeous cheerleader that can have any guy you want. Plus you're amazing. You have an awesome personality, you're a great cook. I'm just a huge nerd that happens to run fast. I'm lucky to have you. I really can't believe that you want me too. I hope this isn't really some cruel dream. Like I'm still sleeping in Wally's bed and you haven't scared the hell out of me yet." Barry says and they both laugh.

"This isn't some cruel dream, Barry. You're right, I can have any guy I want. And I have the guy I want. And yes, you are lucky to have me." Iris jokes and winks at him.

Barry felt his heart flutter at her saying that. He wasn't joking about being lucky to have her. He was the luckiest damn guy in the world. He leaned forward to kiss her again. He knew their night together would soon come to an end and he was stocking up on kisses. "I had a great time with you, Iris." Barry says sincerely once he finishes kissing her.

"I had a great time with you, Barry." She adds truthfully. She lightly rolled away from him and checked her phone and saw that almost 3 a.m. She wondered where the time went. "Can you believe it's almost 3?" She asks.

"No, not really. I guess we were having too much fun."

"Speaking of fun..." Iris says and trails off. She turned on her phone and leaned into Barry. "Say cheese." She says and snaps their picture. Their first official couple picture.

"A selfie? Really, Iris?" He asks in a joking tone.

"Yes, a selfie. Actually, this is an usie. I needed a picture of us together. Now I'm going to Instagram it and give Wally a heart attack." She jokes.

"You're joking, right?" He asks in concern.

"Of course I'm joking. Just trying to have more fun, Bear." She says and puts her phone back on her nightstand.

"That was totally different from the fun we just had."

"That fun was amazing. And, I hate to spoil the fun, but I have to get up for a moment." She says and gets out of the bed. She had to tie her hair up. Good thing Barry has already seen her with her hair bonnet on. This might scar the poor guy.

Barry watched her get out the bed. He just watched her as she walked over to her dresser. He wondered what she was about to do. "What are you about to do?" He asks.

"Um, I have to tie my hair up. You can close your eyes if you want. I know you're not used to this." She jokes, though she's serious.

"I don't need to close my eyes, Iris." He says.

"That's good to hear." She says and starts on her nightly mission of tying her hair up. Barry just laid there and watched her. She felt him watching her. She wasn't the least bit embarrassed. She looked over at him and the expression on his face and thought he was the most adorable thing ever. "Go ahead and ask." She says and laughs to lighten the load.

"Ask what?"
"Ask me why I do this. I know I'm your first black girlfriend, so you've never seen this before. Am I right?" She asks playfully.

Barry swallowed. "Yes, you're right. I don't want to wrongfully offend you."

Iris giggled to herself as she tied her scarf around her just wrapped hair. "Well I, along with most black women, do this because we don't have to wash our hair every day and it protects our hairstyle, and because black hair is dryer and more fragile than white hair, it saves it from breaking off and getting damaged by retaining moisture."

"Good to know." Barry says.

"Hey, it is what it is. I would probably hide this aspect from you for a while since you are white and aren't used to this, but you've already seen it so there's no need for me to fake the funk. Truthfully, I'd never let a guy I was dating see me like this. Maybe after I married the guy or something."

"It's not really a big deal, Iris. I can handle it." He jokes. "I don't even see why you'd hide it from someone."

"I'm glad you can handle this or we'd be doomed. This is what you signed up for when you decided to date a black woman." She says and winks at him as she puts her bonnet on. "Only my father and Wally have seen this side of me."

"Iris, that was the best decision I've ever made. I'll watch you tie your hair up at night forever." Barry says and hears how it sounds. He means every word though. He didn't give a shit about her having to do that. He gave a shit about her.

"Yeah, I think I'll keep you." Iris says as she walks back over to the bed. She climbed back in the bed with him and he pulled her into his arms.

"I have to leave soon right?" He asks.

"Yes. I don't want you to though."

"I don't want to go."

"Well, we can just lay like this until it's time for you to go. Who knows when we'll get another night like this." Iris says.

"I know. Wally being around has never been a problem for me before."

"I'm used to Wally by now. I've had 20 years of experience with that pain in the ass. I love that pain in the ass and can't get rid of him." Iris says and she and Barry laugh.

"Yeah, I get what you're saying. I look up to Wally like he's my big brother. I haven't known him nowhere near as long as you have, but he's a good friend I'd hate to lose."

Iris shifted her body and looked at Barry. "I don't want you to lose him as your friend either."

Barry felt uneasy. He looked at her carefully. "You aren't suggesting we end this, are you?" He had to ask even if he didn't want the answer.

"Of course not. We just have to make sure he doesn't find out. We're really going to have to hide this while you're here."
"And after…?" Barry asks.

"We'll be in the same kind of relationship Wally and Linda are in. They've made it work. We just can't tell anyone."

"That's doable."

"I have a question." Iris says as she settles comfortably in his arms again.

"You can ask me anything."

"Why did you say Wally probably thinks you're a virgin?"

"Because he always tells me that I'll find a girl that likes how big of a nerd I am if I just lost the sweaters. Plus he always tells me that he's going to get me laid one day." Barry says.

Iris laughs out loud. She looked at Barry. "Isn't it funny how right he was?"

Barry grinned at her. "Was he right?" He asks just because.

Iris rolled over on top of Barry again. She put her mouth to his and kissed him deeply while she started to rub his penis through his boxers. "Yes. He. Was." She says through kisses.

The next morning, Wally came home and found Barry snoring on the air mattress in his room. He got in his bed and tried to do the same. He woke up hours later. Their father had already left for work, so it was just the three of them in the house. He took a quick trip to the bathroom and came back to find Barry waking up.

"Morning. What time is it?" Barry asks as he looked around. He was worn out from staying up half the night with Iris.

"Morning. It's after 11." Wally says.

"After 11? Really?" Barry asks incredulously.

"Yeah. What did you and Iris do last night?" He asks and hopes he doesn't have to kill Barry.

"We just watched movies. Then she got on her phone with some of her friends. She practically texted and talked the whole night. I think she forgot I was there. I came back in here and watched movies on my laptop after she pretty much ignored me for hours." Barry lies, hoping Wally buys it.

"That sounds about right." Wally says and laughs.

Barry just shrugged. "I'm used to girls ignoring me." He says, though that's the truth.

"I wonder if Iris cooked." Wally says to change the subject, though he's hungry as hell. He was happy to hear that Iris ignored Barry. He looked like his feelings were hurt.

"I hope she did. I'm starving." Barry says. He gets up and goes to the bathroom. He came back to
find Wally gone. He followed Iris' advice and just went down to the kitchen. Wally was in there looking in the fridge.

"Well, that's a negative on Iris cooking. I guess we have to fend for ourselves." Wally says.

"Fine with me." Barry says and sits down at the table.

Wally was still looking in the fridge when Iris walked in the kitchen. She subtly winked at Barry and he returned it.

"Good morning, guys." Iris says.

"Good morning." They say in unison.

"So, we get no breakfast today?" Wally asks.

Iris rolled her eyes. "It's almost 12. You have hands. I'm not your personal chef." She says smartly.

"But Barry is a guest here." Wally says.

"Barry is your guest. And he has hands too." She again says smartly.

"Do you hear this, Barry? Yesterday she was nice to you, now this." Wally says. He figured his talk with Iris finally sunk in. Maybe she realized what a huge nerd Barry really is and decided that he isn't her type.

"Yeah, I hear her." Is all he says. He knows it's just an act.

Iris just huffed and knocked Wally out of the way of the fridge. She took out makings for sandwiches. "I had to make a good first impression." Iris says and makes a face at Wally.

"I see that. Because you sure aren't making one today. Especially if you came in the kitchen like that." Wally says and points at her.

"Like what?" Iris asks harshly

"With your headwrap on. You never let anyone see you with that thing on." Wally jokes.

"I woke up like this." Iris jokes and Barry and Wally laugh.

"We can see that. I think you've scarred Barry for life."

"He'll live. He'll forget all about this when he cuddles with a pretty girl and runs his fingers through her hair." Iris says in a sarcastic tone and Wally and Barry look at each other.

Wally goes to sit at the table next to Barry. "Did you say something to upset her last night?" He asks.

"No. Not that I know of."

"Sorry, man. I don't know what happened, but you seriously don't stand a chance now. Even if she is off limits." Wally says quietly.

"Why do you say that?" Barry inquires.

"Because she let you see her with her hair wrapped up. She would NEVER let a guy she's interested
in see that. Did you ask her about it or something?" Wally asked.

"Yeah. I asked what it was and she just looked at me like I was speaking German or something." Barry lies.

Wally shook his head. Then he laughed. "You never ask a black woman about her hair or her headwrap. Never." Wally says and laughs some more. He just had to laugh at the fact that Barry stuck his foot in his mouth and turned Iris off all on his own. He knew his sister well. Barry didn't stand a snowball's chance in hell with Iris now.

Or so he thought.

Chapter End Notes

I have to say that I must apologize to people for making Eddie look like a terrible person. I loved Eddie's character and don't think he's a bad guy at all. I just tried to bring light to a real issue that happens with teenagers. In spite of that, I know people will hate that I did that. I know people will hate this story no matter what I write. Sometimes I wonder if it's me or the writing. Anywho, I hope you all enjoyed this latest chapter. Feedback is greatly appreciated. Kudos are hugs! :)
"I wasn't pretending."

Chapter Summary

Conversations and connections between Barry, Iris, Wally, and Linda.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the delay. I'll get better at posting more frequently. I want to have this done before the show comes back on.

During text messages, Iris is in Italics, Barry is bold, Linda is underlined.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Wally continued to laugh at the situation at hand. He thought it was extremely funny how things seemed to go down. He had secretly hoped that Barry would embarrass himself in front of Iris and that would make her stop flirting with him. And low and behold, it happened. He knew how incredibly headfast and stubborn Iris was. Barry was now out of the running. Though he really wasn’t in it in the first place. They both knew they were off limits to each other, but it didn’t really stop them from flirting with each other. Then they finally got the chance to get to know each other better, and now Iris wasn’t as interested and he thought she was. He knew that she didn’t truly dislike Barry now, but she wouldn’t consider him romantically anymore. Wally was glad that he didn’t have to go to plan b and things fell into place without his meddling.

“It’s really not that funny, Wally.” Iris says as she looks up from what she was doing. She was happy as hell that Wally took the bait and was now loving how things were going. She knew her big brother well. This was the perfect way to throw him off. If she acted like she was no longer interested in Barry, he would back off.

“Oh, yes it is.” Wally says and laughs some more.

“No, it isn’t.” Barry says sharply and Wally looks at him.

“I’m sorry, but it is. I won’t laugh at your expense anymore though.” Wally says and gets one last laugh out.

Iris decided to change the subject for now. Things were falling into place nicely. This would be a piece of cake. She walked over to the sink and washed her hands. “So, since I am making myself a sandwich, I’ll be nice and make you guys one too. This is the last meal I’ll make for you, so you’d better enjoy it.” She lies.

Wally looked over at her like she had truly lost it. “What?” He asks incredulously.

“You heard me.” Iris says smartly as she returns to the island to start making their sandwiches.

“That is totally unacceptable, Iris. How can you just say you’re not going to cook anymore?” He
asks in almost a pained voice.

“Because you and your guest are making fun of me, that’s why.” Iris says.

Wally looked at Barry. “You’d better apologize.” He says sternly.

“I already did.” Barry says as he eyes Wally.

“Well, it must not have been good enough. Do it again. You’re not going to mess this up for me. Do you know how good my sister can cook?” Wally asks.

“Yes, I already know. I’ll try again for your sake.” Barry says. He looks over at Iris. He knew he was just going along with her little scheme to get Wally off their backs. “Iris?” He asks expectantly.

Iris looked up at him. “Yes, Bartholomew.” She says with a hint of aggravation.

“Wow, she’s calling you by your first name. That sucks.” Wally says.

“Hush, Wallace.” Iris says and looks over at Wally.

Wally held up his hands like he was backing off. “Sorry.” He says.

“Iris, I’m really sorry I insulted you. I didn’t mean to.” Barry says sincerely.

“Yeah, right.” Iris says in a smart tone.

“No, I really am. I didn’t know I was insulting you. I really didn’t mean to. Will you please accept my apology?” Barry asks and puts on his sad little puppy dog face. Iris looked over at him and wished that he hadn’t done that. She was already thinking that he was her human puppy, and now he was really looking like one. She was nowhere near even mad at him for real. This was all just for show, but the way Barry looked was doing something to her. His adorable face made her weak in the knees.

“Why should I accept your apology?” She asks just to buy some time to make Wally think she really was upset.

“Because I’m truly sorry. I would never want to intentionally hurt you or your feelings. I really didn’t know any better. I’m a jerk.” He says to lay it on thick.

“That you are.” She replies surely and Barry winced. Wally did too.

“I deserve that.” Barry states quietly.

“So, you’re not going to mention my headwrap anymore?” She asks as she gets plates from the dishwasher.

“No. I promise I won’t. I don’t even see it. What headwrap?” He asks and smiles that goofy and awkward smile that Iris has grown to love in such a short period of time.

“I thought you weren’t going to mention it anymore?” Iris asks.

“I’m not. I’m sorry. Do you forgive me?” He asks.

Wally wanted her to forgive Barry because the boy seriously didn’t know any better. Even though he’s his roommate and one of the most self-aware white people he’s ever met. He knew that Barry
acted awkward in situations he wasn’t used to. But Barry was very socially aware. He knew the way the world worked. He knew he had privilege that Wally didn’t have. He knew the things he could and couldn’t say. Wally never even had to go over things like that with him like he had to with his roommate his freshman year. Barry was a really cool dude. He was raised right and there wasn’t a racist or prejudiced bone in his body. He knew when some people were faking it, and Barry wasn’t. He just simply made a mistake when it came to asking Iris about that.

“Come on Iris. He’s really sorry.” Wally says to help Barry out. Though he knew his chances with Iris were done, he still didn’t want there to be tension between them. He was glad that Barry had blown it, but wanted them to move on.

Iris exhaled. “Fine. Ok, Barry. I accept your apology. Don’t let it happen again. I might not be so forgiving next time.” She says in a taut tone.

Barry breathed a fake sigh of relief. “Good. Thanks.” He says and smiles at her.

“See, that wasn’t so bad.” Wally says.

Iris decided to change the subject again. “So what are you two knuckleheads getting into today?” She asks as she starts making the turkey, ham and cheese sandwiches.

Wally and Barry looked at each other. “I have no idea. Are we all hanging out again?” He asks as he looks at both Iris and Barry.

Iris hunched her shoulders then shook her head. “No, I have plans.” She says as she continues with the sandwich making.


“Oh, I’m just going to hang out with my friend Mike. He invited me over to watch Netflix and chill.” Iris says, knowing that will get a rise out of Wally. She just knew it would and she couldn’t wait for his explosion. She was going to play as dumb as possible. She was really going to enjoy this moment.

Wally jerked his head and looked at her. “Netflix and chill?” He asks incredulously.

Barry was just watching the exchange between his friend and girlfriend. This was actually hilarious. He loved how Wally and Iris got along. He really did. He hated that Wally was almost forbidding him from openly dating her, but that didn’t stop him and Iris. She was his girlfriend and there wasn’t a damn thing Wally or anybody else was going to do about it. He didn’t want to be the reason the relationship they had, especially moments like the one they’re having now went away. He cared about both of them too much for that. In totally different ways, but Iris and Wally were really special to him. Even their father whom he didn’t really get a chance to know. He hoped that would change soon. He wanted to get along with his girlfriend’s father. If he and Iris lasted as long as he wanted them to, then Joe would be a major part of his life as well.

“Yeah. What? Is something wrong with that?” She asks as her hands kept moving.

“Is something wrong with that? Are you serious, Iris?” Wally asks in concern.

“Yes. What did I say that was so wrong?” She asks innocently.

“Do you know what ‘Netflix and chill’ means?” He asks. Obviously she didn’t and that kind of made him happy. He was glad to know that she wasn’t just ‘Netflix and chilling’ while she was away at school. He didn’t want to have to kill anyone. Now he knew he would have to kill this
Mike dude, whomever he was. He invited his little sister over to ‘Netflix and chill’ and Wally wasn’t happy about that whether he knew the guy or not. He wouldn’t have been so upset if he didn’t ask her to come over and watch ‘Netflix and chill’. If he just wanted to take Iris out on a date, he would be cool. This was totally unacceptable. And he wasn’t allowing it to happen.

Iris looked up from what she was doing at her overprotective, meddling big brother. She knew she had gotten him with that. “What?” She asks, feigning ignorance.

“I said, do you know what ‘Netflix and chill’ means?” He asks again, a little sharper than he did the first time.

Iris made a face. “Uh, it means come over and watch something on Netflix while hanging with the person you’re watching Netflix with. Why are you asking me silly questions, Wally?”

Wally looked over at Barry. He just shrugged and scoffed. He made a face too to let Wally know he wasn’t happy about Iris going over some dude’s house either. Though he knew that wasn’t even on her radar and wasn’t going to happen. He loved seeing Iris yank Wally’s chain. He deserved it.

Wally took his eyes off Barry and looked back at Iris. “No, that is not what ‘Netflix and chill’ means Iris.” He says and again sounds more like her father than her brother.

“How doesn’t it mean that? I’ve watched Netflix and chilled with lots of people before.” Iris says and goes back to making the sandwiches. She wanted to laugh, but she couldn’t blow her cover. Getting over on and back at Wally was going to be a lot of fun. “Barry and I Netflixed and chilled last night.”

“What? Iris. Tell me you’re kidding.” Wally says. He looks at Barry who looks just how he looked when he caught him sniffing his sweatshirt after Iris was wearing it.

“No, I’m not kidding. What’s the big deal?” Iris asks. She was loving this more and more. It served Wally’s ass right.

Wally looked like he had been punched in the gut. He looked at Barry again.

“You and Barry Netflixed and chilled last night?” He asks slowly.

“Yes, we did. What did you expect us to do? Am I missing something? Barry? What is he talking about?” She asks in exasperation.

Barry just scoffed again and threw his hands up. He wasn’t answering that even if he and Iris were playing a game.

Wally felt himself getting heated. “Iris. ‘Netflix and chill’ means to invite someone over for sex.” He says and it pained him to say that. Hearing her say she did that with Barry almost sickened him. Iris was still and always would be his little sister. He didn’t want to think about her having sex with someone. It just rubbed him the wrong way. He knew it was sexist and misogynistic, but he didn’t care. Not one bit.

Iris burst out laughing. “What?” She asks through laughs.

“Exactly what I said.” Wally says in a sharp tone.

“I’m sorry, but that is hilarious. You’ll come up with anything to keep me from living, won’t you?” Iris asks as she raised an eyebrow to him.

“I’m not making anything up. ‘Netflix and chill’ means ‘come over and fuck’. And now you’re saying that’s what you and Barry did? I don’t believe this.” Wally says to a shocked Barry and Iris.
“So, what’s wrong with that?” Iris asks and she can swear she sees smoke come out of Wally’s ears. She grabbed a pickle and bit into it just to fuck with Wally. She was doing more than fucking with Wally. She knew she was getting to her adorable ass boyfriend as well. She watched as Barry turned red and she loved every bit of it.

Barry became forcefully aroused when Iris did that. He was glad he was sitting down. He wanted to go back into Iris’ room and do things. It was just too bad that they had a fucking babysitter. Where’s Linda when you need her? Barry asked himself.

“What’s wrong with that? Are you kidding?” Wally asks.

“No, I’m not kidding.” Iris taunts.

“So you’re trying to tell me that you and Barry had sex last night.” He says as a hostile statement.

“What? No! Barry and I didn’t have sex last night, you idiot.” Iris says. We did other stuff. Iris thinks to herself. Her activities with Barry the night before made her lady parts tingle. She wanted to do more with Barry. He made her feel really good the night before and she wanted to do that again. Real soon. Like right at that moment. He turned her all the way on. She wanted to do something about that.

“Is calling me an idiot necessary? You were talking like that’s what happened. I thought I was going to have to kill you and Barry.” Wally says.

“Why? Because we could’ve had sex? You fuck, I’m sure. Didn’t you just spend the night with Linda? Two nights in a row, I might add.” Iris says sarcastically and smiles at Wally. She went to the cabinet and got a bag of chips. She had to control her laughter as she turned around. This was so sweet.

Barry made an indistinguishable sound and Wally looked at him. Wally bit his lip to keep from blowing a gasket.

“That’s different.” Is all he says.

“How is that different?” Iris asks once she turns back around.

“It just is.”

“How?” Iris asks.

“I just said that it just is.” Wally says through clenched teeth.

“Why? Because I’m a girl and you’re a boy? Linda has the same equipment I have. Why is it ok that she can use hers, but I can’t use mine?” Iris asks smartly.

“Because Linda isn’t my little sister.” Wally replies.

“So? She’s Doug’s little sister. How do you think he feels knowing you’re having sex with his little sister?” She asks matter of factly.

Wally really had no argument. He just exhaled forcefully. “Linda and I have been together for a long time. Since I was 15 and she was 14. Sex is just something that happens in most relationships. I doubt you’re even with this guy, Mike, is it?” He asks in a smart tone.

“Whatever, Wallace. Your double standards aren’t working on me. My father’s name is Joe. Not
Wallace. Besides, you should be happy.” Iris says as she dumps chips on her plate and picks it up. She grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge and came over and sat down at the table.

“Happy about what?” He asks.

“Happy that I’m not sleeping with your friend. You always say that I’m off limits to your friends, and we’re sticking to that. Right, Barry.” Iris says as she pops a chip into her mouth.

Barry just looked at her and felt something stir deep inside of him. He wanted to tell Wally to beat it and take Iris up to her room and do more than the shit they did the night before. A whole lot more. He wanted to put his hands and mouth in places he did and didn’t get to the night before. He was almost coming apart at the seams.

“Right.” Barry answers almost glumly. He knew he was just playing a role. Iris’ idea to do this to throw Wally off was coming along nicely.

“So you should be the happiest guy in the world right now. You’re home. You get to see your girlfriend and your family. You shouldn’t have any complaints.” Iris says as she takes a bite of her sandwich.

“But I do have complaints. I don’t like the idea of you going over some guy’s house to ‘Netflix and chill’.”

“Wally, you have nothing to worry about.” Iris says.

‘I don’t? Why not?” He asks.

Iris took a sip of her water. Barry was making her hot. She wanted to leap across the table and pounce on him. “Because I’m saving myself for marriage.” She lies with a straight face.

“You’d better be.” Wally says.

“Of course I am. I have to be able to wear a white dress when Dad gives me away. Don’t you think he’d be embarrassed if I put on a red dress?” Iris joked. She was going to wear a white dress anyway, though she wasn’t even remotely a virgin. She’d let Wally believe that she is until her wedding night if that would make him feel better about things. While she hadn’t done full on things that would warrant a red dress, she wouldn’t be as pure as the driven snow on her wedding day. She was planning on really putting a damper on that soon enough with her Bear. Just the fact that she’d be doing things like that with Barry, and Wally having no idea excited her to no end. And the fact that he thinks Barry is a virgin too is just icing on the cake. He certainly didn’t act like an inexperienced virgin the night before. Plus the absolute cherry on top was Wally telling him he was going to get him laid one day. Iris found that to be the most hilarious shit ever. He was going to get Barry laid. With his little sister. The irony was extraordinary.

“Where’s ours?” He asks, referring to the sandwich Iris is eating.

“They’re sitting on the counter. I’m not going to serve you too. What do you think this is? I’m not a waitress.” Iris says smartly.

“You used to be.” Wally says smartly and gets up.

“You used to be a waitress?” Barry asks casually.

“Yes. A barista actually. At this place called Jitters. I worked there when I was in high school. I still work there during the summer too.”
“So that’s what you’ll be doing next summer?” Barry asks. He wonders when he and Iris will ever see each other since he lives in Starling City, hundreds of miles away. He was wondering what would happen to them. He never wanted to let Iris go. He certainly couldn’t come and stay with them during the summer. Wally was getting ready to graduate. When would he see her? He really wondered about that. Iris looked at him and could tell something was on his mind. She knew not to ask him about it in front of Wally. She figured it had something to do with them.

Wally came back and sat back down. “What’s with you?” He asks Barry.

“Nothing. Just hungry.” Barry says and gets up to get his sandwich as well. He felt right at home when he reached in the fridge and got something to drink. He could live in that house forever. It was stupid and wishful thinking. He would probably never stay at that house again after that. How could he? He knew his friendship with Wally wasn’t going to end just because Wally was going to graduate. But where would that leave him and Iris? He really didn’t think things through. She couldn’t come and stay with him. He barely wanted to stay at that house. They didn’t even put up a huge fight when he told them he wasn’t coming home for winter break. Barry knew he had decisions to make. Big decisions. He sat back down and started to eat. He was deeply lost in thought. He was trying to figure out what he’s going to do about him and Iris. He needed her. It wouldn’t be that bad when he went back to school because he had classes and track practice to keep him occupied. But what would they do during the summer? How could that work?

Wally interrupted his thinking when he spoke. “I really feel like I need to go work out or for a run or something. My body is starting to notice it.” He says.

“I honestly feel the same way. Is there somewhere for us to run or work out?” Barry asked and took a bite of his sandwich.

A light bulb went off in Iris’ head. She wanted to see Barry run. She also wanted to see him work out. She imagined his arms curling a barbell and she felt a shiver down her spine. This could actually work out in all of their favors. She needed to work out too. She needed to stretch. She didn’t want to get back to school and have her cheerleading be affected. She loved doing that. If things fell into place the ways she wanted them to, she would get all her stretching, and much more, done with Barry. She had a few tricks up her sleeve.

“Yeah. We can actually go to the gym next to the station where my dad works. And we can go to the field of the high school Iris and I went to. I’ve ran on that track countless times.” Wally says as he continues to eat.

“The gym next to the station? Are you sure? I don’t need a membership?” Barry asks.

“Yes, I’m sure. I’ve worked out there plenty of times. We can go because the officers don’t use it as much as they should, our father included. They won’t mind since you’re with me.” Wally says.

“What about me?” Iris asks.

“What about you?” Wally wonders in confusion.

“I need to work out too.” Iris says.

“Why?” Wally asks just to be smart.

Iris shoved him. “Because I have to stay in shape, jackhole. I need to be able to have the guys throw me in the air and catch me. Can’t do a basket toss and be a flyer if I’m not in shape.” She says.

“Yeah, yeah. Whatever.” Wally says. “You don’t need to come to the gym with us to do that. All
you do is cheer and do cartwheels.” He jokes just to pick with her.

“Excuse me? I do more than cheer and do cartwheels, Wallace. There’s a lot of skill involved in what I do. All you do is run.” Iris says.

“Hey!” Barry says and pretends to be hurt.

“Exactly. We do more than run.” Wally says sarcastically.

“Yes, we do. There’s actually proper form we have to achieve to be able to run.” Barry says to toot his own horn.

“Whatever. All you do is run. I do a lot more than that. You try doing a scorpion, or arabesque, or a bow and arrow, and get back to me.” Iris says and sticks her tongue out at him.

“That sounds really complicated.” Barry says, while trying to mask how impressed and how turned on he is. He pushed her sticking her tongue out at Wally deep in the back of his mind. He knew she didn’t mean it to be sexual, but it still turned him on. Then the other thing. His girlfriend is an actual cheerleader and that really did something to him. Sure he saw the cheerleaders at their school, but never really paid them that much attention because they weren’t interested in him. They did date jocks, just not him. So it was like something foreign to him. Sure they were pretty, but he focused on running. Now that he knows that Iris is one, cheerleading became very interesting to him. He desperately wanted to see Iris in action. He figured that would never happen, but he could dream about it.

“It is. Don’t listen to this jerk. What I do is a skilled sport. Just because I don’t toss a ball around or anything, doesn’t mean that what I do isn’t a sport.”

Wally scoffed. “You just said all we do is run.” He points out to her.

“Yeah, I did. Now you see how it feels.” Iris says.

“So you said you’re a flyer?” Barry asks. He was deeply fascinated by this all of a sudden. Visions of the split she did the night before danced in his mind.

“Yeah.”

“What’s that?” He asks in awe.

“Well, a flyer is the person that’s lifted into the air during stunts. You usually have to be really small and really flexible to be a flyer.”

“And that you are, shorty.” Wally jokes.

“I am not short!” Iris says.

“Yes, you are. And you’re tiny.” Barry says. He loved the fact that she was tiny. He never knew having a petite girlfriend would excite him this much before. Maybe it was just Iris. He seriously liked everything about her.

“Are you back to insulting me?” Iris asks Barry.

“Of course not. I was just kidding.” He retorts. “But there’s nothing wrong with being short.”

“Well, it comes in handy. None of the guys mind.”
“What guys?” Barry asks and hopes he doesn’t sound jealous, because he is.

“There are guys on the team. Y’all don’t have guys on your cheerleading squad?” She asks in wonderment.

“Yeah, we do. We just don’t pay them any attention. They’ve got it made, that’s for sure.” Wally says almost bitterly.

“What do you mean by that?” Iris asks.

“They have it made because they get to look straight up the skirts of cheerleaders. If I had known about that, I would have gotten into it when you did.” Wally jokes.

"I’m telling Linda.” Iris says and laughs.

“He has a point though.” Barry adds, still hoping he doesn’t sound jealous. He just had vivid images of some dude ogling his girlfriend.

Iris made a face. “Please. The guys are just part of the team. They just hold me up in their hand and catch me. Nothing sexy about that.”

“They hold you in their hand?” Barry asks again in awe. He was getting aroused again. Plus as smart as he is, he didn’t know anything about this. He was interested in what interested Iris. It seemed like a passion to her and he wanted to hear her talk more about things she loved.

“Yeah. We call them bases and spotters. The spotters are usually guys and bases are guys and girls. They’re actually pretty strong. It takes a lot of strength to hold someone in the palm of your hand over your head, or to catch them when they land. It’s actually quite fascinating. And not just cheers and cartwheels like this jerk says. The guys aren’t there to flirt and get dates. It’s as much a sport to them as the guys on the football and basketball teams.” Iris says with much enthusiasm. She was glad that Barry cared enough to ask her about what she was into. That meant a lot to her. Some people just thought cheerleaders were just bimbos that only clapped their hands and danced with pompons. She knew Wally was just picking with her. He knew how important cheerleading was to her since it’s what their mother did.

“That’s what you think. Those guys are living the dream.” Wally says and he and Barry laugh.

“Whatever. Only you two sleazebags would think like that.” Iris says. She gets up from her seat with her plate and walks over ot the sink. She needed to get away from Barry and Wally. Mainly Wally. She wanted to take Barry up to her room with her.

“You sure love calling us names, don’t you?” Wally asks.

“Yup.” Iris says flatly.

“Then you’re not going to the gym or the track with us.” Wally says in the same flat tone.

Iris laughed. “I don’t need you to go to the gym. I have my own car. You really haven’t said anything. In fact, that’s what I think I’ll do. That way I can leave when I want and come back for my ‘Netflix and chill’ night.” Iris says.

“Are we back on that topic?” Wally asks as he stands with his own plate.

“No, we’re not. There’s nothing to talk about. My plans don’t revolve around you. Plus I’m an adult now and can do what I want. I just told you my father’s name is Joe, not Wally.” She says in
a smart tone and leaves the kitchen. Barry followed her with his eyes. He wanted to follow her with his whole body. Forget all about Wally and get with his new girlfriend. But he had the ball and chain that is Wally West on his heels. He again wondered where Linda was when you needed her. He got up and took his plate over to the sink as well. Wally was busy straightening up the kitchen. Iris didn’t technically cook, but it was routine. Like second nature. He had been so used to doing it that he could do it in his sleep.

“Need me to do anything?” Barry asks. He hopes he says no.

“Naw, I’ve got it. I just need to wipe off the island and the table and unload and reload the dishwasher. You can go ahead and get ready so we can go to the gym.” Wally says.

“Ok.” Barry says and hides his excitement. He just walked towards the stairs and quickly took them two at a time to get to Iris before Wally came and interrupted it. He walked to Iris’ room and it really looked like she was waiting for him.

She pressed him against the wall and stood on her tip toes and kissed him. “God, I’ve wanted to do that all morning long.” She says once they break apart.

“Tell me about it. It was torture.” He says. He grabbed her by her waist and lifted her off her feet. Iris got so hot for him when he did that. She loved that she was much shorter than he was. His height was incredibly sexy to her. He was incredibly sexy to her. He smiled at her and pecks her on the lips again before putting her back on the floor.

“It was. Pure torture. Pretending to be mad at you while you pretended to be jealous of the male cheerleaders.”

“I wasn’t pretending.” Barry says and smiles slyly. He pulled her closer to him.

“You weren’t?”

“No, not at all.” Barry confesses.

“There’s no reason for you to be jealous. I’m with you.” Iris says to assure him.

“I can’t help it. They get to see you in action.”

“Well, I’ll give you a special performance later on, if we can.” Iris says as she presses her body closer to his.

Barry lit up. “Really?”

“Yes, really. Now go before we get caught. We have a façade to keep up. I don’t want to blow it.”

Barry gave her another kiss. “Ok. I’ll see you soon.” He says and leaves her bedroom. He quickly walked to Wally’s and started putting his workout gear on.

Iris felt all warm and tingly inside. She shut her bedroom door and started to get undressed. She found a pair of yoga pants and put that on along with her sports bra and tee shirt. She took off her headwrap and put her hair into a ponytail. She didn’t want to give poor Barry a heart attack. They were playing a role. She had to make it look like they weren’t interested in each other anymore. It was a hard thing to do when all she wanted to do was jump on him. She wanted to jump on him all the time. She wanted him to pull her into his arms. She just wanted to lay in her bed and cuddle with him. She really had a thing for Barry and there wasn’t a thing she could do about it. She was seriously hoping that Wally got lost again. She wondered what Linda was up to. She picked up her
phone off the nightstand and texted Linda.

Lin?

Minutes later, Linda replied. Hey Iris. What’s up?

What are you doing today?

Just hanging out. I don’t really have plans. Why?

You know why.

You need me to occupy that boyfriend of mine.

Yes. I need time to spend with Bear. It’s hard to do when we have a babysitter.

Bear?

Iris smiled at that. She grinned just thinking of her Bear. Yeah. I call him Bear.

That’s the cutest thing ever. I’ve never seen a tall, lanky bear before.

Lol. Me neither. Actually I think he’s more like a puppy than a bear. But calling him Bear just kind of slipped out.

Omg, he is like a puppy!

I know! I think he’s like a stray that Wally brought home that I just have to keep.

Awww. That’s so sweet, my teeth are going to rot.

So, what do you have planned? You know I don’t need a reason to see Wally. I miss that big lug.

Well right now we’re getting ready to go work out at the station's gym. I lied and told Wally that I had plans to go watch Netflix and chill with this guy I know.

He lost his shit, didn’t he?

You know he did. That really could work if Barry wasn’t stuck here at the house. Where would he say he’s going?

If only Wally wasn’t so hellbent on you dating his friends….

Tell me about it.

Well, I can definitely come over there. I doubt Barry would want to hang out with us.

I doubt he would too. I might have to sneak him somewhere. Or maybe he can convince Wally to let him hold his car.

That might work. He can come and get me once you guys are finished working out. Maybe I can come now. I wouldn’t mind watching him get all sweaty.

Ew, Lin. Iris joked. She was feeling her though. She couldn’t wait to watch Barry work out.

Hey. My boyfriend is hot.
If you say so… Iris joked. She knew her brother was good looking. So was her father. Good looks ran in the family.

So, I’ll call him and act like I don’t know what’s going on.

Great. Thanks, Lin.

NP. What are sisters for?

Iris then decided she wanted to send Barry a few texts also.

Hey Bear.

Barry was tying up his shoes when a text came through. He wondered who it was. He looked at his phone just as Wally walked in the room.

“I’ll let you get dressed.” Barry says and leaves Wally’s room. He headed downstairs while he was looking at his phone. He smiled when he saw that it was from Iris.

Hey Rosie.

What are you doing?

I’m sitting in the living room.

Where’s Wally?

In his room getting dressed.

So you’re alone? Iris texts and then smiles.

Yes. I’m alone.

What if I came downstairs naked?

I would die.

I don’t want to kill you, Bear.

I know you don’t want to, but you would kill me if you walked down here naked.

How would I bring you back to life?

If you sat on my face.

Iris got all kinds of turned on and hot at that text message. It made her clitoris jump in anticipation. She had no idea that Barry had things like that in him.

Bartholomew!

You’re a naughty boy.

Yes, I am.

I think you’re lying about being a huge nerd.
Absolutely not. I am a huge nerd. Can’t you tell?

You’re an adorable nerd and the cutest one I know.

Thanks. But I have a nasty side to me. That’s only for you.

I like that.

I like you.

I like you too.

So…Are you coming? He texted and waited for her to reply.

Iris grabbed what she needed to leave and went downstairs.

Yup. She texted as she walked down the stairs.

He turned towards her when he heard her walking down and got up from the sofa. “You’re not naked.” He says as he stares at her.

“Not right now. But I can get naked later.” Iris says and smiles at him.

“After you ‘Netflix and chill’ with that Mike dude?” Barry teases.

“Bear, the only guy I’m going to ‘Netflix and chill’ with is you. We gotta get Wally and Linda Netflixing and chilling as well. Wally is the hugest cockblocker in the world.” Iris says under her breath.

“Where is Linda?” Barry wonders. He really needed her to spend time with Wally. Wally had never been on his nerves and aggravating him this much in the two years that he has known him. He loved having him as a roommate. Barry wondered who he’d get stuck with when Wally graduated. Wally was his friend and he always liked being around him. But right now he wanted Wally to totally get lost so that he and Iris didn’t have to sneak and pretend.

Iris laughed because she felt the same way. “I just texted her. She said she’s coming over and she might come to the gym with us.”

“Thank god.” Barry says and smiles at Iris.

“Gotta go.” She says and heads to the kitchen when she hears Wally. She’s lived in that house with him for 20 years and knows the ins and outs. She recognized the sound of him leaving his room and walking down the hall. Wally came jogging down the stairs seconds later and found Barry just standing in the living room. “Are you ready to go?” He asks Barry.

“Yup.”

“Iris?!” Wally called up the stairs not knowing she was already in the kitchen.

“Yeah?!” She came out with a bottle of water.

“Oh. I thought you were still upstairs. I have to go get Linda cause she’s coming too.” Wally says.

“Yay! I have someone to talk to.” Iris exclaims happily like she didn’t know Linda was coming.

“Barry’s riding with you.” Wally says.
Iris made a face to keep up the role she was playing. “Why?” She asks almost harshly.

“Because. He’ll be your third wheel instead of mine.” Wally jokes and laughs.

“Thanks.” Barry says with much sarcasm.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Iris asks in the same harsh tone.

“It means that he’s going to do my job of stopping you from going over some dude’s house to watch ‘Netflix and chill’.” Wally says and smiles.

Iris frowned. “That’s ridiculous and you know it. Barry didn’t come here to babysit and cockblock me.”

“She’s right. I didn’t.” Barry counters sarcastically.

“Yes, you did. It was in the terms and conditions. You forgot to read the fine print. But cheer up Barry. Since you’ll be there, you don’t have to see her hook up with some guy that isn’t you because she’s off limits.” Wally says and smiles widely. Iris wanted to knock the grin off his face. Barry did too, but it was pointless. Wally didn’t know how wrong he was and that made the situation greater.

“Barry’s not going to stop me from doing anything. I will still go and ‘Netflix and chill’ with Barry there and right in front of him. And he’s not going to do anything but just sit there and let it happen.” Iris says smartly. This was really becoming fun to her. The irony of the whole situation at hand made her want to laugh maniacally and clasp her fingers together. This was just perfect. When the time was right, she was going to fuck Barry right under Wally’s nose and then pretend that it didn’t happen. Hell, they were already pretending that what they did the night before didn’t happen in front of Wally. Though she could look into Barry’s eyes and know that he was thinking about it. They did some pretty freaky stuff and Wally had no idea. It was deliciously sinful and she couldn’t wait to do more of it. She felt like actually fucking Barry in Wally’s bed, though she wouldn’t do something that gross. Just the thought that they could, and Wally not know while being so against it turned her on. Maybe they’d use some of his condoms just because. The possibilities were there. They could do a lot of things under Wally’s ‘off limits’ stance. Iris just tried to imagine the look on Wally’s face once he realized they were fucking right under his nose. She hoped she could capture that moment on video or at least have a picture. Iris thought of a song and how the lyrics rang so true.

*I like being in the same room as you and your girlfriend.*
*The fact that she don’t know,*
*That really turns me on.*
*She'll never guess in a million years,*
*That we've got this thing going on.*

The lyrics weren’t exactly on point, but they fit. She just liked being around Barry and Wally and him having no idea that she and Barry did some pretty sexual shit and he has no clue. It gave her a sense of satisfaction.

Barry looked over at his girlfriend and forced himself not to laugh at the irony. All the context clues she was dropping in front of Wally and he had no idea. Iris’ plan was brilliant. He then looked at Wally and the expression on his face.
“I’m really starting to resent the smart mouth that you have. You keep acting like I can’t throw a monkey wrench into your plans. Dad is a cop. I can get him in on this, since you think Barry can’t handle it or you.” Wally says smugly.

“Whatever, Wallace. I can’t wait until you and Linda get married and have a daughter so that you can be overprotective over her and not me anymore. I actually feel sorry for my future niece. But you won’t be my problem anymore.” Iris says smartly.

“Whatever, Iris. I’m never gonna stop being overly protective over you. Never. I have to approve of the dude you’re going to marry. And if I don’t like him, it’s not happening.”

Iris laughed. “That’s my decision. Mine. Dad gets a little say so because I want him to get along with his son in law, but your opinion does not matter.”

“Yes, it does. I’m the older brother. I have to give this chump the “If you hurt my sister, I’ll hurt you talk”. I already have my speech prepared.”

Barry in the back of his mind wondered if Wally would be giving that talk to him. He hoped so. He wasn’t worried about Wally. Well, he is. But he won’t be if he and Iris lasted long enough to be planning on getting married. He didn’t at all feel weird thinking that considering he’s only 20 and just met Iris, but he knew that she was the one. He saw her in his future. He already felt like he had known her forever and wanted to keep her in his life. He knew he’d never strike gold again and find another girl as awesome as Iris. The universe wasn’t built that way.

“Yeah, you and Linda need to get started on a family. I hope you get all girls.” Iris says and Barry laughs. He hoped that too. He obviously wanted something, someone to protect. Wally would make an awesome cop.

“I’m only 22. I’m not ready for a family yet.” Wally says.

“So? You and Linda have been together for almost 10 years. We all know you’re going to marry her.” Iris says.

“Of course I’m going to marry her. Just not tomorrow. I need to graduate and start my career first.”

“Well, do it soon. I can’t wait for you to move out.” Iris says and Barry laughs again.

“Just for that, I’m never moving out. I’ll be on your heels forever.” Wally says and gives her that smug smile of his.

“Then I’ll move out. I’ve had enough of you. Maybe I can move in with Mike.” Iris jokes, though there is no Mike. But Wally doesn’t know that.

“You’re not ever getting rid of me, Irey. Never.”

“I often wonder what Linda sees in you.” Iris says as she grabs her jacket and walks to the door.

Barry laughed again. He loved the banter between Iris and Wally. Loved it. It again made him wish he had a sibling to do things like that with. But he and Wally really did get along like brothers while they were at school. Barry was seriously going to miss him when he graduated. “You guys make me really wish I had a brother or sister.” He says as he grabs his jacket and follows Iris. Wally does the same.

“No, your parents did good stopping with you. Mine should have stopped at me.” Wally joked as he locked the door. He’s totally joking because he can’t imagine his life without Iris in it. Couldn’t
even fathom it. He loved his little sister more than anything in the world. He hoped that the
daughters he had with Linda would be like her.

Iris made a face. “Oh, please. You wouldn’t be able to function without me. You know you love
me.” She says as she walks to her car and gets in. She unlocked the door for Barry and started the
car up.

Wally had to agree with her. He got in his car and did the same.

Iris lowered her window and got Wally’s attention. “What?” Wally asked in a joking, smart tone.

“Don’t what me. I’m not following you. I’ll just meet you there.” She says and raises her window.
She looked over at Barry. “We need to sneak in some alone time.” She says and smiles. She put her
seatbelt on and waited a few more moments for it to warm up.

“I’m happy to hear you say that. Wally’s my dude, but I’m sick of him.” Barry says.

“Oh my god, me too. You know I love Wally to death, but I wish Linda would take him out of
Central City for a few days.”

“I agree. I haven’t lived with him as long as you have, and this is seriously the first time I’ve been
sick of him. We usually get along like brothers that actually like each other.”

“Well, you see how we get along.”

“Yeah, I do. And it really does make me wish I had a sibling. I think it would’ve made losing my
parents easier.” Barry says solemnly.

“Awww, Bear. I know but I don’t know how you feel. We lost our mom and I’m glad I had Wally
to know how I felt. But I guess it was a little different for him since I lost my mom. But we still
had my Dad. I’m seriously a Daddy’s girl. What about you?”

“Did Wally tell you what happened with my parents?” Barry asked. He doesn’t tell everyone that
story, but Iris had a right to know.

“Not really. Just that you lost your parents when you were younger and had some bad shit happen
to you. If you don’t want to tell me about it, it’s ok.” Iris says sincerely.

“No, it’s fine. I think you should know.” Barry took a deep breath. “Well, when I was 11, some
men broke into our house and stabbed my mother. She told me to hide. My father was a doctor and
came home to find her. He put his hands on the knife and they thought he did it. He’s in jail for her
murder. They didn’t believe me. They thought I was just trying to protect my father.”

“Oh, Bear. I’m so sorry that happened to you and your family. I really am.” She says in a sincere
tone. She reached over and grabbed his hand.

“Thanks. I appreciate that. More than you know.”

“Why does it sound like there’s something behind that?” Iris asks.

“Because some people do believe he did it. I was the guy that people pitied and picked on because
they thought my father killed my mother.”

“Well, I believe what you said happened. Why would you make that up? And since you turned out
so great, I doubt that you had a horrible father that would do that. A father that teaches his son how
to fight so that he doesn’t have to run from bullies and puts him in soccer wouldn’t kill his son’s mother. It’s obvious your dad loved you and wouldn’t take that away from you. At least that’s my take on it.” Iris says and smiles at him.

“You’re amazing, you know that?” Barry says as he looks at her.

Iris smiled and pulled off. “Of course I know that.” She says and winks at him. “Our mom died when I was 8 and Wally was 10. It happened right after that Halloween picture was taken in the living room. She had an aneurysm. Totally unexpected. She had taken us to school that morning and it happened when she got back home. They called our father because she didn’t come to pick us up. He found her on their bedroom floor. I was too young to understand that then. I didn’t understand how she was just there smiling and laughing while she drove us to school then gone. Wally and my dad were devastated. I had to pull them out of that. Our Grandma Esther came and stayed with us for a while. She taught me how to cook and things. I think that’s why Wally tries to protect me so much. He’s a pain in the ass, but I love him. I get it.”

“Yeah, I do too. I just wish he understood that he doesn’t have to protect you from me.” He looked at her and smiled. “I’m sorry about your mom too. You look just like her.” Barry says sincerely.

“Thanks. I do. Do you look like your mom or dad?” She asks as she drove down the street.

“My mom, I guess. Well, her father. I look just like my grandfather.”

“Does he have a six pack too?” Iris joked to lighten the load of what they were discussing. They had enough angst and sorrow between them for several people. She didn’t want to dwell on any of it. She thinks he and Barry turned out great despite the agony.

Barry blushed then laughed. “I doubt it. You really like my six pack, huh?” He asks as he looks over at her.

“Mmhmm.” Iris says and smiles. “I kind of like the rest of you too.”

“I kind of like you too. You know, the cheerleader thing really turns me on.” Barry states truthfully.

Iris smiled and looked over at him. “I figured that. You’d be surprised how many tricks I can do.” She says and then winks.

Barry playfully groaned. “Are you trying to kill me, Iris?” He asks.

“I already told you I wasn’t.” She says and giggles. Then she thought of earlier when they were eating. “Hey, I wanted to ask you where you went earlier when we were talking about the summer. I figured you didn’t want to talk about it in front of Wally.”

“No, I didn’t want to talk about that in front of Wally. I was just wondering what’s going to happen to us. When will we ever see each other? I surely can’t come and stay with you guys during the summer.” Barry says almost gravely.

Iris looked over at him. “I thought about that too. It won’t be so bad while we’re in school. But what are we going to do during the summer?” She asks.

“I don’t know.” Barry says and hopes he doesn’t get sad thinking about it.

Iris really started thinking. How would this work? “Why did you come home with Wally in the first place?” She asks.
“Because I didn’t want to go home and Wally saw how depressed I was about it. My family thinks my father is guilty.” Is all he says and Iris gets it.

“That could work in our favor.” Iris says.

“What?”

“I said, that could work in our favor. You’re already staying with us for that reason. It’s obvious my father doesn’t mind. Maybe we can “create” a reason for you to have to stay with us all the time.” Iris says as she looks over at him.

“Are you kidding?” He asks incredulously.

“No, I’m not kidding. It could work.” Iris says.

“Iris, I’m pretty sure your father won’t be ok with your boyfriend living with you.” Barry says.

“Of course he won’t. He won’t know you’re my boyfriend, Silly. Wally will be back home after he graduates, so we’ll just have to hide it longer.” Iris says and starts to get a little excited.

“You’re really serious about this, aren’t you?” Barry asks.

“Yes, I’m serious. Maybe we can say you had a big blowup with your family and you have nowhere else to go? My dad would take you in. You and Wally get along so well. You’re already roommates. Maybe we can give you the guest room in the basement so you won’t always have to be in Wally’s room. We’re really gonna have to get clever with our sneaking around, Bear.”

Barry started to get excited as well. He was wagging his imaginary tail. He didn’t want to get his hopes up too far. It could backfire and blow up in their faces. But just the thought that it could, gave him something to look forward to. “I’m trying not to get excited, but I am. If your dad says no, then we’ll figure something out. Or I can move here. I’ll be turning 21 soon. I have a trust fund that my father set up for me when I was younger.” Barry says.

“You have a trust fund?” Iris asks and then laughs.

“Yeah. My father was a doctor remember?” He jokes.

“Yeah. I wouldn’t want you to have to spend that money though. You’re going to need it when you graduate.” Iris says. She had an idea and a plan. She pulled over and took out her phone. Barry was wondering what was going on.

“Why’d you stop?” He asks.

“Because I need to text Linda. I can’t text and drive.”

Lin?

Like clockwork, Linda replies. Yeah?

Is Wally there yet?

Nope.

Are you ready yet?

Ha ha. Nope.
TAKE YOUR TIME!

Say no more.

You're the best!

Iris grinned to herself and put her phone away. Barry watched her every move. “What are you up to?”

She looked over at him as she put the car back in drive. “Who, me?”

“Yeah, you. What are you up to?”

“Nothing.” Iris says impassively as she continues to drive.

“You’re lying.” Barry says.

“No, I’m not Bear.” Iris lies as she drives back to their house. Barry finally figured it out when she pulled up.

“What are we doing back here?” He asks in anticipation. His imaginary tail was wagging incessantly.

“So we can fool around for a bit without Wally the guard dog in our faces.” Iris says and winks at him.

“Won’t he be expecting us?” Barry asks though he doesn’t really give a shit about Wally at the moment.

“Yes, but we have time. Linda wasn’t ready and I told her to take her time. Let’s go.” Iris says and turns the car off. She hopped out and practically ran to the house. Barry eagerly followed her.

Iris fumbled with her keys and almost couldn’t unlock the door. She had the strong urge to just jump on Barry and it couldn’t be helped. She finally got the door open, and Barry followed her in. Iris quickly shut the door and pushed Barry against it. She jumped and landed into his arms. She loved that he was tall. It made her incredibly horny that he was over 6 feet tall. Never really thought she liked tall guys, but now she does.

She wrapped her legs around his waist and Barry palmed her ass as she pressed her lips to his. She felt Barry suck on her lips and thought about how he’s a really good kisser. She didn’t want to kiss another guy. She and Barry were so opposite, but they fit like a glove. He was the night to her day, the cold to her hot. She started feeling like she loved him. It seemed ridiculous and impossible, but she did.

Barry hungrily kissed Iris while he palmed her ass. He slid his hand down the back of her pants and felt skin. He wished that he could take all her clothes off and kiss every inch of her skin. Take his time so that he was sure to not miss a spot. Iris was incredible and the best thing to happen to him. He already loved her. He did. No sense in denying it.

Barry carefully walked them down the little dip in the living room and carried Iris over to the sofa. His mouth was still connected to hers as he did that. He laid Iris down on the sofa and laid on top of her. He was aware of how erect he was. Couldn’t help it.

Iris felt his arousal pressed against her middle and she badly, truly badly wanted it inside of her. Waiting was going to be a pain in the ass. She wanted this to last. It had to. Because she already
loved him. And because of Wally. They had to wait, make it count, and last forever.

Iris ruffled Barry’s hair and broke the kiss. She stared deep into his cute green eyes. “Ah, I really needed that.”

Barry smiled down at her. “Yeah, me too. I wish we didn’t have to sneak, but this is kinda hot.”

“It is. The fact that we’re doing it and Wally doesn’t know turns me on.”

“I agree.”

“But we gotta go. Can’t give his meddling ass any ammunition.” Iris says.

Barry groaned. “I know.” He says and gets off of Iris.

She got up from the couch and looked up at him. “We should do this again sometime.” She says and smiles before walking back over to the door.

He followed her. “I vote for tonight.”

“Maybe I can slip Wally some Nyquil or something so that we can.” Iris joked and opened the door.

Barry just laughed and shook his head. “You are a naughty girl, Iris.”

“I try.” She says and locks the door. They both head back to her car and she makes the drive to the gym. She saw Wally and Linda standing out front waiting for them. “I guess Linda didn’t take as long as I wanted her to.”

“I hope they weren’t waiting long.” Barry says.

“Follow my lead.” Iris says as she parks and they walk up. “Hey, Lin.”

“What happened to you two?” Wally asks in an accusatory tone.

“I had to run back to her car and she makes the drive to the gym. She saw Wally and Linda standing out front waiting for them. “I guess Linda didn’t take as long as I wanted her to.”

“I had to run back home. My period started.” Iris says, knowing Wally won’t want any details of that.

He just looked at her. “Thanks for sharing.” He says in a sarcastic tone.

Iris just shrugged. “That explains it.” Barry says and Iris, Linda and Wally just look at him.

“Asshole.” Iris says and frowns at Barry. She grabbed Linda by the arm and walked inside.

“You are just on a roll, aren’t you?” Wally says and laughs.

“What?” Barry asks nonchalantly.

Wally patted him on the back and laughed some more. “At the rate you’re going, your head will be on the platter for Christmas dinner instead of the turkey.”

“What?” Barry asks while feigning ignorance.

“I’d say that’s strike 2.” Wally says and cracks up laughing. He then walks into the gym.
Barry just shrugged and followed him in. Iris gave him a scowl that he knew was for show.

Wally took in the scowl on his sister’s face with pleasure. Not only was Barry out of the running, that Mike dude was too.

Iris picked up on the smug look on Wally’s face. She knew her big brother well. She knew he felt like he had won. Linda pulled Iris aside. “Did your period really start?” She whispers.

“No. I just said that to shut Wally up.”

“So why did Barry say that then?” Linda wonders.

“Oh, because we’re trying to make Wally think he’s an insensitive jerk that I’m no longer interested in.” Iris says and smiles widely.

“That is a really awesome plan.” Linda says.

“I know. I thought of it while Barry and I were in my bed last night.” Iris says and blushes.

“Did you guys….?”

“No. Not yet. But to be fair, Wally did tell Barry he was going to get him laid one day.”

Linda burst out laughing and Wally and Barry looked over at them. Iris playfully put up her middle finger to Barry.

Barry winced and Wally just stared at Iris in amazement.

She honestly did mean “Fuck you” to Barry.

Wally too.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! I hope you enjoyed. Reviews and kudos are hugs!

This chapter contains a sample of "My Little Secret" lyrics by Xscape. Used for entertainment purposes only.
"I can't believe we're really about to do this."

Chapter Summary

Barry, Iris, Linda, and Wally at the gym. Plus girl talk, guy talk, couple talk, a lot of talking.

Chapter Notes

It's actually quite sickening how long it took me to get this update posted. This was a labor of love. I hope it's up to par. Have mercy on me.

During text messages, Iris is in Italics, Barry is bold, Linda is underlined, and Wally is in brackets.

Thank you for reading. Reviews and kudos are hugs!

Iris looked at the slightly smug and amused look on Wally's face and realized that she and Barry were doing a great job of making him think she was no longer feeling Barry. It played out perfectly. They could surely act like there wasn't a connection between them anymore, and have Wally back all the way off. So far off that he forgot to even think about keeping them apart and them being off limits to each other. Not only were they going to sneak and date and do other things behind his back, they were going to actively pretend as if they don't even like each other. Hopefully, they wouldn't go too far and have Wally think that they'd eventually have some sexual tension and frustration that they would have to work out. She needed to go over the course of action again with Barry so that they didn't go too far. Wally was relentless and would not stop them from getting together.

She hated feeling like she had to think that "Fuck you" was the way to go with her feelings about her big brother and him wanting to protect her, but she was at the point that enough was enough. She could do what she wanted. She felt like rebelling, though she wasn't his kid or even a kid at all. Yeah, he was right that she should've stayed away from Eddie. But you live and you learn. She isn't 16 years old anymore. She wouldn't do stupid things like she did back then. Barry was a different guy than Eddie anyway. And she truly did like him more than Eddie. Actually, she loved Barry. She already did. She couldn't and wouldn't tell him that yet, but she did. She never loved Eddie. This would play out totally different than what happened with Eddie while they were in high school. Wally was right about staying away from Eddie and has told him so. He wasn't right about Barry. Barry was nothing like Eddie. She knew and believed that with everything in her.

Wally wouldn’t have to come to her rescue when it came to Barry. She had only known him for a short period of time, but she knew that he wouldn’t hurt her. He didn’t have sinister intentions. He liked her for her and she liked him. Well, she loved him. She never really thought that she believed in love at first sight, but that’s kind of what happened. She felt this deep connection to Barry that she had never felt with anyone. She and Wally were ridiculously close, and he was her brother and
best friend. But she started feeling like Barry could become her best friend too. You should date your best friend. She and Barry had a lot more getting to know each other to do, but it wouldn’t be hard. She already adored the human puppy. She knew that he liked her as well. He told her she was his favorite person in the world, and she really believed him. She saw the way he looked at her. She felt it too. And the way it felt when he touched her. It was like electricity and fireworks surging through her when they touched. She could seriously marry this dude and spend forever with him. She decided not to dwell on that and focus on what she had to do. She and Barry had a role to play. She just suddenly realized that they were role playing and it kind of turned her on.

“So you do know that you can never reveal any of this to Wally, right?” Iris asks just to be sure, though she knows that Linda will keep their secret.

Linda made a playful face at Iris. “Duh. Of course I know that. You know that I would never rat you out. I think this is brilliant and I can’t wait to see it all unfold.” She says truthfully.

“I know. I just wanted to make sure. We have to keep up this charade. Then, when the time is right, Wally will get his bubble burst.” Iris says and smiles again.

“Just make sure that I’m around to see the reveal, ok?” Linda says cheerfully.

“Of course. I might need you to secretly record it so that I can always see the look on Wally’s face when he learns the truth. But I’ll never let on that you knew. You’re just going to have to act as surprised as he does. Hopefully, we’ll last long enough to do that. If it doesn’t, at least we can end it and I won’t have to hear Wally say, ‘I told you so’.”

“I hope not either, but I really don’t think you have anything to worry about. I see the way you two are together. I see the way you look at each other. You two have something special. And you’re ridiculously cute together too. Not cuter than me and Wally, but you get my drift.” Linda says and winks at Iris.

“Yeah, I get your drift. I happen to think me and Barry are adorable too. My Bear is kinda hot, if I do say so myself.” Iris says and smiles widely.

“Yeah, he’s a cutie. I think the nerdiness makes him cuter. But he’s still cute, though you can tell he doesn’t know just how cute he is.” Linda says.

“I know. I thought the same thing. I kept telling him he was adorable, and he said no one has ever called him adorable before. I think that’s tragic. Not only is he adorable, he really has some underlying sexiness to him. He’s got some things going on that you’d be surprised about.” Iris confesses truthfully.

“I definitely need details on that. You did say you guys didn’t, but did you do something?”

“Just kissing, that’s all.” Iris says and wants to keep the other parts between her and Barry. It was too special to her to tell even Linda. “We both definitely wanted to, but we’re waiting. Don’t want to ruin it by sleeping together too fast. We pretty much just talked a little by playing games.”

“Well, there’s nothing wrong with waiting if you want you guys to last. Wally and I were together for almost 2 years before we went all the way.” Linda says.

“Oh, I’m definitely not waiting 2 years to have sex with him. I’ll be lucky if I can make it 2 weeks. I think it wouldn’t be that hard if he wasn’t staying at the house. And now I’m about to watch him work out. Heaven help me.” Iris says and she and Linda crack up laughing.

The guys look over at them and know that they’re talking about Barry. Well, Barry figured they
were just having girl talk. He knew that Iris wasn’t really mad at him. Though the middle finger was something else. Even Wally couldn’t believe she had done that. He took the moment that Iris and Linda were talking to go and sign everyone in. He could only imagine the things Iris was saying about Barry to Linda.

“Man, you are in the dog house for real.” Wally jokes once he finishes at the counter.

“I really don’t think it’s that funny, Wallace.” Barry says sarcastically.

“Wow, now you’re calling me Wallace. Iris must’ve really gotten to you. First she was flirting with you, now she’s giving you the finger. Plus she called you an asshole. You’re doomed. You sure have a way with the opposite sex, don’t you?” Wally jokes.

“No, I don’t have a way with the opposite sex. But your sister is—” Barry begins but Wally cuts him off.

“Watch it, Bartholomew. Don’t make me kill you.” Wally says surely.

“I wasn’t going to say anything bad. I was just saying that your sister is feisty. Is that bad?” Barry asks.

“No, that’s not bad because she is. It’s just a shame and funny that you have managed to get this far on her bad side. What a difference a day makes. Maybe you should just be quiet around her.” Wally offers as a suggestion.

“Why?” Barry asks.

Wally looks at him like he’s lost it. “Why? You insulted her. Twice. First the headwrap, which I have to give you the benefit of the doubt about since you’ve never dated a black woman. But what you just said could surely get you kneed in the balls.” Wally says. “I’m actually shocked she didn’t do that. But the middle finger was a nice touch.”

“What? I was just pointing out how differently she’s acting towards me, that’s all. And since that… happened…it makes sense.” Barry says, though he seriously wished that he didn’t even have to go there. As long as he didn’t really feel that way, then things were good.

Wally cringed and rubbed his face. “But still, you really shouldn’t have pointed it out. First she was flirting with you and wearing your sweatshirt, now she’s scowling at you and giving you the finger. I think you have an uphill battle, my friend.” He says and then pats Barry on the back again.

Barry then cringed. He rubbed his face as well. “Damn. Yeah, I probably shouldn’t have said that.” He says admittedly. “I know some girls are really sensitive about that topic.”

“There’s no probably in it. You shouldn’t have said it. Yeah, some girls are sensitive about that. And you just got back into her good graces. But the good thing is, Iris doesn’t stay mad for long. You’d just better make sure you don’t say anything else. Buy her some gourmet brownies or something. She just might be your friend again.” Wally says.

“Brownies?” Barry asks sheepishly.

“Yeah, brownies. She loves those things. If she could, she’d probably eat nothing but an all brownie diet.”

“You’re not yanking my chain or anything, are you? Does she secretly hate them and you’re telling me to get her some so that she will be even madder at me? Is she allergic to chocolate or
something?” Barry asks though he knows that isn’t the truth. Iris already admitted to her brownie obsession.

“No, I’m not yanking your chain. Iris loves brownies. She’s obsessed with those things.” Wally says.

“And you really think it’ll work? She’ll stop being mad at me?” Barry asks eagerly, though he already knows Iris isn’t the least bit mad at him.

“Yeah. I think it’ll work.”

“What if she gets upset? What if she thinks I’m giving them to her because….her….thing started and I’m being a jerk?” Barry again asks eagerly.

“I’ve known Iris for 20 years. You’ve known her for 2 days. I know what I’m talking about. Get her some brownies. An assortment. She’ll go back to loving you. Well, not loving you because you seriously don’t stand a chance with Iris even without me telling you that she’s off limits. She let you see her with her headwrap on and she talked about that in front of you. You’re toast. But at least she won’t be giving you the finger again.” Wally says.

“Why is that headwrap thing such a big deal?” Barry asks quizzically.

“It just is for black women. My mother did it and so does Iris. I remember our Grandma Esther wearing one around the house when she stayed with us after our mother died. The good thing is, if you ever do date a black woman in the future, you’ll be prepared.”

“Prepared?”

“Yes, prepared. So you won’t ask her about it when you see it.”

“Thanks for the advice.” Barry says though he doesn’t need it. He already told Iris he could watch her tie her hair up forever, and he meant that. He was not letting her go. That wasn’t a deal breaker for them. He honestly didn’t care.

Wally patted Barry on his back. He was still reeling from the amusement of all that happened. “Come on. It’s time to work out.” He looked over at the girls. “Hey, are you two done dogging Barry out now?” He playfully asks and Barry just looks at him.

Iris and Linda walked over to them. “Yeah, we’re done.” Iris says almost harshly. She looked at Barry and rolled her eyes at him for good measure. It was killing her to be that way with her Bear, but it had to be done. They had an act to perform.

Barry and Wally look at her. “I think you two need to put on some gloves and work that out.” He says to a shocked Barry, Iris and Linda.

Iris looked at him like he was crazy. “What?”

“I said, you two need to put on some gloves and work that out. You have a lot of frustration to get rid of.”

If Iris and Barry could laugh at the irony of that statement, they both would. They did have a lot of frustration to get rid of. Though it wasn’t anger and hostility like Wally thought. It was yearning and sexual tension. They already had ways of working that out. Wally had no idea about that.

“You want me to hit a girl?” Barry asks incredulously. He thought the notion was ridiculous. He
could never hit Iris. Never. Or any girl for that matter. He wasn’t that kind of guy.

Iris rolled her eyes again. “He wants you to try.” She says smartly. “Actually, I think that’s a good idea, Wally.” Iris says and grins widely.

Wally took in the grin on her face and had second thoughts about his suggestion. Iris might kill the poor nerd. “Nevermind. I don’t think that’s a good idea.” He says after giving it some thought.

“Why not?” Iris asks smartly.

“Yeah, why not?” Linda asks.

“Because I think you’ll really kill Barry, that’s why.” Wally says.

Barry scoffed. “Gee, thanks.” He says with much sarcasm.

“Yeah, she’ll kill you. Our dad had us both in gloves when we were little. Iris is tougher than she looks.”

“She’s like this tall.” Barry says and exaggerates with his hands. He hoped he didn’t go too far with that.

“And I’ll stand on a box and still knock you out.” Iris says smartly. She was actually starting to like the idea, though she knew she couldn’t really hit Barry that hard. But she and Wally sparred a lot of times over the years. It would be fun.

Linda and Wally laughed, while Barry cringed. He seriously didn’t know how to feel about putting on boxing gloves and actually trying to hit his girlfriend. He just couldn’t see himself doing it. But he and Iris had a role to play. It might actually be fun.

“Good luck with that.” Barry says as he eyed Iris dead on. Yeah, this is going to be fun.

“Ok. So when she knocks you out, I’ll be happy to take you to the hospital.” Wally says.

“Ok. So when she knocks you out, I’ll be happy to take you to the hospital.” Wally says.

“Ok. So we’re going to work out first, and do that last.” Wally says and leads the way. He scanned the room with his eyes as he walks over to the treadmills. Barry, Iris, and Linda follow him. Wally and Barry got on and started with a good run. Iris and Linda went to stretch first. Barry really wished that Iris hadn’t decided to do that in front of him. She was distracting him and turning him on. Iris and Linda were on the mats out of earshot of Wally and Barry, but they could still see them. He tried to focus on running on the treadmill.

“You’re gonna give that poor nerd a heart attack.” Linda says.

Iris laughed as she stretched out on the mat. “I’m not trying to.”

“He probably had no idea that you’re that flexible, did he?”

“Actually, he does. He saw the cheerleading picture in the living room and asked me about it. Plus I did a split for him.” Iris replies and smiles.

“So you just did a split for him?”
“Well, we were playing a game to get to know each other better and he asked if I could do one. I knew what he was up to. And I could’ve just told him yes. But I wanted to go above and beyond flirting. He somehow brings that out of me.” Iris confesses truthfully.

“I’ll bet. You want to get on the treadmills with them?” Linda asks.

“Yes. But not for long.”

They both make their way over to the treadmills with the guys and hop on. Iris and Linda got off way before Barry and Wally did. They went over to the rowing machines. They worked up a nice, comfortable rhythm while they both tried to not look at their boyfriends. Iris especially. She was deeply impressed with the speed Barry was running at on his treadmill. She had visions of him taking his shirt off and running in just his shorts. She imagined the muscles in his arms and chest rippling. Then the six pack. The six pack that she had the sudden urge to rub on and kiss.

“You’re almost drooling.” Linda says out of nowhere.

Iris was shaken from her reverie. “What?”

Linda giggled. “I said, you’re almost drooling.”

“I am?” Iris asks in wonderment.

“Yes, you are.” Linda says and giggles again.

“I’ve really gotta get a handle on that.” Iris says and giggles too.

“Yeah, you do. You’re lucky Wally is in the zone and not paying us any attention.”

“Yeah, I am. But he looks kinda good on that treadmill. I can’t help but look.” Iris says and smiles over at Linda.

“All I see is Wally.” Linda says and they both laugh.

“I second that notion, because I don’t even see Wally.”

“So you two are really gonna put gloves on and box? I can’t wait to see that.” Linda says.

“Yes. I’m shocked Wally suggested it. And you and Wally need to do the same. Or maybe me and you. We can’t be the only two that do this.” Iris says surely.

“I guess. But Wally and I don’t have a lot of sexual frustration to work out. I mean, he’s hot as hell and I’ll always want to jump on him, but I’m not missing out on anything.”

“Don’t remind me, Linda!” Iris says.

“What? I’m just saying. The sexual tension between you two is strong. Really strong.” Linda says.

“I agree. It’s taking everything in me to wait. But we have to. I want this to last and mean something. I don’t want to sleep with him too soon. I’d drag him to my car right now if I could. Though I resent Wally keeping us from openly dating, I’m glad he’s around to keep us from jumping each other’s bones.”

“That’s why your plan is brilliant. He’ll back off some if he thinks it won’t happen.” Linda says.

“Precisely. But I really just want to spend a whole day with him, you know? Away from the house.
Get to know him a lot better. Go out without fear of being watched. Then I could kiss and touch him whenever I wanted.” She confesses truthfully.

Linda looks over at her. “Ok. I have a plan. What if I take Wally away for a whole day? What if we go to Atlantic City? We’re both over 21 and you and Barry aren’t. It’s the perfect plan. You guys won’t be able to go, and Wally can’t argue about it.”

“Lin, I could kiss you! That’s a great idea. When did you want to do this?” Iris asks in a cheerful tone.

“Hey, I can do it tomorrow. Christmas will be here soon, and our time together will be limited. Well, not really because Wally is almost a part of my family. But the relatives coming in from Keystone City will want this to be all about family, since it’s a holiday and all.” Linda says.

“Yes. That’s perfect. Absolutely perfect. I really could kiss you.” Iris says and smiles.

“I told you my reasons for getting Wally alone are totally selfish. We haven’t seen each other since August. That’s a long time in couple world. We might have sex every day until we go back to school.” Linda says as Iris frowns.

Iris stopped rowing and looked over at her with her frown still in tow. “Really? Did you really have to tell me that?” She asks with a raised eyebrow.

“Sorry! I’m just being honest.”

“You know I’m going without. And I have this hot ass guy staying a room away from me that I can’t touch, and you have the nerve, THE NERVE! to tell me that you guys are gonna have sex every day?! I love you, but I could kill you right now. Wally too.” Iris says as she starts to row again.

“Look, you don’t really have to go without. You and Barry are both adults. You can sleep with him if you want to. Believe me, Wally fucks. So there’s no reason for you not to.” Linda says quietly.

“Linda, Wally has nothing to do with me and Barry not fucking. He really doesn’t. I already told him that while we were eating. He’s not going to deprive me. I will fuck Barry in Wally’s bed if I want to.“ Iris says and Linda looks at her in shock.

“Please don’t do that!” She says. “I’ll probably lay in that bed naked. I don’t want you and Barry getting on me.”

Iris cracked up laughing. She laughed so loud that Barry and Wally looked over at them. Linda joined in because it was pretty funny. “I’m not going to do that. I have my own perfectly good bed we can do that in. I’m just saying that Wally’s not stopping me from doing that. I just met the guy. If I just wanted it to be a meaningless one night stand, we wouldn’t be having this conversation.”

“Wow. You really like this guy, don’t you?” Linda asks.

Iris smiled just thinking about it and him. “Yeah, I do. He’s actually pretty awesome. Being mean towards him is hard, but it has to be done. Just like him saying insulting things to me. I know he would never intentionally insult me or be a prick about what I brought up. We were doing good earlier after our fake mishap.” Iris says.

“What fake mishap?” Linda inquired.

“Well, I came into the kitchen with my hair wrapped up. You know he already saw it when we first
met, so I figured there was no use in faking it. I told him to pretend that I ignored him last night and that he insulted me about asking about the headwrap. I snapped at him and Wally loved it. He actually told Barry that he no longer has a chance with me if I let him see me like that. He totally took the bait.” Iris says and smiles at her future sister in law.

“This is just awesome. I need to spend more time at the house to see this play out.” Linda says.

“Yes, you do! Then you need to take Wally to his room and keep the door shut.”

“Like I said, totally selfish. That is so not a problem.” She replies and they laugh. “But Iris, I have to ask. What happens if Wally finds out before you guys tell him?”

“I don’t know. I worry about that too. I’m not even gonna lie to you. Hopefully, this plan works and he never does.”

“I just don’t want him and Barry to fight like he and Eddie did.” Linda says surely.

“Me neither. I was there, remember. That was scary. I’ve never seen Wally that upset. I would never want to see him and Barry actually fight. I know it will be all because of me. I don’t want either of them to lose the friendship they have.”

“Have you told Barry about that? I know you were much younger then, and it’s not really his business. But have you?”

“I wanted to ask you about that. I wondered if I should too. Just so that he knows how Wally is, though we’ve joked about Wally killing both of us.” Iris says.

“Well, I think you should. Just to let him know everything he’s dealing with. You don’t have to fully go into details. Just tell him that you dated one of Wally’s friends in high school, he hurt you, and Wally went nuts.” Linda thinks for a moment. “Well, maybe don’t tell him that part.”

Iris again burst out laughing. “No, I won’t scare my poor puppy when it comes to guard dog Wally.”

“Barry’s a puppy, and Wally is a guard dog. I don’t want to see that match up.” Linda admits truthfully.

“Me neither.”

Wally and Barry were busy running on the treadmills, trying to focus so that they both wouldn’t fly off. Barry knew he had to stay in the zone because he didn’t want to totally embarrass himself in front of Iris. He couldn’t help but look over at her while she was on the rowing machine. It made his heart change beats when he saw her laughing out loud with Linda. How he managed to love a girl he met 2 days ago was beyond him. But he really didn’t have a choice in the matter. Iris was awesome. Supremely awesome. She was the most beautiful girl he had ever laid eyes on and he loved everything about her. He knew he couldn’t tell her that he loved her already. It might scare her. He knew it was fast, but he’s fast. He knew what he felt and he had never felt that way before. He had never loved a girl before. He cared about the other girls, well the ones he knew, that he was with. But he didn’t love them. Iris came along and made him feel like she ignited his heart. Like it didn’t really beat until he met her. Her smile made him hopeful. Eager. He wanted to see that smile for the rest of his life. Of all the times he wished that his mother was still alive, he wished that she was just so that she could meet Iris. He knows that without a doubt that his mother would have loved her. His father too. He couldn’t wait to write to him about her. Tell him that he got as lucky as his father did when he met his mother. He hoped that they didn’t end in tragedy like
his parents did. Or even like Wally and Iris’ parents.

Barry and Wally kept running at an extreme pace, while casually glancing over at the girls. They both looked at their readers and saw that they had been at it for almost an hour.

“You wanna hit the weights?” Wally asks.

“Yeah.” Is all Barry says as he starts to slow his treadmill down and Wally does the same.

“Good. You need to get a little training in before Iris kills you.”

Barry looked over at him. “You’re really getting a kick out of this, aren’t you?”

“Yes. I can’t wait to see tiny Iris knock you out.” Wally says and laughs.

They both got off their treadmills and walked over to the weights. Linda and Iris both followed them with their eyes. They watched as they both picked up huge dumbbells and started doing curls with them. Iris zeroed in on Barry’s arms and almost lost it. She wished had hadn’t been wearing the tank he had on. She wished that he was wearing a baggy tee shirt. Even though she knew what he’d be hiding under it, she still needed him to cover up. His arms looked really good to her. Really good. Her boyfriend/nerd/human puppy/Bear was hot as hell.

“Damn.” She says under her breath.

“I know.” Linda agrees. Wally had an incredible body that she loved looking at.

Barry again looked over at Wally. He had to smirk to himself. “That must be why you suggested it.” Barry says through curls.

“Of course it is. But I really want you and Iris to get along. Our house isn’t that big. Christmas is coming and I told you it’s a big deal at our house. We still have a month. I don’t want you to be as miserable as you would be if you went home.”

“Well, since you put it that way, I’m game.” Barry says. They continued to lift and have meaningless chatter. Barry was starting to feel weird. He had the feeling that Iris was watching him. He purposely turned away from her so that he wouldn’t stare. He glanced in the mirror, and sure enough he saw her looking at him. He tried to hide how good he felt about that.

Iris noticed Barry looking at her through the mirror. They were being messy. “Lin, we gotta get in on that.” She says. She needs the distraction. Maybe if Barry was in her direct field of vision, it wouldn’t look as if she was staring at him.

“You just want a closer look.” Linda jokes and they both laugh.

“Guilty as charged.” Iris says and hops up from her machine while Linda follows.

“Hey guys.” Linda says cheerfully.

“Hey.” Barry and Wally say in unison. Iris tried to ignore Barry when all she wanted to do was grab him, run to her car and take him back to her bedroom.

Linda and Iris both grabbed dumbbells and started to use them. Iris tried painfully hard not to look at Barry. He tried to do the same. Wally and Linda weren’t even hiding that they were looking at each other.

Wally winked at Linda and she became a puddle of mush. Iris almost envied that until Barry did
the same thing. She forced herself not to blush but she was screaming on the inside.

“I need you to spot me.” Wally says as he puts the huge dumbbell away.

“Sure.” Barry says and puts his away too.

They go to the weight benches and set up the weights. Iris just has to poke fun. “Don’t hurt yourself.” She says with much sarcasm. Wally and Barry looked over at her and the amused smile she has on her face.

“You make sure you don’t hurt yourself with that tiny dumbbell you have.” Wally says smartly.

“Hardy har, Wallace.” Iris says. “Just for that, you get next after I knock Bartholomew out.”

Barry playfully scoffed. “How are you going to knock me out? You can’t even reach me.”

Iris scoffed as well. She rolled her eyes so hard they almost got stuck. “You are an asshole and a half, aren’t you Bartholomew?” She asks smartly.

“Maybe not a half. But I think only you thinks that I’m an asshole.”

Iris made a face. “No, I’m pretty sure Linda thinks you’re one too. And Wally. I can tell he’s thinking that, he just isn’t telling you.”

“But you’re the only one talking about it. Silence is golden. Maybe you should shut up sometime soon. I’m actually over hearing you talk.”

“Wally, I think this stray dog you brought home needs to be taken out for a permanent walk. Right after I beat him to a pulp. Gloves. Ring. Now.” Iris says smartly and puts her dumbbell away before she walks off.

Linda looks over at both of them. She puts her dumbbell away as well. “Wow. You are really glutton for punishment, aren’t you?” She asks to help out with the charade.

Wally looked at Iris storm off and then at Barry. “I thought I told you to keep your mouth shut.”

Barry just shrugged and shook his head. “She asked for it.”

“If you and my sister keep going at it, I’m going to have to take her side.” Wally says seriously.

“What am I supposed to do?” Barry asks innocently.

“You keep your damn mouth shut and take it.” Wally says.

“In my defense, she asked for it.” Barry says.

“And in your defense, you will get hurt. I hope you can take a punch.” Wally says in a joking manner.

“You really have no idea what you’ve gotten yourself into, do you?” Linda taunts.

Barry waved her off. “I’m not afraid of Iris.” He says surely, but adds a hint of fear to throw Wally off more.

Wally and Linda looked at each other. “You don’t sound too convincing.” Wally says and laughs. He grabs Linda’s hand and walks away toward the boxing ring. He looked back at Barry and
laughed some more.

Barry just followed them to the ring. Iris was just standing there, seemingly waiting on him. He looked around at the other people in the room hitting the speed and heavy bags. He really wondered how they would get through this with so many people around. He knew they were just playing, but he had a feeling that Iris was really going to hit him to make it look good. No way would she hold back with Wally watching. No way she would.

“Too long enough.” Iris snapped.

“Ok, it’s time to get this show on the road.” Linda says. “My money’s on Iris.”

“Mine too.” Wally says and cracks up laughing.

“Those are some pretty good odds, Bartholomew.” Iris says snidely.

“It amazes me how someone so small can have such a big mouth.” He offers, just as snidely. Wally looked at him and just shook his head. The boy just refused to listen.

“Fine. I can back up everything I’m saying though, Bartholomew.” She says and walks over to the gloves that are hanging.

Barry followed her and got himself some. “Are you really going to beat me up?” He asks under his breath.

“Yup.” Iris says and winks at him subtly. “Make sure you get the right size. We don’t want any mishaps.”

“What’s the right size?” He asks in subtle confusion.

“I’d say an 18oz.” Iris says.

“What do you have?”

“14. I’m smaller than you are. I’m still going to hurt you though.” She says and discreetly winks before walking away. She walked up to Linda. “Help me with my gloves please, Lin.”

Wally looked at Iris’ enthusiasm and then over at Barry. He laughed to himself and shook his head. “So you’re really going through with this?” He asks, though he knows the answer.

“Yup.” Iris says and smiles.

“Let me go and help this fool.” Wally says and walks over to Barry. He laughed and shook his head along the way. Wally patted him on the back once he got to him. “Need some help?”

“I guess.” Barry says timidly. He looked at Wally and the expression on his face. “She’s going to kill me, isn’t she?”

“Oh yeah.” Wally says and they both have to laugh at that.

“I can’t believe we’re really about to do this.” Iris says. She removed her shirt, revealing just her sports bra.

“I can’t either, but I’m dying to see it. It might not even happen though. He might pass out from seeing you like this before he even makes it to the ring.” Linda jokes and she and Iris laugh as she helps her with her gloves.
“You’re right.” Iris says and winks. She walked over to the ring and climbed in. “Let’s go, slowpoke.” She taunted as she looked over at Wally and Barry.

They turned to look at her and sure enough, Barry almost passed out at the sight of her in her sports bra. He surely started thinking that Iris was playing hardball, and he could do the same. He took off his tank, revealing his bare chest. Iris let out a small gasp at that. She wished he would have kept his damn shirt on. She figured she brought that on herself.

Wally helped him with his gloves and Barry climbed into the ring too. He and Iris locked eyes and the both really wanted to take off the gloves and just go to town on each other. But they had Wally watching. They definitely couldn’t do that.

Iris just stared at Barry in just his gloves and shorts and wanted to scream. Barry was feeling the same way. They both silently wished that Wally was not in the room with them. Iris wanted to toss the gloves and do a running jump into Barry’s arms. She now knew that this was a bad idea. Wally should have kept his damn mouth shut. It just was making things more complex. She had never wanted to jump on a guy so bad before. Barry was definitely doing things to her.

Iris was definitely doing things to Barry. He wanted to take her and pin her to the floor of the boxing ring and take her right then and there. He couldn’t do that. He could find a way to sneak into her room sometime later that day. He was desperately hoping that Wally was going on his way with Iris. And they didn’t necessarily have to do anything. Not even sexual. They could just sit and be in each other’s company, not saying a word. He just wanted to be around her at all times. Wally was putting a damper on that. He was open to actually suggesting that to her. Maybe he’d suggest it to Iris and have her talk to her since they’re so close. Instead of Wally being her annoying and overprotective big brother, he was like her annoying and lingering little brother that she was stuck babysitting. Only difference was Wally was the one doing the babysitting. Barry hated the hell out of that. He wasn’t used to being supervised since his mother was alive and his parents were together in the same house. His relatives didn’t care what he did. And if Barry was the type of youngster to do get into all kinds of stuff, he’d probably be in trouble with the law or something by now. But Barry was straight laced and predictable. He could be considered boring but he didn’t think that was a bad thing. He broke out of that shell somewhat after going to college. He had to get pulled out of his comfort zone to live a little. He was way out of his comfort zone with what he was about to do now. He was actually standing in a boxing ring, shirtless, wearing boxing gloves, waiting for his secret girlfriend to fight him. He couldn’t even make that up. But he was intrigued and couldn’t wait to see what Iris was going to do. She couldn’t possibly hit him that hard. Right? He asked himself.

Wally and Linda watched the exchange. Linda could feel the sexual tension. She could cut it with a knife. She wondered if Wally could feel it too. And while she really wasn’t trying to look at Barry in that way because she has Wally, Iris was completely right about him. Nobody would ever know he was hiding muscles and abs underneath the awkward nerd he was. It was pretty cool to see.

Linda turned to Wally. “Um…I think you’d better get in the ring with them just in case. They both have that fire look in their eyes.” They had more than that. They had the ‘I want to jump on you and fuck you repeatedly’ look in their eyes.

“I think I’d better. It’s like a bull and a matador. I never should have suggested this.” Wally says and sighs.

Linda rubbed his back. “Don’t beat yourself up. This will all be over in a few minutes.”

“Hopefully Iris doesn’t kill him in these next few minutes.” He says and walks to get into the ring.
He just stood there and looked at Barry and Iris for a moment. They were still squaring off. He prayed Iris didn’t break Barry’s nose or something. That would totally change and fuck up things. “Hey.” He says to get their attention.

Iris and Barry finally broke away from their stare off and looked over at Wally. They had gotten messy again. It was hard not to.

“What’s up, Wally?” Iris asks.

Wally looked at her funny. “What’s up? I think you’ve envisioned beating Barry up so much, you’ve seemed to have lost it somehow.”

“I haven’t lost anything.” Iris says smartly.

“Not yet.” Barry says just as smartly.

Iris locked eyes with him. “Ding! Ding!” She says and walked up to him. She surprised everyone in the room when she gave Barry a quick series of punches. Barry backed up into the ropes and tried to get his bearings. He wasn’t ready for that at all.

Wally and Linda watched in disbelief.

“Ow! What are you doing?!” Barry asks harshly as Iris hit him again.

“I’m beating you up. What does it look like I’m doing?” Iris asks smartly.

“Well, I wasn’t ready.” Barry says.


“I’m not going to hit you.”

“I think you owe it to yourself to at least try and get a lick in.” Wally says and then laughs.

“Yeah, listen to your friend. That way you won’t be a total loser.” Iris says and smiles as she puts her gloved hands on her small waist.

Barry looked down at Iris. He noticed a gleam in her eye. If he didn’t already know her so well through a connection that surprised him, he would have missed it. It was like she was apologizing to him and egging him on at the same time. He really read her eyes and looked over at Wally..

“You know, you’re the first girl I’ve ever wanted to hit.” Barry lies. He has not ever wanted to hit a girl, and especially not her. But this was a lot of fun. Even if his girlfriend did just wail on him.

Iris laughed sarcastically. “Take your best shot.”

Barry lightly tried to swing at Iris and prayed that he missed. He didn’t really have to because Iris was fast. She ducked both swings and punched him in the gut twice, knocking him to the floor of the ring.

Linda playfully started to cheer. “Go, Iris!” She says.

Iris looked over at her to take her eyes off her poor little hurt puppy. She locked eyes with Wally who looked to be in a state of shock. She stood over Barry and locked eyes with him. She desperately wanted to kiss him. Badly. It made her chest ache at how badly she wanted to kiss him.
She definitely would when Wally wasn’t around. “Sorry about that, Bartholomew.” She reached out her hand to help him to his feet. Once he was standing, she smiled at him. “But you asked for it.” She says. She playfully winked at him and left the ring. She put away her gloves and put her shirt back on. She walked over to Linda and they high fived each other. They looked back at Barry and Wally and waved at them before leaving the gym. Both guys watched them leave in silence.

Iris and Linda made their way out to her car, laughing along the way. Things were just supremely funny to both of them. The events that just unfolded inside the gym would be funny and memorable for years to come. They both settled inside her car still laughing. Linda's laughing subsided first. Iris finally calmed down enough to put her seatbelt on. She and Linda looked at each other and the laughing started up again.

"That was all kinds of amazing." Linda says through laughter.

"Yeah, it was." Iris exclaims happily.

“Did you see the looks on their faces?”

“Yeah. Barry was really shocked. He didn’t see that coming at all. I’m going to have to make it up to him somehow.” Iris says. She had naughty visions running through her head already.

“No, he didn’t see that coming. Wally really didn’t either though he’s the one that started it. You should have hit him too.” Linda says.

“I know. Wally deserves a swift punch to the face.” Iris says and laughs.

“As long as you don’t harm the family jewels.” Linda says.

Iris looked over at her with a disgusted look. “No talk of Wally’s…..jewels while you’re in my car or anywhere near me.”

“Fair enough. But that was really awesome though. I wish that it had lasted longer.”

“Me too. But Barry really wasn’t trying to hit me, so I ended before it got out of hand. And the bad part is it managed to increase the sexual tension and frustration between us. I don't know how much longer I can hold off, Linda.” Iris says in a serious tone.

Linda picked up on how serious Iris became. She looked at her with friendly and sisterly eyes.

"Well, I'm going to give you some slightly older, sisterly advice. If that's what you want to do, then do it. There's really no time frame on when to sleep with someone. So what you just met? I can already see that there's a connection between you two. I can feel it. Wally can see it too, though the fact that you two are acting like you hate each other has thrown him off. If you really like this guy, and he likes you, then there's no reason you have to wait. Wally and I waited a while because we were kids then. If I had met Wally yesterday, there would have been no waiting involved. You're an adult and so is he. There's no book that says if you sleep with someone you like days after meeting them then you're doomed to not have a relationship in the future. Do what you want to do."

Iris looked over at Linda and smiled. "Thanks for the advice. I totally get what you're saying because I've been having this war with myself since I met him. I do feel like we'll be doomed if we sleep together too soon. I really want this to last. Not only so that I can rub this in Wally's face, but because I really like him Linda. I think I already love him. He's awesome and amazing and I just do. I think he and I could be really good together. I think that we balance each out. The things that he doesn't necessarily like about himself, I love. I love that he's a nerd. That he's awkward and
adorable and is truly like a human puppy or a baby deer learning how to walk." Iris says and Linda laughs at that description.

"You have described him perfectly. But he's seriously only like that around you. He wasn't that awkward when I first met him. I mean, Wally described him as a huge nerd, and he isn’t at all what I expected. Yeah, he’s nerdy and awkward, mostly around you. But it comes and goes. I think you bring out that hidden side to him. You don’t really have a hidden side because you’re an open book. You’ve always been fun loving and energetic and the life of the party, but it has increased since you’ve met him. And I think that balances out perfectly. I’m very observant. It's like blatantly and painfully obvious how into each other you two are. So since I saw it, Wally saw it. Now we have the flip side and it’s just amazing to watch. I can totally feel the sexual tension between you two and I think Wally will soon.” Linda says.

“So, what are you trying to tell me Linda?” Iris asks in awe.

“I’m trying to tell you to do something about the sexual tension before Wally picks up on it. Go ahead and sleep with Barry.” Linda says.

“Remember when I told you before that you’re not helping?”

“Yeah.”

“That still stands. You are not helping! You’re supposed to talk me out of sleeping with him.”

“What good will that do though? You'll still want to.” Linda says and laughs.

“You’re right about that.” Iris replies.

Wally and Barry continued to stare at their women leave in disbelief and silence. They finally looked at each other and really didn’t know what to say. Wally then burst out laughing. Full on laughter. He fell against the ropes and just laughed heartily at what he just watched. Barry just stared at him.

“I don’t really think it’s that funny.” Barry says.

“Oh, yes it is. My sister kicked your ass.” Wally says and laughs some more.

“I let her win.” Barry says to his defense. He really did because there was no way in the world he was actually going to hit her. He might playfully smack her on the ass, and he hoped to do that soon, but he would never hit her.

“Even if you did, she still kicked your ass. I told you she’s tougher than she looks.”

Barry took his gloves off and left the ring to put them away. He put his shirt back on.

“Does that mean I’m out of the doghouse now?” Barry asks once Wally is in front of him.

“I don’t know. You might be. She was happy about knocking you on your ass. You’ll never live that down. You gave her bragging rights forever.”

“So I don’t have to get her brownies?” Barry asks though he still wants to get them for her.
“Oh, you should definitely still get the brownies. Just keep your mouth shut now. But she might rub those in your face too.”

"I actually think it's unfair that I have to get her brownies when she beat me up."

"Well, you're the guy and the guest, so I think you should. Plus, you are the one that insulted her. You're lucky you didn't get more."

“I’m just never going to win with Iris, am I?” Barry asks gravely.

“Probably not. But she won’t full on hate you if you get the brownies and shut up. Do you think you can do that?” Wally asks and hopes Barry can. Though it’s hilarious to see him and Iris at odds. They went above and beyond being off limits to each other.

“Yeah. I think I can do that. Where am I going to get brownies from?” He asks sheepishly.

“From this place called Zora’s. She loves their brownies.”

“Are we going there now?” Barry asks as he follows Wally around the gym.

“No. I’m not done working out yet. The girls interrupted that.”

Barry looked around. “Where are they anyway?”

“Good question. Let me find out.” Wally took out his phone and texted Linda.

[Where are you two?]

Iris and Linda were driving along and having serious girl talk when she got a text from Wally.

Riding with Iris. Where are you?

[Still at the gym. What are you two up to?]

“He wants to know what we’re up to.” Linda says out loud.

“Tell him we’re seeing Magic Mike XXL.” Iris jokes and she and Linda laugh.

We’re seeing Magic Mike.

Wally looked at his phone in disbelief. “I know she’s kidding.” He says.

“Who?”

“Linda. She said she and Iris are seeing Magic Mike.”

[You’re kidding right?]

Nope. Seeing you work out turned me on so we went to see the movie. I hope you don’t mind. You can work out with Barry some more. I’ll see you later.

[Am I going to have to keep you and Iris apart too?]

I think you have enough to worry about with Barry and Iris. Well, not anymore since they hate each other now.

[She said that?]
Pretty much.

[Good.]

Wally, that’s terrible.

[Have fun at your movie. I’ll see you later?]

Yes. Love you.

[Love you.]

“So, what are we going to do? I’d love to see the movie, I just don’t want to do it dressed like this.” Linda says as she puts her phone away.

“I agree. We can go to see it another day. We can really have our girl’s day. We can just hang out at the house if you want. The guys will be there later I’m assuming. We can have a game night or something. Eat pizza and watch old movies. Netflix and chill.” Iris says.

Linda looks over at her and laughs.

“I know Wally will be ok with that, but what are you and Barry going to do?”

“The same. I think Wally will forget all about us with you around. Where else is Barry going to go if he gets kicked out of Wally’s room since you’re there?”

“I seriously love the way your mind works. So you’ve decided then?” Linda asks. She decides to text Wally to give him a heads up.

Hey. Just a heads up. I'm sleeping over tonight. Iris said we're having game night.

[Ok cool.]

Iris thinks about it for a moment. “I’m not really sure? If it leads that way, I don’t think I’ll stop it. My agenda is to get him alone, but we don’t necessarily have to have sex. Plus Dad will be home. I don’t know… I’ve never had sex in that house while he was home.”

Linda looked over at her and grinned. “Wally has.”

Iris playfully rolled her eyes. “I know Wally has. I heard you one time. I don’t think we really can if I have to keep up this façade of being a virgin. I really don’t think Wally would be able to handle knowing that I’m not.”

“Is he still on that?” Linda asks incredulously.

“Yes, he’s still on that. He told me that I’d better be when I told him I’m saving myself for marriage earlier. You wanna hear something really funny?” Iris asks.

“Of course.”

“Barry told me that he thinks Wally thinks he’s a virgin too.”

“He might have mentioned that. He’s not?”

“No. Well, he said he’s not and I believe him.”
Linda looked over at Iris suspiciously. “There’s a hidden meaning behind that, isn’t there? You totally had sex with him, didn’t you? You skank. You’re holding out on me?”

“No, we didn’t have sex. We….did some things. Ok. Jeez. I wasn’t holding out. Honestly.”

“What kinds of things?” Linda asks quizzically.

“Enough to let me know that he isn’t a virgin, or a total lost cause when it comes to satisfying a girl.” Iris replies.

“Wait a minute! What does that mean? Did he go down on you?”

_Not really?_ Iris thinks. _He was down there, right?_ “No. Not really?” She says and glances over at Linda.

Linda shifted in her seat. “Not really? He either did or he didn’t. Holy shit. He did.”

“No, he didn’t. I don’t think you can actually call that going down on someone. He was definitely down there… His mouth touched things…I liked it. I really liked it, but he stopped himself from going too far.”

“I get what you’re saying, I guess. He teased you. Wally does that sometimes.”

Iris made a face. “I didn’t need to know that.” She says and laughs, though she seriously doesn’t care what Wally and Linda do. She figures that’s just normal in relationships.

“Oh, stop being such a prude. You aren’t. You couldn’t give a rat’s ass about your brother going down on me at all. You don’t care that he has sex.”

“You’re right, I don’t. I figured that was a given. Just don’t ever describe to me his orgasm face or how he acts when he’s getting a blow job, please. There are some things a sister should never know about her brother.” Iris says and she and Linda laugh.

“If only he felt the same way. I just think you’ll always have to deal with the fact that he sees you as his pure and cute little sister.” Linda says.

“I know. But I told him I couldn’t wait for you two to have a daughter so that he can leave me alone. I told him I feel sorry for my future niece.”

“I feel sorry for my future daughter. I know he’ll be a great father because he has one and will want to be nothing less than how great your dad is, but I can just see it now. She won’t be able to do anything.”

“Not until she gets around her fun Aunt Iris.” Iris says and smiles.

“Exactly. Just don’t corrupt my child, please.”

“Of course I will! I’ll take her to get her first tattoo and everything. Wally will love that.”

“We’re talking about a child that doesn’t even exist yet, and I already see Wally losing his shit.”

"Hey. That's your boyfriend. He's not your husband and the father of your kids yet. There's still time to run." Iris jokes.

"That's an impossible thing for me to do. I love your bullheaded brother with all that I am. And what would he do without me?"
"I agree. I couldn't imagine Wally dating someone that isn't you. If you guys ever did split, I'll hate his new girlfriend enough for the both of us."

"I expect nothing less." Linda says and they both laugh.

"Am I taking you to your house? I know you want to change. I need to do the same."

"Yup. I'm hanging at the house with you guys. I'm going to sneak and spend the night."

"Yay! This should be a lot of fun." Iris says as she heads towards Linda's house so that she can get changed. A little over an hour later, they were back in Iris' car and heading for the store to get snacks and food for their game night. Then they were on their way to the West house, ready to start their evening with their guys.

Wally put his phone away and looked around. He still hadn't gotten the full work out that he was used to. He wondered where Barry's head was. He was used to working out with him, but didn't want to assume that he wanted to continue.

“Well, since they’re hanging out, we can finish working out. Or did you want to do something else?” Wally asks

“Working out is fine with me. Lead the way.” Barry says.

Barry and Wally settled back into their grove of working out, which actually turned out good because they didn’t have Iris and Linda there as distractions. Though the girls were welcomed distractions, it was still a lot easier to work out without them around. They actually got to talk about guy things like they normally would. They were interrupted when a cute blonde walked up to Wally.

"Hey Wally! I haven't seen you in so long!"

"Hey, Patty. You're right. Not since the summer. How are you?"

Barry was still working on his arms and saw the woman Wally was talking to look over at him. "I'm great. Your dad told me you guys were home, but I didn't think I'd run into you here. Where's Iris?"

"You actually missed her. She and Linda left over an hour ago. After Iris beat up my friend." Wally jokes.

Patty looked over at Barry again. She laughed at the frown he put on his face. "You really had to tell someone that Iris beat me up, didn't you?"

Wally laughed. "Yes. It was funny. Patty, you should have seen it."

"I wish I could have." She replies with a hint of a sparkle in her eye. She thought Wally's friend was kind of cute.

"It wasn't that funny." Barry says sarcastically and stands. Patty immediately started checking Barry out. She really started to think he was just a little bit cute. She liked how tall he was.

Wally waved him over. "Barry, this is my dad's colleague Patty. Patty, this is my friend and roommate from school, Barry."
Barry and Patty stuck out their hands and shook. "Nice to meet you." They both say in unison.

Barry tapped Wally on the shoulder. "I'll be right back." He says and heads for the restrooms. He seriously needed to go and needed an Iris fix. It felt like it had been too long since he had seen her. He preferred to hear her voice, but though texting her would be just as good.

**Hey Rosie.**

Iris' face lit up when she realized it was her Bear.

*Hey Bear.*

**You know you really hurt me when you beat me up.**

*I'm sorry Bear. I didn't mean to, but I had to.*

**I know you did. I'm in a lot of pain.**

*You are?*

*I am.*

*Where?*

**All over.**

*Want me to kiss it and make it feel better?*

**Yes. And more.**

*I can do that.*

Barry blushed all the way to his ears. His imaginary tail was wagging.

**Good.**

*I can't wait to see you.*

**I can't wait to see you.**

**Oh and Rosie?**

*Yes, Bear?*

**Giving me the finger was a nice touch.**

*Lol. I know it was. I meant it though.*

**You really meant to tell me fuck you?**

*Yes. You and Wally.*

*But for different reasons. ;)*

**You are amazing. Did I tell you that before?**
Yes. I don't mind you telling me some more.

You are amazing.

You are adorable.

Besides you making me feel better, what else are we doing later on?

We are having game night. Linda is already here. She's spending the night.

Is she sleeping with you or Wally?

Probably me. But she'll more than likely sneak out of my room and into his.

Where am I gonna sleep?

On the couch.

Barry had to laugh to himself at that.

"So, that's your friend?" Patty asks as she watches Barry walk away.

"Yeah. Roommate and teammate too." Wally says.

"How old is he?" She asks and smiles.

Wally chuckled. "He's 20. But he'll be 21 next month."

"So, he's only 3 years younger than I am."

"Are you interested in Barry?" Wally asks in awe.

"It depends. What kind of guy is he? And is he single?" Patty asks.


"I can deal with shy and awkward. He's pretty cute." Patty says just as Barry is walking back with a huge grin on his face.

Wally takes it to mean he might be interested in Patty. She hopes that's what it means. "What are you grinning so hard for?"

Barry blushed and looked at Wally and Patty. "Oh, nothing. I was just thinking about something." He decided to change the subject. "So, you're a cop?" He asks Patty.

"Yup. I'm a rookie though. Wally's dad Joe is the best teacher I could ask for. He's really showed me the ropes." She says and practically beams at Barry.

"Barry's thinking of going into law enforcement too." Wally says to chat them up.

"Really?" Patty asks in awe.

"Yeah. I want to work in Criminology or Forensic Science."

"Are you thinking of working for Central City PD?" She asks and hopes that he says yes.
Barry smiled and shrugged. He was thinking that if he and Iris lasted like he wanted them to, he certainly would just to be with her. "Who knows? Anything's possible."

Wally watched the exchange between the two. It made him laugh and shake his head that Barry wasn't picking up on the vibes Patty was giving him fast enough. Though he was grinning and blushing, he still hadn't taken the bait far enough to ask her out. He figured he'd have to do it for him.

"Well, I hope you do. It'd be great to see you work here." Patty says and again beams at Barry. He was too busy thinking about Iris.

"I really would love to work with Wally's dad here in Central City. I heard CCPD has the best cops." Barry says. Then his phone went off. "Sorry about that." He says and looks at it. He almost lost his shit at the text Iris sent him.

_I changed my mind. You're sleeping in my bed tonight._

_Do you want to?_

_We'll go too far this time._

Barry turned completely red. Wally and Patty exchanged glances.

**Of course I want to. Do you think I'm an idiot?**

"Who's that?" Wally just has to ask.

"Felicity." Barry lies and leaves it at that.

Patty frowned at Barry mentioning another girl. "I thought nothing was going on between you two?"

"There isn't anything going on between us. She's just a friend. She just sent me a joke that only another nerd would get." Barry says and puts his phone away. He was ready to go.

Wally discreetly gave Patty a thumbs up. "So, Barry, would you like to go out sometime?"

Barry became flustered. "Huh?"

Patty smiled and Wally just shook his head again. "I said, would you like to go out sometime?"

Barry became more flustered and nervous. He couldn't believe this Patty woman just asked him out. "You want to go out with me?" He asks in confusion. This wasn't good.

"That's why she asked." Wally says smartly.

"Uh...I can't." He stammers out.

Patty looked shocked and confused. Wally laughed. "Yes, he can. He's just nervous. Of course he would." Wally patted Barry on the back.

Barry seriously wanted to hit Wally. He just completely put him on the spot. He laughed nervously. "Wally..." All he could think about was Iris. He couldn't explain that to either of them.

"I told you he was shy and awkward around girls." Wally says and laughs.
"Thanks, Wally." He says. Barry silently prayed for a distraction. He completely wanted out of this situation. He wondered how he would come out of it unscathed. By a stroke of pure luck, Iris texted him back.

*Of course I don't think you're an idiot. How can I think that when you're an adorable nerd?*

**Call me ASAP.**

Barry texted back. And like clockwork, Iris did. Barry looked at his phone. He breathed a sigh of relief. "I'm sorry, I have to take this." He says and walks away.

Wally laughed and shrugged as he and Patty watched Barry walk away. Barry really had a way with the opposite sex. It was hilarious to him. He wanted to scratch his head at him telling Patty he couldn't go out with her. He didn't understand him telling Patty that at all.

“What was that all about?” Iris asks.

“Nothing. I just wanted to hear your voice.”

“Where’s Wally?”

“Talking to someone your dad works with.” Barry replies.

“Do you realize this is the first time we’ve talked on the phone?”

“I do realize that. That’s why I told you to call me.”

Iris giggled. That put a smile on Barry’s face. “You’re smiling, aren’t you?” She asks.

“Of course I am. I’m talking to you.” Barry almost jumped out of his skin when Wally patted him on the back.

“You’re lying your ass off about nothing going on between you and Felicity.” He says.

“No, I’m not.” He counters. “Uh, I have to go. I’ll call…uh text you later.” Iris didn’t even respond and hung up.

“Yeah, right. So are you ready to go?”

“Yeah.” Barry says and he and Wally leave the gym. They stop at Zora’s on their way to get Iris’ brownies and make their way home. They found Iris and Linda lounging around when they got there.

“Look what we have here. Bert and Ernie.” Iris jokes.


Barry walked up to Iris and handed her the box. “A peace offering.” He says and smiles. He subtly took in her appearance and thought she looked amazing in the Wonder Woman tee shirt and blue jeans she was wearing. He would think Iris looked amazing in anything.

Iris playfully snatched the box away. She wanted to throw herself into his arms. He got her brownies. “A peace offering? Did you get me these because my period started and you’re trying to be funny by bringing me chocolate?” She asks with mild sarcasm.

Barry playfully cringed. He looked at Wally who shrugged. “Give them back.”
Iris took one from the box and started to eat it. “Nope. But thanks, Bartholomew. I should kick your ass more often.” She joked between bites.

Barry became embarrassed and hid his face in his hands. Wally and Linda laughed at him. "I'm never gonna live that down, am I?" He asks.

“Oh, lighten up Barry. I was just kidding. Thanks. You’re not out of the woods yet though. But at least I don’t full on hate you right now.”

“Gee, thanks.” Barry says sarcastically.

“So, exactly what are we doing tonight?” Wally asks.

“Games, pizza, movies. It’s Friday night, big brother.”

“Cool. Well, me and Barry need to hit the shower.”

Iris held her nose. “Yeah, you do.” She joked.

Wally grabbed her and gave her a hug. “There you go.”

Iris wiggled out of his arms. “Ew! You’re disgusting! Getting your sweat all on me!”

“You deserved that.” Wally says and walks away.

Iris blew a kiss at Barry once she knew Wally wasn’t looking. Linda smiled and Barry turned red. He blew one back to her and headed for the stairs too.

Linda and Iris just sat around and talked a little more while they waited on their guys to get ready.

“That was really nice of him. He must know about the brownie obsession.” Linda says.

Iris grinned. “Yeah, he does. He is just the most adorable thing ever.”

“He is pretty adorable. And you weren’t kidding about him having a nice body. I wasn’t looking because I have Wally, but I wasn’t expecting that.”

“Tell me about it. I felt the same way when I first saw him. I especially love his arms.”

“Yeah, he has some nice arms.”

“He has nice everything.” Iris counters.

They started to laugh when Joe walked in.

“Hey girls.” He says and comes to sit on the sofa with them.

“Hey, Dad.”

“Hey, Joe.” Linda says.

“I’m surprised you’re home so early.” Iris says.

“I know. Me too. What are you two up to? Where’s Wally and Barry?”

“They’re upstairs showering. We went to the gym earlier. We’re having game night. You have to join us. We miss you.”
“Alright, I’m in. I miss you kids.”

“I missed you too. I can’t believe I haven’t seen you guys since August.” Linda says.

“I know. Well, I’m glad you’re all here. Plus the new kid, Barry.” Joe says.

“So, how’s work been going?” Iris asks.

“Actually, it’s slow now. Crime slows down when it gets cold out. I’m expecting robberies to creep back up because Christmas is right around the corner.”

“That sucks.” Linda says.

“It does.” Iris agrees.

“Well, I’m gonna go up and grab a quick shower and get comfortable for this game night. I haven’t kicked your butts in Monopoly in a long time.” Joe jokes and gets up from the sofa.

“That’s cause you cheat.” Iris jokes back at her father.

“Hush, baby girl.” Joe says and disappears upstairs.

Iris and Linda laugh and just go back to mindlessly chatting. They heard the guys laughing on their way down the stairs. Iris casually looked at Barry, her adorable nerd in his plaid shirt and jeans and thought he looked really cute. They came over and sat on the sofa and chairs with them.

“ Took you two long enough.”

“We didn’t take nearly as long as you two would.” Wally says smartly.

“Whatever. Dad is joining us tonight. I invited him.”

“That’s fine with me. That’s ok with you, Barry?” Wally asks.

“Of course. I don’t really have a say in that anyway. But I’d like to get to know your father better.”

“Did you go to the store?”

“Yes. I got plenty of snacks. I guess we can order the pizza now.” Iris says as she gets up to walk to the kitchen. Barry discreetly followed her with his eyes. Linda and Wally got up and went behind Iris and he did the same.

Iris placed the order and everybody started getting the snacks ready.

“We are doing karaoke tonight, right?” Linda asks.

“Of course we are. We have to do a duet. Wally and Barry can do one too.”

Wally and Barry scoffed. “I’m not singing a duet with a dude.”

“Me neither.” Barry agrees.

Iris looked at Linda and they both shook their heads. “Ridiculous. You act like we asked you two to kiss.”

They joked around for a while until they heard the doorbell ring.
“Wow, those pizzas got here fast.” Linda says and they all head to the living room. Joe was coming down the stairs and got the door.

It wasn’t the pizzas.

“Hey, Patty. What a nice surprise. What are you doing here? Is something wrong at the station?” Joe asks in confusion. "Come on in."

Patty smiled and stepped in the house. “No, nothing’s wrong at the station.”

“She's here for game night.” Wally says and smiles. “She’s Barry’s date.”

Barry turned several shades of red. He wanted to kill Wally. He looked over at Iris. She was looking at Wally, Patty, Barry, and Linda. Linda and Iris locked eyes and had a 'WTF' moment silently.

Iris then just looked back at Barry and saw him watching her with apologizing eyes. She averted her eyes and put on a fake smile.

Barry felt his heart sink when Iris looked away from him. He looked at Wally and the smug grin on his face and seriously, really wanted to kill him. All Barry could think was, *Fuck you, Wally.*

Chapter End Notes

I must say that writing for a ship and a show that I've lost a lot of faith in is an extremely hard thing to do. The direction this story is going in shows that. I just hope that I don't disappoint. I at least hope somebody enjoyed this update and where this headed.

Thank you for reading.
"It's really no big deal."

Chapter Summary

Self explanatory.

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry but it is what it is.

It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I must inform people that this story is over. I feel like such trash for ending it where it left off. I apologize to those of you that loved this story and wanted more updates. I write from my heart, and my heart really isn't in it anymore. I did have Chapter 11 close to finished, but that's irrelevant now. And so is my vision for this story. Barry and Iris are truly an iconic couple that I really had high hopes for. I had high hopes for them in this story as well. I really feel like it's a waste of my time and the little talent that I do have writing for something that's been cheapened. I just can't write if it's and me aren't respected. I already know that I'm too sensitive about these things, but It can't be helped.

I truly do apologize to you all. I guess you can just draw your own conclusions as to what happens. It's just a story. A story that I loved writing and wanted to see through to the end, but just a story.

I bid you all farewell.
"That's easy for you to say."

Chapter Summary

Game night! Plus laughter, tears, heartbreak, pettiness, and angst. Lots of it.

Chapter Notes

So, I decided to try and finish this story. This was a labor of love for those that wanted it. I know some people have abandoned me and this story like I abandoned ship, so this really is for the people that left comments asking me to continue. It's truly appreciated.

Some of you won't like this chapter and that's to be expected. Despite what some may think, my decision to end this was NOT for attention and people to beg me to finish.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Iris swallowed the lump in her throat and kept the fake smile plastered on her face. She seriously had a role to play now. She was confused as hell and had no idea what the fuck was going on, but she had to fake it and get through their game night. Though playing games was the last thing in the world she wanted to do. She wanted to cuss and hit something. Preferably Barry and Wally. She kind of wanted to hit Patty too, but those two were at the top of her shit list.

My boyfriend has a date. My boyfriend has a fucking date. My boyfriend has a fucking date to the game night I set up. With another fucking girl. This is just peachy. Iris thought bitterly. She guessed that Barry wasn’t her boyfriend anymore.

That was perfectly fine with her. Patty Cakes could have him. He could go and stay with her until he took his ass back to school.

This is just fanfuckingtastic. Iris again thought bitterly as she put the fakest smile ever on her face where she hoped that it would stay.

How in the fuck could her boyfriend have a date with someone else? And at her house? How in the fuck did that happen?

Whatever went on between the three, they would not, they just wouldn’t get the best of her.

“Patty, what a nice surprise! It’s really great to see you again.” Iris says with her huge fake smile still on her face.

“Thanks. It’s really nice to see you again too, Iris. I was telling Wally that I was sorry I missed you at the gym earlier.”

“Well, you’re here now. Welcome! Make yourself at home.” Iris looked over at Linda who still had the ‘WTF’ look on her face. Barry looked like a deer caught in headlights, Joe looked normal,
and Wally had his normal smug ass grin on his face. Iris wanted to wipe it off his face badly. Barry did too. He was mad enough to spit fire. He really couldn’t believe that Wally had done this shit to him.

Joe just shrugged. “Well, the more the merrier here. Everyone knows that.” He says and goes to sit on the sofa.

Patty took off her jacket and hung it on the coatrack. She then walked over and stood ridiculously, dangerously, too close for the comfort of him and Iris, next to Barry. She smiled and playfully nudged him.

Iris wanted to scream.

“You guys get comfortable and figure out what games we’re playing. I’ll finish up with the snacks.” Iris says and walks towards the kitchen.

“I’ll help.” Linda says and follows Iris.

Iris let out a sigh of pure frustration and aggravation. She locked eyes with Linda when she got in the kitchen. “What. The. Fuck.” Is all Iris says.

“My thoughts exactly. What the fuck is she doing here?” Linda asks quietly.

“She’s here for game night. She’s Barry’s date.” Iris spat with venom and sarcasm.

“What the fuck? How is that even possible?” She asks.

“My money is on my asshole brother and his asshole friend.” Iris says. She laughed bitterly.

“Sorry. I know he’s your boyfriend, but he was my asshole brother before he was your boyfriend. I don’t even know what to say about the other one.” Iris says.

“No apologies, necessary. I’m in total agreement that he’s an asshole. Why the fuck would he, they do that?”

“Who knows? We need to get to the bottom of it. Though I don’t want to interact with any of them now. I wish I could cancel this shit.”

“Me too. But we can’t. Are you going to be alright?” Linda asks.

Iris put on a fake smile. “Yup.” She says and pours chips into a bowl. She and Linda finish up with the snacks and go back into the living room.

Barry was varying degrees of angry, uncomfortable, and confused. He wondered how he’d get through the night. He watched Iris as she came back into the living room. She completely avoided eye contact with him. She went and sat down on the sofa next to Joe.

Everyone else followed suit. Wally sat in the adjoining chair and Linda sat on his lap. Barry sat on the other end of the sofa next to Iris. She subtly slid closer to Joe. Patty kind of stood there awkwardly with nowhere to sit. Iris noticed this and got up.

“Here, take my seat. Sit next to your date.” She says. She forced herself to keep the hostility and sarcasm from her voice. She didn’t want to sit next to Barry’s ass anyway. She got up and sat on the table. She has sat on that table plenty of times so It wouldn’t look odd.

Barry wanted to hit something. He didn’t like how Iris just got up and offered her seat to Patty. He didn’t want to sit next to Patty. He wanted Iris to sit on his lap like Linda sat on Wally’s. He knew that this night would be a disaster.
Iris really didn’t want to be anywhere near Barry. Wally saw how she got up and assumed it was because of her feelings towards Barry. And he was partly right. Right now she was really disliking Barry. There was no pretending. Well, she was. She wasn’t trying to let anyone other than Linda know how devastated she was about Patty being in her house on a date with Barry. She was annoyed that she was devastated. And she was mad as hell at her brother. Again. Wally just didn’t know that she was disliking him too. Really was. She was more mad at him than she was the day before. Right now she hated her big brother’s guts.

Iris saw how Patty smiled and sat down really close to Barry. She felt a twinge of jealousy at how content Patty looked. She kind of resented it because Patty and Barry did look super cute together. Maybe Patty was better for him. Sure she was a little older, but they wouldn’t have to face the obstacles that she and Barry would have to. Her brother was already against it and they were keeping it a secret. Plus the world was full of bigots. People wouldn’t look twice at Barry and Patty. The way she felt, she really could have him. As far as she was concerned, she and Barry were not together anymore. She just had to tell him. He was a damn genius. He should be smart enough to figure out that their relationship is over.

“Well, I guess I’m your date, baby girl.” Joe says and smiles at Iris.

“Thanks for that, Dad. I would have been fifth wheeling it big time. And since you are, I have the best date in the house then.” She says and smiles at her dad. She wanted to jump into her Daddy’s arms and bury her face in his chest and cry her eyes out.

“I do too.” Joe says.

“Hey! What am I, chopped liver?” Linda says to lighten the load. She could tell that Iris was hurt and upset.

Everyone just laughed at her outburst. Everyone except Barry. He didn’t find a thing funny. He wanted to kill Wally. He really did. He had never wanted to physically hurt Wally ever, but he wanted to right now.

“So, how are things going for everyone?” Joe asks. “We haven’t really had a chance to catch up.”

“Well, I’m glad to be out of school until next year.” Iris says.

“I second that.” Linda adds.

“I third that.” Wally says.

“I don’t miss those days.” Patty says. “I’m so glad I’m out of school.”

“And I’ll be out soon.” Wally boasts.

“Don’t rub it in. I still have another year.” Linda says and they all laugh.

“I still have two. More if I go to grad school.” Iris adds.

Barry still hasn’t said anything. He’s just watching Iris. He hasn’t taken his eyes off her. “What about you, Barry?” Joe asks.

Barry is still watching Iris. He looks a thousand miles away. “Barry. Yo, Barry.” Wally says to get his attention.

He shook his head from his reverie. He was finally pulled out of his trance of staring at Iris.
“Yeah?”

Everyone laughed at him. Everyone except for Iris. She realized she had to get better at faking it.

“My dad asked you a question. You were zoned out.” Wally says.

“What’s the question?” Barry asks awkwardly.

“How are things going for you? Everyone was talking about school.” Joe says and gives Barry a fatherly smile. Something Barry needed at the moment.

“Oh. Well, I’m glad to be out. Double majoring is kicking my butt.” Barry says and smiles awkwardly.

“You’re double majoring?” Patty asks in awe.

“Yeah.” Is all Barry says.

“In what?”

“Physics and Chemistry.”

“Wow. You must be pretty smart then.” Patty says. She seriously looks like she has hearts in her eyes.

“I guess.” Barry says dismissively.

“He’s a genius, Patty.” Wally says to talk Barry up.

“I’m not a genius. I’m just a nerd.” Barry says. He desperately hopes Iris corrects him and calls him an adorable nerd. He felt his heart sink when she didn’t. He wondered how they got there. That’s right, Wally. He mentally reminded himself to thank Wally for the best evening ever.

“There’s nothing wrong with being a nerd. You’re a cute nerd.” Patty says.

Iris wanted to roll her eyes. She didn’t no matter how badly she wanted to. She just put her fake smile back on. She looked over at them. She felt Barry staring into her eyes. She looked away from him staring at her and focused on them both. “You two really look cute together.” She watched as Barry cringed and Patty smiled.

“Thanks.” She says.

“And look at you two. You’re already matching.” Iris says with the bitterness of a thousand lemons. She noticed that Patty had on the same color blue that was in Barry’s plaid shirt. She hated how miffed and bitter she was about it all. Seeing Barry and Patty together was bringing out emotions she didn’t know she had.

Barry stared at Iris after that statement. She was really giving it to him and taking shots. He hated that shit with everything in him. He felt like she was really trying to push him with Patty and that’s not at all what he wants. Not by a longshot.

Patty looked down at her shirt and then at Barry’s and laughed. “I guess we are matching. That’s something, huh?”

“So, how did you two meet?” Iris asks eagerly.
“At the gym. I saw Wally there after you left. He told me you beat up his friend.”

Iris smiled. “Yeah, I did do that.” She says and they all laugh.

“You beat up Barry?” Joe asks in concern.

“I sure did. Your boxing lessons came in handy.” Iris says and they all laugh again. Barry wasn’t laughing though. Nothing was funny to him.

“I didn’t teach you to fight to beat up Wally’s friends.” Joe says.

“Dad, he had it coming. Didn’t you, Bartholomew?” Iris asks, this time she didn’t hide the sarcasm.

“Don’t start, Iris.” Wally jokes.

Iris quickly turned her head and looked at her brother, the asshole. “Don’t start what?” She asks innocently.

“Don’t start with Barry again. Don’t embarrass him in front of his date.” Wally says.

“Oh, I wouldn’t dream of doing that.” Iris says and smiles. She felt the fire and ice ooze from her pores. She could set the house on fire or cause an ice storm with the way she felt. “So, back to how you two met.”

“There isn’t really anything to add. I just saw Barry at the gym with Wally when I asked about you and he told me I just missed you and that you beat Barry up. Then I just went for it and asked him out. And here I am.” Patty adds and giggles. She playfully nudged Barry again.

Iris saw red.

She looked at Barry and wished she could really punch him in the face. Harder than she hit him earlier. He was just staring at her. She used to like it when he looked at her. Not anymore.

“So, you asked him out? Good for you. Who says the guy has to ask?” Iris says and smiles.

“Yeah. I’m the kind of girl to go after what I want. After Wally gave me the green light to ask, I just went for it.” Patty replies and slid closer to Barry on the couch.

Iris looked over at Wally. “Look at you playing matchmaker.” She teased. She was bitter and salty about it, but her egging Wally on made it seem like it was just sparring between siblings. She wanted to give Wally a few rounds in the ring. She wanted to punch his lights out.

“Hey. I had to. Barry knows he wants to thank me. I didn’t see him complaining when we were talking. Right, Barry?”

Barry looked at Wally. He wanted to tell him “Go fuck yourself” a million times. He wanted to hit Wally. He couldn’t hit Iris earlier when they were in the ring, but he could hit Wally. “Yeah.”

“So, Iris. You’re not seeing anyone?” Patty asks in a cheerful tone.

Iris laughed lightly and shook her head no. “Nah. I’m not seeing anyone. I was interested in this guy, but he turned out to be a huge jerk. Big prick. Major asshole.” She looked at Joe. “Sorry, Dad.” She says and smiles as she looks at Patty and Barry. He locked eyes with her. Iris didn’t look away this time. She wanted him to know she was talking about him. Barry was visibly shaken and Iris loved it. It served his ass right. She watched him swallow nervously and look away.
“Well, that sucks.” Patty says.

“Yeah, but what can I do except move on? There’s plenty of fish in the sea. His loss, not mine.” Iris states. “Besides, Wally won’t let me date anyway. He thinks no guy is good enough for me.”

“I’m sure there must be some guys at school you can date.” Patty offers as a suggestion.

“Oh, there are plenty of guys at the school. I’m around the jocks all the time because I’m a cheerleader. I have a few on my list.” Iris says matter of factly to let Barry know he could easily be replaced.

“Oh your list? Do I have to transfer schools?” Wally asks with much humor and Linda nudged him.

“See what I mean? That’s why I didn’t go to SCU with him. He would have spoiled all my fun. Just like he did in high school. I couldn’t have any fun until he graduated and went away to school.”

“I had to spoil your fun. It’s my job as your big brother.” Wally adds to his defense.

“That’s what he keeps saying. Since he thinks no guy is good enough for me, I might just steal his girlfriend. I like her better anyway.” Iris jokes and winks at Linda.

“Iris, I’d date you any day of the week. I know how amazing you are. You’re kinda hot too.” Linda jokes as well. She can really sense how upset Iris is and hates it. She wasn’t expecting their game night to be like this.

“Excuse me?” Wally asks with fake hurt in his voice.

They all laugh. Their laughter is interrupted by the doorbell.

Iris hopped to her feet. “I’ll get it.” She practically runs to the door and was happy to see that it was finally the pizzas.

“I’ll help you.” Barry says and jumps to his feet. He practically ran to the door as well. He locked eyes with Iris again and she looked away. Again.

He felt his heart sink. Again.

Iris took the boxes she had and darted to the kitchen. Barry followed closely behind. Iris started setting up the pizzas and didn’t once look at Barry.

She absently said to herself, “I forgot to put out the paper plates.”

“Iris.” Barry says quietly and calmly. He just watched her not even acknowledge that he had spoken. She seemed to forget he was in the room.

She completely ignored him and walked over to the cabinet. She got the paper plates and walked back over to the table. “Are you guys coming?” She called into the living room.

“Iris…” Barry says again to nothing. He just looked at Iris and wanted to punch the wall. Iris was mad at and ignoring him. This was just great. All thanks to Wally.

They all started filing into the kitchen. Linda got there first and saw how defeated Barry looked. He was just looking at Iris. She was completely ignoring him. He was about to get caught.

Linda walked over to him and nudged him. “Get it together.” She whispered under her breath.
He finally took his eyes off of Iris and looked down at Linda. “She’s mad at me.” He says sadly.

“I can see that.” Linda counters. When Wally, Joe and Patty made their way to the kitchen, she changed the subject.

“Iris, have you decided what song we’re going to sing for our duet?” She asks.

Iris looked at Linda and smiled. “Um…I haven’t really thought about it yet. You have any suggestions?”

“Wait. We’re doing karaoke?” Patty says as she grabs a plate.

“Yup. It’s tradition.” Iris says and smiles. “You and Barry can do one too.” Barry just looked at Iris and wished she hadn’t suggested that.

“I can’t sing to save my life.” Patty says and laughs.

“That’s ok. You’re amongst friends. Wally can’t sing either.” Iris says.

“Shut up, Iris.” Wally says.

“Iris and I love to do our duets.” Linda adds.

“What about you, Barry?” Patty asks.

“Um, I’m not much of a singer.” He lies, hoping it will get dropped. He knows that Iris knows he can sing, but he didn’t want to do a damn duet with Patty.

Iris wanted to say something, but she thought better of it. She didn’t want to explain how she knew he could sing. She didn’t want to explain anything about Barry. She now wanted him out of her house. Him, Wally, and Patty. They all needed to go. The only people she wasn’t mad at were Linda and her dad. She was so glad that Linda was over and could help her through this. She couldn’t tell anyone else.

“It’ll still be fun. You’re in the no judgment zone.” Linda says as she grabs her pizza.

Iris had a plan. “I’ve got it, Lin. We can do Beyonce songs tonight. We can sing 'Single Ladies'.”

She says with much hidden meaning.

Barry picked right up on it.

“Linda isn’t single.” Wally says to remind Iris and Linda.

“So what? I am.” She says to let that sink in. Barry had to know that they were over. He had to know what she was getting at.

And he did. He felt so defeated. He wanted to come out of his skin. Iris just essentially broke up with him in front of everyone, and he just had to deal with it. This night sucked and he figured it couldn’t get any worse.

“Where are the drinks?” Wally asks with a mouth full of pizza.

“I forgot to take it out. You have hands.” Iris snaps.

Wally looked over at her. This was normal for them though. “I’m tired of you snapping at me.”
“I’m tired of you thinking that I care.” Iris says and rolls her eyes. Hard. She wasn’t faking that at all. She sat down and started to eat.

Barry wanted to say something, but she’d probably just snap at him too. This was a disaster. They were pretending to hate each other, now he got the feeling Iris wasn’t pretending. He should really thank Wally for fucking things up. He really should.

“Behave in front of our guests.” Joe says sternly, but in a joking tone.

“She started it.” Wally says as he heads for the fridge.

Iris rolled her eyes again. She felt Barry looking at her. She wished that he would stop that shit and pay attention to his date. She grabbed a cup and got up and walked over to the fridge. She shoved Wally out of her way and got ice.

“Shoving me was totally unnecessary.” Wally says.

“You’re lucky I didn’t kick you.” Iris says smartly and gets her ice. She walked back over to the table and sat down. Barry watched her the whole way. Her anger was making him uneasy. She was mad at him and Wally. To everyone else it just looked like she was having the usual sibling rivalry with her brother, but he knew it was more. And at first she was just pretending to hate him. Now he thought she really did. She was ignoring him and avoiding eye contact with him. This was painful for him. And all because of Wally.

He watched her pour soda into her cup and get pizza. He felt like a true weirdo just watching her. He knew he needed to get his shit together before he got found out. He felt like he got kicked in the gut when he saw a pizza that Iris must have ordered just for him because it had his favorite toppings of pepperoni and jalapeno. She did that small, really big thing for him and now she hated him.

Barry started to eat as well without even enjoying or tasting it. He wanted to pull Wally up and tell him what he did was utter bullshit. He wanted to tell Patty that he wasn’t interested in her and get her to leave. He wanted to get Wally and Iris in a room together and alone so that he could explain that it was all Wally’s doing and he didn’t invite Patty there and to stop being irrational and mad at him for something that he didn’t do. He needed a chance to rectify the situation. He didn’t want to be in that house and really have Iris hate him.

And he was going to spend the night with her again. He knew that was out of the question now. All because of Wally. And what was wrong with Patty that she couldn’t see that he wasn’t interested? He said about as much to her as he said to Linda and he certainly wasn’t interested in her. This was a disaster.

Maybe he should have said that something was going on between him and Felicity. In hindsight he knows that that would have made this disastrous situation easier. Maybe that would’ve turned Patty off and now she wouldn’t be here thinking that they had a date. He did not want her there. His night and stay at the West house was ruined. He wondered if his relationship with Iris was ruined as well. He felt stupid for wondering that because it was blatantly obvious that it was. She was barely looking at him and not even acknowledging his existence.

Iris was beyond sick and tired of Barry just staring at her. She picked up her plate and cup and stood. She wanted out of that kitchen. It felt like the walls were closing in on her.

“Where are you going?” Wally asks.
“Into the dining room. Do you mind?” She snaps at him. Barry felt bad because he knew that he was the reason she wanted to leave.

“You want some company?” Linda asks. She hates seeing how upset and hurt Iris is.

“I will always want your company.” Iris says truthfully and smiles at her friend and surrogate sister.

“Patty, I think you should go too. That way you can have girl’s talk.” Wally offers as a suggestion. He needed to talk to Barry and didn’t just want to pull him aside. He was seriously ignoring his date and acting like someone had died. He really needed to pay Patty some attention.

Iris looked at him and wanted to pour her drink into his face. She didn’t want Patty coming with them. Any other time, she would have been ok with it. Now, she didn’t want anything to do with Patty. She just kept walking into the dining room anyway. She sat down at the table with force. Seconds later, Patty and Linda came into the dining room.

“Do you guys get the feeling Wally wanted to get rid of us?” Patty asks once they’re seated at the table.

Iris almost rolled her eyes. “He probably did so that they can have guy talk.”

“Is Barry always this quiet?” Patty asks innocently as she looks at Iris and Linda.

Linda subtly looked at Iris. “I honestly wouldn’t know. I just met him a few days ago.” Iris answers.

“Yeah, me too. Wally hasn’t really said anything about it. Just that he’s a huge nerd and he can run really fast.” Linda adds.

“Despite him being a nerd, he is pretty cute. Don’t you guys think?” Patty asks eagerly.

“I only have eyes for Wally.” Linda says.

“What about you Iris?”

Iris glanced at Linda. She bit into her slice of pizza that tasted like rubber to her now. Barry, Wally, and Patty were really putting a bad taste in her mouth. She swallowed the rubber disguised as pizza and shrugged. “I haven’t really thought about it. I guess he’s cute. But he really isn’t my type.” Iris lies. He is her type. For a moment, she really thought she’d have a future with him. “I guess since he’s Wally’s friend and off limits to me, I don’t even see the need to look at him like that. I guess I can say he’s somewhat a brother by extension.” Iris shrugged again. She hoped that Patty would shut up about it. She didn’t want to talk to this chick about Barry. Linda eyed Iris carefully. She has known her a long time and knew that she was upset and hurt. She really couldn’t blame her. The way she was so happy and giddy about Barry just a few hours ago was now gone.

“If you don’t mind me asking, why do you say he’s off limits?” Patty inquires.

“Because Wally doesn’t want me dating any of his friends. He tells his friends that I’m off limits too.”

“Have you ever dated one of his friends?” Patty asks.

Iris subtly looked at Linda. “No.” Iris lies. She didn’t need to know shit about her and Eddie. She definitely didn’t need to know shit about her and Barry. But she and Barry were history, just like
her and Eddie. She hated to admit it to herself that yet again, Wally was right. She felt like her 16 year old self all over again. Liking one of Wally’s friends when she knew she wasn’t supposed to. Wally telling her that liking one of his friends was a bad idea. Still deciding to go through with dating one of his friends and Wally not knowing about it. Getting hurt by one of his friends. She felt like a royal idiot. The good thing was Wally truly had no idea this time. She wouldn’t have to hear him say ‘I told you so’. She was glad that she didn’t even tell Linda that they were together. It would end quietly and as quickly as it began. The only difference was that now it was more in her face. She also had to put on a brave face and pretend that she wasn’t dying a little on the inside.

As soon as the girls were out of the kitchen and earshot, Wally just looked at Barry. Wally figured Barry was a lost cause. Barry felt him looking at him. He was still incredibly mad at Wally and wanted to punch his lights out. He felt like Wally had completely crossed the line. “What?” Barry asks once he’s tired of Wally just staring at him.

“What? Why aren’t you paying your date any attention? She seems to really like you, and you act like you’re at a funeral.” Wally says.

“He’s not paying her any attention because he likes Iris.” Joe says seemingly out of nowhere.

Wally and Barry turned to look at him. Barry had that dear caught in headlights thing going on. He just scoffed and shook his head. “What? Mr. West….I don’t.” Barry lies.

“Son, I told you that you can call me Joe. And you do.” Joe states and looks over at them.

“Of course he does. He can’t have her though.” Wally says. “Plus Iris doesn’t like you.”

Joe wanted to laugh out loud at that. Wally was seriously mistaken. He knew his kids well. Iris liked Barry as much as he likes her. He knows what he sees. He didn’t want to bring that up in front of Wally and have him lose it. He knows how Wally feels about that.

Barry turned beet red at that. He lowered his head and then did his nervous fidgety thing. “Is it really that obvious?” He asks.

Joe grinned and shook his head. “Yes. It’s not obvious to Patty though.”

“Speaking of Patty, why did you invite her here?” Barry asks in a calm tone. He wanted to blow up on Wally. Luckily his dad was there and he couldn’t do that in his house and in front of him.

“Because she likes you. And you need to get laid.” Wally says and laughs.

“What?” Barry asks incredulously.

“I said she likes you and you need to get laid.” Wally says again.

“I don’t need you to help me get laid, Wally.” Barry says bitterly.

“Yes, you do. So I think you should start paying Patty some attention. You’re the reason she’s even here. This is supposed to be your first date.”

“Yeah, I’m on a date I don’t even want to be on.” Barry says in the same bitter tone as before.

“Do you want me to tell her to leave?” Wally asks.

“Yeah, that would be great. Since you’re the one that invited her on this date, you can be the one to let her down.”
“Why would you want to let her down? She’s pretty. And I was kidding about telling her to leave.”

Barry shrugged. He hadn’t really thought about it. He only had eyes for Iris. “I guess she is. I’m not interested in her though. And I’m not kidding. She needs to go.”

“Why? Because she’s older than you?” Wally asks as he stares Barry down.

“No, that isn’t why. I’m just not interested.” He wasn’t interested because he had Iris, but he couldn’t very well tell Wally that.

“I hope it’s not because of Iris.” Wally says as he deadpans him. “Because she’s off limits and you don’t stand a chance with her.”

Joe looked at his son and his friend and wanted to laugh. Barry was obviously lying through his teeth and Wally was so hell bent on getting Barry with Patty, that he couldn’t see what was really going on. This was just funny to him and he wondered how it would all play out as the night progressed.

“I know I don’t stand a chance with Iris, but this has nothing to do with her. This is about Patty and me not being interested. You both should have been able to tell that earlier.” Barry says.

“I just thought you were being your usual awkward and weird self around her.”

“Yeah, but not because I was interested. I always act weird and awkward. How long have you known me?”

“Long enough to know that you need to get laid.” Wally jokes and starts laughing.

Barry really wanted to say some things to his friend, but he couldn’t and wouldn’t do that in front of Joe. He was in his house and he deserved his respect. Wally did too for bringing him home, but that was about to go out the window. Wally had royally screwed him over, especially when it came to Iris. He didn’t care about Patty, but didn’t want to be a complete jerk to her. He wanted her gone. He wanted them all gone so that they could be alone like they were earlier in the day.

“Remind me to laugh later.” Barry says dryly.

“You’ve got to admit that it was pretty funny.” Wally says.

“No, I don’t think this is funny at all.” Barry replies.

“Wally, I have to agree with Barry. You need to fix this.” Joe says almost sternly.

“Fix it how?”

“Tell Patty that you were mistaken and shouldn’t have invited her here.” Joe says.

Wally sighed. “So I’m just supposed to go out there and tell her that?”

“Yes.” Barry says almost immediately.

“I’m not going to do that. Maybe I shouldn’t have invited her here without your approval, but I can’t just embarrass her like that. You go and let her down easy.”

“Why should I do it when it’s your fault she’s even here in the first place?” Barry counters in an incredulous tone.
“A little quieter guys, you don’t want her to hear you.” Joe says.

“Can’t you at least wait until the night is over to do it?” Wally asks.

Barry sighed out of pure frustration and aggravation. He rubbed his face. “Fine.” He says sharply.

“You should be thanking me.” Wally says in a smart tone.

“Thanking you? For what?” Barry asks incredulously.

“I tried to help Mr. Rogers Jr. out, and this is the thanks I get. I tried to set you up with a hot cop, that actually likes how nerdy you are, and you’re not interested. You’re an idiot.”

“I’m not an idiot and I’m not like Mr. Rogers.” Barry states defiantly.

Joe and Wally laughed. “You should see his sweaters, Dad.”

Barry scoffed. “There’s nothing wrong with my sweaters.”

"Wally, leave Barry alone about his sweaters. I think we need to get this show on the road." Joe says as he stands.

He was ready to get the fun started with his kids and guests.

"Alright. I'll leave him alone this time." Wally says as he stands as well. They all threw the remainders of their pizza in the trash.

Barry felt a mixture of emotions. He wanted the fun to start as well, but he wanted it to not happen at all so that he could talk to Iris in private. He was also dreading going into the other room where the girls were. He wondered how Iris dealt with Patty coming along with her and Linda. He knew how she felt though. She didn't like it at all. He didn't like it either. He wished that Patty was not there. He felt like she had expectations of him and he was unable to give them to her. He wasn't interested and had no idea of how he was going to let her down. He hadn't really been in the position to reject girls before. He didn't want to hurt her feelings or make her think it was her, but she just simply isn't Iris and that isn't her fault. He again though that the night was a disaster. He reluctantly stood and walked behind Joe and Wally. He instantly locked eyes with Iris who wasn't looking too happy at the moment. He felt his heart sink when Iris averted her eyes again.

"So, is everyone ready to get started?" Joe asks, eager to let the kid in him come out for the evening.

"Yeah!" Linda says with fake cheerfulness that brought on a few laughs.

"I am." Patty says eagerly and looks around the room. She smiled when her eyes landed on Barry. She couldn't help but notice that he looked uncomfortable. She brushed it aside and chalked it up to him being nervous. Wally did say that he was shy and awkward around girls.

"So, what are we doing first?" Wally asks. His eyes fell on Iris. He noticed that Iris didn't seem like her usual bubbly self. "Iris?"

Iris slowly looked up at her brother. "Yeah?"

"Are you ok?" Wally asks in concern and all eyes are now on Iris.

Thanks, jackass. Iris thought to herself. Why was he bringing attention to her? "I'm fine. Why do you ask?" She lies.
"You just don't seem like yourself."

"I'm totally fine, Wally." Iris lies again. She still felt Barry staring at her. She put on her fakest of fake smiles and stood. She started grabbing the trash to clear the table and to have a small moment of herself. "We can get started right now. I was thinking we could play Monopoly first. Or maybe cards. Whatever you guys want to do." She says almost distractedly as she walked into the kitchen. She made her way to the trash can and took a deep breath. She needed to get it together. She had a role to play. She slipped a little and Wally picked up on her not being ok. Linda knew, but that was irrelevant. She wasn't going to say anything to put her on the spot. She just really needed Barry to stop looking at her. Things were different now. He needed to knock it the fuck off. It was unnerving and unrattling her. She took another deep breath and left the kitchen. She walked back into the dining room, fake smile still etched on her face. She clapped her hands. "Alright. We can get this game night started." She says and looks around.

"You're not being the banker, just so you know." Wally says smartly.

"Why not?" Iris asks just as smartly.

"Because you rob the bank, that's why." Wally says.

"I do no such thing! You're just mad you always go bankrupt when we play. Don't blame that on me being the banker. I'll prove it to you. Barry can be the banker. He's smart. He's majoring in Physics so I'm sure he's good with numbers. You just watch. I'll still win." Iris says to Wally and makes a face at him.

"Whatever. Barry, are you up for being the banker?" Wally asks.

"Sure. Whatever Iris wants." Barry says and smiles awkwardly. He needed to get back into Iris' good graces. He figured this was a start.

Iris discreetly looked at Linda and rolled her eyes in disgust. "Why haven't you gotten the games yet?" Iris asks Wally instead of replying to Barry's statement.

"I was getting to it."

"Well, you do that. I have to run up and get my speaker. I'll be right back." Iris says and darts to the stairs.

"Joe, where's your bathroom?" Patty asks.

Joe points towards a door. "Right there." And Patty walks off.

Barry took that as a sign. "I have to go too. I'll use the one upstairs." He says and heads in the same direction as Iris. He needed to get her alone. He walked up the steps and headed to her bedroom. The door was still open and he was thankful for that. He walked right in and shut the door. "Iris."

Iris froze at her dresser. She should have known he would follow her. Damn him, she thought. She just grabbed her speaker and turned around to face him. She just looked at the expression on his face, and wished she hadn't. She didn't want to look at his face anymore. She started to walk towards her door. Barry was blocking it. Damn him! She thought again. She stopped in front of him. "Excuse me." Is all she says.

"Iris. Please let me explain." Barry says.

"There's nothing to explain. Excuse me."
"I didn't invite her here. Wally did that."

"Are you going to get out of my way? Or do I have to get Wally up here? Or my Dad? He has a gun, so I suggest you move." Iris says in a sharp tone.

"Iris, please listen to me. I didn't invite Patty here. Wally did while I was on the phone with you. That's why I had you call me." Barry says, almost pleads, to get her to listen to him.

"Ok. Since Wally invited her here, what reason did you give him to do that? Better yet. What did you do to get Patty to want to come here and see you? I'm sorry, be your date." Iris asks with much sarcasm as she finally looks at him.

Barry shrugged. "I didn't do anything. I swear. Iris please just listen to me."

"Barry. Get out of my way. Do you want the people downstairs to think something is going on up here between us? Now move. Your date is waiting."

Barry sighed and rubbed his face. “She’s not my date. Dammit Iris, please just listen to me.”

“She is your date. Now for the last time, Please get out of my way or I’m calling Wally. It wouldn’t be the first time he had to rescue me from one of his asshole friends.” Iris says and instantly wished she hadn’t said that. She didn’t need for Barry to know about that.

Barry looked down at her funny. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Nothing. Now move.” Iris says while avoiding all eye contact. Barry had the inkling that she really would call Wally and that would not look good for him.

He stepped aside and let Iris open the door and walk through it. He just stood there and watched her walk away. He really started to wonder about what Iris said. Wally had to rescue her? From one of his friends? What in the hell does that mean? Barry asked himself. He waited about another minute and left Iris’ bedroom and hoped that nobody was up there to see him leave it. He got his wish and just headed for the stairs. He walked down and saw everyone seemingly waiting on him. He noticed that there was a spot reserved for him next to Patty. He wondered whose idea that was. He reluctantly sat down. The only good thing about the set up was that he was in perfect view of Iris. If he couldn’t sit next to her, he could look at her. However creepy it was.

“Yay! The banker’s here.” Linda says. She knew that something went on upstairs between Iris and Barry from the looks on both of their faces. Iris seemed to be in another world when she came back downstairs with her speaker and hooked her IPod up. She wanted to help keep the evening as light as possible.

“I haven’t played Monopoly in years.” Patty says.

“We play it every time we get together. It’s kind of a family tradition.” Joe says.

“Yeah, it is. Even if playing this with Iris is brutal. You might hate her before the night is out.” Wally says.

Iris scoffed and rolled her eyes. “You’re only saying that because I always leave you bankrupt. I beat you at everything. I beat you at bowling last night. Remember. I’ll beat you a Twister when we play that too.”

“Wait. We’re playing Twister too?” Patty asks.
“Yup.” Iris says happily.

“Don’t even waste your time Patty. She can bend like a pretzel.” Wally says.

That piqued Barry’s interests a little. Visions of the split danced in his head.

“Hush, Wallace. It’s not my fault I’m better than you at everything.” Iris says and sticks her tongue out.

That aroused Barry. He was seriously going through it.

“You can’t beat me at running.” Wally says smartly.

“Barry can.” Iris says and grins at him.

That piqued Patty's interests. “Really?” She asks Barry as she looks at him and Wally.

“Technically, yes.” Wally says. “We call him The Flash.”

“Yeah. Be careful, Patty. He might do everything so fast you won’t even see it.” Iris joked and Linda burst out laughing.

“Ha! Good one, Iris.” Linda says.

“I try.” Iris jokes and they laugh.

“I resent that.” Barry says lowly. He was putting that little scene between him and Iris in her bedroom behind him. He wouldn’t let that destroy him. Maybe Iris decided to really listen to what he said and was going to let it go. She seemed to not be as angry at him anymore. He didn’t want her to be angry at him at all. He seriously did nothing wrong. This was all Wally’s doing. He wondered about Iris’ little statement and would ask her about it later when Patty made her exit, Wally and Linda went about their way, and Joe went to bed. They had a lot to discuss. They needed to clear the air. They could talk almost all night again. They needed to clear the air. They could start all over if she liked. He liked and cared about Iris too much to let some girl he wasn’t the least bit interested in mess up what he already had and what he wanted with her. He’d swallow his pride and apologize even if he wasn’t in the wrong.

“Sorry about that Bartholomew. Didn’t mean to embarrass you in front of your date.” Iris says and smiles at him.

Barry felt a tug in his chest at her smiling at him. Maybe they could get past this. He turned red and started to blush. Everyone in the room picked up on it. Including Patty. “It’s ok, Iris. You can do anything you want to me.” He says and Wally looks over at him. He turned even redder. “I didn’t mean it the way it sounded.” He lied. That’s exactly how he meant it. Iris could literally do anything to him and he would let her.

Wally brushed it off. It was already determined that Barry had it bad for Iris. He couldn’t blame him. But Iris seriously wasn’t interested in him so it wasn’t anything Wally needed to worry about.

“Like how I beat you up earlier?” Iris asks smartly and smiles at him again. She was determined to have fun. She was putting the Patty and Barry shit in the garbage where it belonged. They would not ruin this night for her. They wouldn’t. And she would find a way to get Wally back at a later date.

The whole room laughed. Patty had to force hers. She was picking up on some heavy sexual
tension between Iris and Barry. She hoped that she was imagining it.

“I let you beat me up. I can’t hit a girl.” Barry says to his defense.

“Keep telling yourself that, Bartholomew.” Iris says.

“Hey. I was there. Iris won that fight fair and square.” Linda says.

“She did.” Wally says.

“You’re supposed to be my friend, Wally.” Barry says.

“I am your friend. But that’s my sister. And she kicked your ass.”

The room erupted into laughter again.

“Well. I guess I’ll just have to beat Iris at something else.” Barry says to challenge Iris.

“Oh, you are on Bartholomew.”

Patty felt more of the sexual tension. She was getting uncomfortable. “Why do you call him Bartholomew?” She asks.

“Because Bartholomew is his real name.” Iris says almost smartly but caught herself.

“Of course it is. I don’t know what I was thinking your name really was. Why don’t you go by Bart?”

“Like Bart Simpson? His name is Bartholomew too. But my parents always called me Barry I guess for that reason” he says and was a little annoyed at her interrupting him and Iris.

“Uh, can we get this game going, Bear?” Wally asks in an annoyed tone. “Sorry. Didn’t mean to call you Bear.” He adds with much sarcasm to annoy Barry and Iris.

“So you go by Bear too?” Patty asks hopefully.

“No. Only Iris calls me that.” Barry replies and the tension in the room goes up ten notches.

“Really?” Patty asks with a hint of pettiness in her voice and Iris cut her eyes at her. Only Linda and Joe saw it though.

“It’s just to annoy him because it’s ridiculous. Have you ever seen a tall and lanky bear?” She asks ruefully and smiles widely at Patty.

“I can’t say that I have.” Patty says as she matches smiles with Iris.

Joe became uncomfortable looking at the exchange between his daughter and colleague. It seemed like they were ready to fight over Barry. He already knew how Wally would feel about that. Barry too. He obviously had it bad for his daughter. He never took his eyes off her even with his date sitting right next to him. He got the feeling that Patty was starting to pick up on it as well. He looked at Linda who widened her eyes.

“Ok. I’m with Wally. Can we get this game started?” Joe says

“Yes. Good luck everyone.” Iris says.
The game started off slow and quickly picked up when Iris started buying all the railroads and utilities. Barry bought Park Place and Boardwalk and put hotels on them and the game was pretty much just those two after that. Linda went bankrupt first, followed by Joe and then Wally and Patty. By then, everyone, except for Barry and Iris were tired of the game and wanted to play something else.

“Can you guys end this?” Wally asks.

“You just want us to quit because you lost.” Iris says.

“I’m with Wally.” Linda adds.

“Me too.” Patty says.

“Me three.” Joe counters.

“So, what should we do Bartholomew?” Iris asks.

“You can have this win, Iris. It’s not a big deal.” Barry replies. He really needed for him and Iris to be ok.

“I don’t want you to let me have it.”

Wally grunted. “He’s taking the L Iris. Let him. You won.”

“Fine.” Iris says smartly. Barry started to help her put the game away. He was busy arranging the money while Iris did everything else.

“What’s next?” Linda asks.

“I say it’s time for karaoke.” Joe says and stands.

“I say it is. I can’t wait any longer.” Linda replies.

“You need to get the karaoke machine, Wallace.”

“Stop calling me Wallace.” He says and stands and walks over to the closet to get it.

The night was going on as Iris planned that it would. She almost forgot all about Patty. Patty, however, didn’t forget about Iris one bit. Or Barry. They pretty much had eye sex throughout the whole game. Barry paid her no attention. She felt like an idiot and a fool. It was obvious she was on a date, but he wasn’t. He was on one with Iris it seemed. She felt like she was intruding. She wondered if this was a game they played on her. If Wally invited her there to mess with her. She wondered why he would do that. Then she figured he really was just trying to set Barry up so he wouldn’t look at his sister since Iris said she is off limits to his friends. She felt like she had been used. She wanted to leave but didn’t want to give any of them the satisfaction. Maybe she’d let being Barry’s date work to her advantage. She casually rubbed her hand on Barry’s thigh. He at first slightly jumped at her touch. He then looked over at her with the weirdest expression on his face. She leaned over and whispered in his ear. “You wanna get out of here?” She asks expectantly.

Barry almost lost his shit at that. “What?” He asks just to be sure he heard her correctly. He had zero intentions of going anywhere with Patty.

She rubbed his thigh more and raised her hand higher. “Just think about it.” She says.
Iris looked up from what she was doing and watched the exchange and saw red. Then black. She had visions of slapping the shit out of Patty. She wanted to punch Wally in the face and knee Barry in the balls. The night was still early though.

She looked up at Linda who looked away. She didn’t want to egg Iris on though she knows she didn’t like what she just saw at all.

Iris just got up and turned her IPod and speaker off for the karaoke. She was doing a good job of dealing with the Patty and Barry shit so far and she wasn’t going to stop now. “Linda. I think we should go first to kick the festivities off.” Iris says in a cheerful tone.

“I think we should. Hurry up, Wally.” Linda says.

“I’m going as fast as I can.” Wally says as he and Joe hook up the machine.

“I just got an idea, Lin.” Iris says with a mischievous grin on her face.

“Oh, lord. What does that mean?” She asks in a joking tone.

“I say we sing ‘It’s Raining Men’ first.” She says and keeps grinning. “Maybe it really will rain men and I can get me a guy.”

And Barry was back to feeling like he got kicked in the gut. This was getting out of hand. Patty needed to take her ass home. They were doing alright. Iris seemed to have forgiven him and let it go. Then she had to offer herself to him and Iris was back at it. Patty was really becoming a problem for him and Iris. He wanted her to go far away. If he never saw her again, he’d be happy.

Patty decided to be petty again. She grabbed Barry’s arm and pulled him to his feet. They walked into the living room. “I’m glad I don’t have that problem.” She says as she pulls Barry closer. She smiled at Iris.

“Lucky you.” Iris says and smiles back at her. “You picked a winner.”

“I did.”

“Let me pick a song for you and your guy. You can go after me and Linda.”

“I’m not really much of a singer, Iris. I don’t want to embarrass myself.” Patty says.

“Nonsense! We’re just here to have fun. And Barry won’t look at you any differently. I see sparks between you two.” Iris says and winks. Barry felt his heart drop.

This is a disaster, he thought to himself.

“Testing. 1. 2. Ok it’s ready.” Wally says.

Iris clapped in excitement. “Are you ready, Lin?” She asks eagerly. She needed to focus on something other than Patty and Barry. She was doing a great job during the game. Then Patty had to fuck it up.

“I’m ready.” Linda says and she and Iris go up and get their mics. They started to sing ‘It’s Raining Men’ and had a ball doing so. Iris and Linda having a lot of fun really made everyone have fun too. Barry watched Iris the whole time. He loved that she was having fun.

Hi, hi! we're your weather girls
Ah-huh
And have we got news for you
You better listen!
Get ready, all you lonely girls
And leave those umbrellas at home.
Alright!
Humidity is rising, barometer's getting low
According to all sources, the street's the place to go
Cause tonight for the first time
Just about half-past ten
For the first time in history
It's gonna start raining men.
It's raining men! Hallelujah! It's raining men! amen!
I'm gonna go out to run and let myself get
Absolutely soaking wet!
It's raining men! Hallelujah!
It's raining men! Every specimen!
Tall, blonde, dark and lean
Rough and tough and strong and mean

When they finished singing, they were met with applause. Iris felt a lot better. Now she could have more fun. At Patty and Barry’s expense, nonetheless.

“Thanks, you guys. Ok. Patty and Barry. You guys are up. I hope you like the song I picked for you.” Iris says and hands her mic to Barry and Linda hands hers to Patty. They went and sat down on the sofa.

Barry wanted to curse when he saw what it was. Iris was hitting below the belt. He sang it anyway. He really tried not to add any of his talent to it, but it was no use. He had a great voice.

I got chills they're multiplying and I'm losing control
‘Cos the power
You're supplying it's electrifying
You better shape up 'cos I need a man and my heart is set on you
You better shape up you better understand to my heart I must be true
You're the one that I want
Nothing left
Nothing left for me to do
You're the one that I want
Ooh, ooh, ooh

They were met with applause too, though it really was for Barry. He carried Patty through that song.

“Did not know you can sing, dude.” Wally says.

Barry just shrugged.

“You sounded great!” Patty says happily. She kissed Barry on his cheek and Iris saw red. Then black. Then fire. She wanted to kill Patty.

She wouldn’t let it show. “Who’s up next? Linda and Wally, you need to do a duet as well. I’ll pick one for you.” Iris says and jumps up. Wally and Linda start their duet. Patty snuggled close to Barry on the couch the entire time. Iris was seething mad.
You're all I need to get by, oh, oh
Like sweet morning dew, I took one look at you (you're all I need to get by)
And it was plain to see, you were my destiny (you're all I need to get by)
With my arms open wide (you're all I need to get by)
I threw away my pride
I'll sacrifice for you
Dedicate my life for you, oh, oh
I will go where you lead, c'mon, baby, always there in time of need, oh, oh
And when I lose my will you'll be there to push me up the hill
There's no, no looking back for us
We got love sure 'nough, that's enough
You're all, You're all I need to get by

She felt like being petty. “My turn.” She says when Wally and Linda finish. She picked the pettiest song she could find.

There was a time
I thought that you did everything right
No lies, no wrong
Boy I, must've been outta my mind
So when I think of the time that I almost loved you
You showed your ass and I, I saw the real you
Thank God you blew it
Thank God I dodged the bullet
I'm so over you
So baby good lookin' out
I wanted you bad
I'm so through with that
'Cause honestly you turned out to be the
Best thing I never had
You turned out to be the
Best thing I never had
And I'm gon' always be the best thing you never had
Oh I bet it sucks to be you right now

Everybody in the room was uncomfortable during and after Iris’ song. Nobody more than Barry. It was obvious as hell she was singing to him. Wally and Linda were looking at each other and shaking their heads. Joe watched in shock. Patty had a sour look on her face and Barry looked deeply hurt. He was hurt. And he had an answer for Iris.

Joe decided to ask Iris about it before things got completely out of hand. He leaned over to Iris when she sat back down. "You mind telling me what's going on between you two?" Joe whispers so that the whole room won't hear.

Iris feigned confusion. "What? There's nothing going on between us. We're fine." She lies.
"I happen to have these things called eyes, and you two are not fine." Joe says.
"Dad. It's no big deal. We're just singing songs for karaoke. Nothing to worry about." She says to
reassure him, though she isn't that sure of how things are going herself.

Joe was really convinced when Barry started to sing. He just looked at Iris when he did.

She's out of my life
She's out of my life
And I don't know whether to laugh or cry
I don't know whether to live or die
And it cuts like a knife
She's out of my life
It's out of my hands
It's out of my hands
To think for two years she was here
And I took her for granted, I was so cavalier
Now, the way that it stands
She's out of my hands
So, I've learned that love's not possession
And I've learned that love won't wait
Now, I've learned that love needs expression
But, I've learned too late
And she's out of my life
She's out of my life
Damned indecision and cursed pride
Kept my love for her locked deep inside
And it cuts like a knife
She's out of my life

Everyone was more uncomfortable after Barry sang. Wally wanted to jump up and shake some sense into Barry. He looked at Iris and realized that she caused him to sing that damn song.

“Dude. What the hell.” Wally says to Barry.

"I like Michael Jackson." Barry again just shrugged. He was hurt and done. He was now at the point he wanted to leave the West house and go stay with his relatives. Iris really hated him. He wanted to leave and never come back. He didn’t give a damn how Patty felt about that performance. Wally either. The night and his life was a ruined disaster.

Joe decided to take matters into his own hands. He needed to get the tone in the room back. He picked an upbeat and fun song.

I used to go out to parties and stand around;
'Cause I was too nervous to really get down.
But my body yearned to be free.
I got up on the floor, boy,
So somebody could choose me.
No more standin' upside the wall.
I have got myself together, baby,
Now I'm havin' a ball.
Long as you're groovin' there's always a chance
Somebody watchin' might wanna make romance.

He saw that it worked when he finished because everyone seemed to be smiling and in a good
mood. Even Barry who looked absolutely miserable before he started singing.

“Wow, Joe. Had no idea you can sing that well.” Patty says in awe.

“You’re just yanking my chain.” He replies humbly.

“No, she isn’t. You were great.” Barry says.

“Thanks, son. Now, I think that’s enough karaoke. What’s next?”

Iris jumped up. “Twister!” She says with the enthusiasm of a 7 year old.

“Twister it is. I’m not playing because I’m way too old for that. I’ll be the referee.”

“Is everyone playing?” Iris asks.

“I’m going to sit this one out.” Wally says.

“Chicken.” Iris says.

“On second thought, I’m not.” Wally says smartly.

Everyone took off their shoes and lined up to play. Wally was out on the first round. Iris laughed loudly at that. Patty was out on the second one and she was deeply irritated by that. She had to watch Barry, Iris and Linda play. She hoped that either Barry or Iris got out on the next round. That didn’t seem likely with Iris, so she really hoped for Barry. Then Linda got out and again the game was down to Barry and Iris.

You could cut the sexual tension with a knife. Wally was upset and so was Patty. Barry’s lankiness worked to his advantage. And Iris was extremely flexible. They were in positions that could closely resemble sex. Even Joe was uncomfortable. Barry purposely fell because he was extremely aroused and didn’t want anyone to see. Iris fell on top of him and felt it. He called himself catching her fall. As cliché as it was, she ended up in his arms and they were staring into each other’s eyes.

Iris shook her head and smiled to play it off. “I won. Again. I am the champion!” She cheered as she got up.

Barry got up as well. “I let you win. Again.” He says as they stare each other down.

“Well, I think that’s enough for game night. It’s almost 1.” Joe says.

“Well, I think that’s enough for game night. It’s almost 1.” Joe says.

“Really?” Iris asks in surprise.

“Yes, it is.”

“Well, I think it’s time for me to head home.” Patty says and puts her shoes back on. She walks over to get her jacket. She had had enough for the night. “Thank you all for a fun night.” She says.

“Aren’t you going to walk her to her car?” Wally asks Barry.

“Yeah.” Barry says. He was eager to do that to let her down. He put his shoes on and walked over to the door with Patty. Everyone said their goodbyes and they walked out the door. They slowly walked to Patty’s car. “So…” Barry began, but didn’t know what to say. He felt like he did when he broke up with Becky Cooper.

“You’re about to let me down easy, aren’t you?” Patty asks.
Barry just looked at her and felt a lump form in his throat. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry.” Patty says.

“It’s not you, it’s me.” Barry says almost honestly. What he really meant was ‘You’re not Iris’, but he couldn’t say that to her.

“Are you sure that’s it?”

“Yeah.”

“Because you like Iris, right?” Patty asks.

Barry blushed and became nervous. “How did you know?”

Patty laughed. “Barry. Daredevil can see that you like Iris. I take the whole Wally not wanting his friends to date her is the problem, right?”

“Yeah.”

Patty kissed Barry on his cheek again. “When you get over that, give me a call.” She says and gets into her car and pulls off.

Barry went back into the house where he found everyone tidying up. He helped out because he felt it was the right thing to do. Joe quickly decided that it really was a night for him. “Goodnight, kids.” He says as he locks up and heads for the stairs.

“I guess you’ll be sleeping on the couch tonight, my friend.” Wally jokes.

“Funny.” Barry says. He would have been alright with that if him and Iris weren’t going through it.

“The couch is very comfortable. You have everything you need. I’ll put your bag in the hallway.” Wally says as he grabs Linda’s hand and pulls her up the stairs with him.

That left Iris and Barry completely alone.

“Are you going to listen to me now?” He asks timidly.

Iris sighed. “Barry, there’s nothing else to say.”

“What does that mean?” He asks.

“It means that maybe we rushed into this. This was a bad idea from the start. Wally was right.” Iris says as she avoids his stare.

“Wally was right about what?” Barry asks.

“That me dating one of his friends would end badly. I don’t want to fuck up your friendship with him. So let’s just call it.”

“Does that have anything to do with you saying Wally had to rescue you from one of his asshole friends?” The look on Iris’ face gave him his answer.

“That’s nothing. But I think you should really give Patty a chance. I think you guys would be a better fit than you and I would be anyway.”
“How?”

“Because you can actually go out with her. People would much rather see you with her than with me.” Iris says dourly.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” He felt himself getting upset.

“You’re an attractive white male. I’m a black female. People would much rather see you with a white female.”

“I don’t give a damn what people think. I’m not some racist asshole, Iris.” Barry says to his defense.

“I know that.”

“So, you’re just ready to end this because Wally invited some girl here that I’m not even interested in? Just like that?” He asks sadly.

“It’s for the best, Barry. No hard feelings.” Iris says and really needs to get away from Barry before she loses it in front of him.

“That’s easy for you to say.” Barry states as he feels his heart drop. His feelings were indeed hurt. “I can’t believe you’re breaking up with me over something Wally did.”

But Barry was wrong about that. That wasn't easy for her to say. Not at all. “This isn’t about Wally, Barry. It just made me realize how wrong for each other we are. I was telling the truth about you and Patty. You two look super cute together.” Iris says. Her heart dropped at saying that. She didn’t mean that shit at all.

“I don’t want to be with Patty. I want to be with you.” Barry says softly.

_I want to be with you too._ Iris thought. But she ignored him and that. “Let’s hug it out.” She says as she walks toward him. She opened her arms.

Barry just stood there. He was rooted in place. This was not what he wanted. Not at all. He just looked at her. He couldn’t believe it was over just like that.

When Iris realized that he wasn’t going to give her a hug, she almost fell apart. She needed to escape. “Goodnight.” Is all she says and heads for the stairs. Her tears had a mind of their own and were ready to break free.

Barry watched her walk away and couldn’t believe what just happened. All because of Wally. But he wasn’t even that mad at Wally. Iris clearly wasn’t listening to reason. He remembered Wally saying that his sister was headstrong, but she didn’t stay mad for long.

He looked around and just laughed. He needed to. This night was the worst night ever. Well, not ever. The night his mother died was the worst night ever. But this was up there in his book.

“Fuck this.” Barry said and headed for the stairs as well. Sure enough he saw his bag in the hallway. He walked right past it and went to Iris’ room. He was out of fucks to give. He knocked on her door.

Iris was sitting on her bed, wishing her tears away when she heard the knock. It was too late for this bullshit. She couldn’t leave him out there. Wally or her father could hear. She got up and walked over to her door and opened it.
She knew she would find Barry on the other side.

He looked as pitiful as she felt when she looked at him. He just stood there and looked down at her. He then just backed her up into her room and locked the door.

Chapter End Notes

Have we seen the last of Patty? Who knows.

This update contains samples of "It's Raining Men" by The Weather Girls, "You're the One That I Want" by Olivia Newton John and John Travolta, "You're All I Need to Get By" by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrelle, "The Best Thing I Never Had" by Beyoncé, "She's Out of My Life" By Michael Jackson, and "Got to Give It Up" by Marvin Gaye. I own absolutely no rights to those lyrics and they were used for entertainment purposes only.

Thank you for reading and Sorry about the song lyrics.

And Thank you for sticking around.
"You really mean that, don't you?"

Chapter Summary

Barry and Iris talk...and more. Plus something else.

Chapter Notes

Here's an update. Yay! I'm extremely nervous about it. I really am. Read if you dare. Don't read the end notes before reading the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Barry was seriously out of fucks to give. The night had been a disaster. And that’s putting it mildly. He couldn’t believe the current state of his and Iris’ relationship. Well, non-existent relationship. She had broken up with him. That wasn’t sitting right with him at all. Normally he would accept that it was over and go on his merry way. He just couldn’t do that with Iris. He couldn’t. She already meant too much to him. Truth be told, he loved this girl. Even if she hated his guts and just broke up with him. Even though she had just broken his heart, he still loved her. They just had to get past this. She was wrong about them being wrong for each other. Really wrong. He felt that they belonged together. He wasn’t letting something stupid Wally did fuck that up for them. He was willing to fight for her and them. He had to. He owed it to himself and her.

He was being bold and borderline aggressive and he really didn’t care. Well, he cared if it would upset Iris and have her call for Wally or her father. He was willing to take that chance. What did he have to lose? Nothing. Nothing at all.

He just stood there after backing her up into her room and locking the door and just looked at her. The good thing was that she didn’t seem to be afraid or pissed off at all. She seemed hurt and that wasn’t a good thing. He never wanted to intentionally hurt her. But he got the feeling that if she was hurt, then she cared about him like he cared about her. He continued to stare at her. She was so beautiful. Then he noticed her eyes. He could tell she had been crying. He hated that. Truthfully, she looked how he felt. He didn’t know if that was a good thing or a bad thing. It was good if she felt like he felt in that she was wrong in breaking up with him and thinking they should give things another chance. It was bad if she truly meant what she said and that it was over and just wanted him out of her life.

Iris looked at her adorably cute human puppy and how miserable he looked. She hated the look on his face. Hated that she put it there. Her feelings for Barry had sprung up on her and shocked her to her core. She had never felt this way about any guy before. Not once. She loved and cared about Joshua because he was her friend first, then became her first. She had love for him, but nothing like this. Barry was different and so were her feelings for him. She loved this adorable dork. Loved him even though she just met him. He was her polar opposite and she loved that about him. She was trying to fight that because she had just met him, but she couldn’t fight it anymore. She figured she wasn’t supposed to. That things happened for a reason. That Wally brought him home with him for a reason. But he was Wally’s friend and they really couldn’t have a future because of that. But
she had just broken up with him. She only let him in to not cause a scene. It was over. It had to be.

Right?

“Iris…” Barry begins. He doesn’t know what to say. He does. He just doesn’t know how to put it into words. He wasn’t above begging. He would swallow his pride and beg her to rethink things.

“Yes, Bear?” Iris says. She said it low. She wasn’t supposed to call him Bear. Wasn’t supposed to do that at all. She had to disassociate herself from him. She had to. She was exasperated, tired, and hurt. This night didn’t go how she planned at all. Patty wasn’t supposed to come along and fuck things up for her and Barry. Wally wasn’t supposed to invite Patty to come along and fuck things up for her and Barry. Barry wasn’t supposed to come along and grab ahold of her heart when she really couldn’t have him. She was just supposed to be enjoying her winter break from school with her family and friends. She wasn’t supposed to instantly fall in love with the nerdy stray puppy Wally brought home with him. This wasn’t in the plan.

“Iris….I… I’m having a hard time accepting this.” Barry says as he stares at her. He was thinking that there was hope since she called him Bear. She hadn’t called him that all night.

“You’re gonna have to Bear.”

“You called me Bear.” He says to point out to her.

“That was a mistake.” Iris says.

“Iris. The only mistake you made was breaking up with me for no reason.”

“I had a reason to break up with you, Bear. This isn’t going to work. We both know it. We should just call it. We can be friends. I don’t want to ruin your friendship with Wally. Us staying together will. You have Patty who’s probably perfect for you that’s interested. Give her a chance. You won’t be ruining anything if you get with her.”

“I will be ruining something if I get with her.” Barry says.

Iris sighs. “And what’s that?”

“I’ll be ruining what I want to have with you.”

“Barry, this is over.”

“It shouldn’t be.”

“But it is. I’m trying to look out for you. The bad shit that happened to you when you were younger. You don’t have many people in your life. Wally is a great friend to you and wants to be there for you. Let him. Don’t lose a good friendship with someone over something trivial.” Iris says and even though she means it with everything in her that she wants Barry and Wally to stay friends, it still hurt her to say it out loud. Wally was a good friend. He was even a good friend to her. Wally was her best friend and big brother. He could be that for Barry too because he really needed it.

But she needed Barry. That thought just instantly nagged her for some reason.

“Iris. Wally is a good friend to me. Except for what he did tonight. I know he’s your brother but I could seriously kill him over what he pulled tonight. I would gladly end my friendship with him. For you.” Barry says as he stares at Iris.
Iris felt her heart flutter and drop at his admission. “Barry. There’s no reason for you to do that. Don’t let go of that for me. Now I don’t mean to be rude, but it’s late and I’m ready to go to bed.”

“Then why did you let me in?” Barry questions.

“So that my Dad and Wally wouldn’t hear. Did you really want one of them to come to their bedroom doors to see what the knocking was about?” Iris asks.

“Iris, I’m way past giving a fuck about that. I know your father has a gun, but I don’t care. I hope he doesn’t shoot me but you’re worth taking a bullet for.”

Iris looked up at him. “Barry, don’t be ridiculous. He’s not going to shoot you unless you really give him a reason to. I don’t think you’re that kind of guy.”

“No, I’m not. I’m glad you know that.” He says and longs to touch her. “Why were you crying?”

“I wasn’t crying.” Iris lies.

Barry reached out and wiped the tears from her eye with his thumb. They were still red. It was painfully obvious that she was crying. He was glad that she didn’t flinch when he touched her. That would have broken his heart. “Why are you lying?”

“I’m not.” She lies again.

“You are.”

Iris sighed again. “Bear…” She looked up at him and felt the tears coming back. She didn’t need a flood right now. She had to keep it together and fake it. He just had to come to her room. She was fine being able to cry and have no one watch. Now the reason she wanted to cry was there to witness it. This wasn’t good. She couldn’t cry in front of him and give him false hope. She needed him to accept that it was over even if she had a hard time accepting it herself.

“I don’t want this to be over, Iris.” Barry confesses truthfully.

“I don’t want this to be over either, Bear.” She also confesses truthfully. She realized she hadn’t meant to say that. She was supposed to stay strong and convince Barry, and herself, that what they had was over. It had only been two days. It shouldn’t be this hard. But it was. It was cutting her like a knife and killing her. She wanted a redo of the night from hell. Patty and Wally ruined her night. And she was taking it out on Barry. That didn’t seem right. The fact that she was punishing herself and Barry over something that her idiot asshole big brother did finally hit her. She figured there was no use in fighting it. She stood on her tip toes and grabbed Barry’s face. She crashed her lips into his. She could tell that the kiss startled him. It startled her too. She loved this guy and would be a fool to let him go. She owed it to herself and Barry to see this through. Yeah the night had been a disaster. But it didn’t change how she felt about Barry at all. She was mad at him, and wrongfully so and she sees that now. She needed to apologize. Barry didn’t deserve what happened.

She almost forcefully pressed her body to his and deepened the kiss. It felt like fireworks on the Fourth of July when she kissed him. She couldn’t give that up. She had never felt anything like that before with any other guy. Barry was it for her and she realized that at that very moment. She was going to marry this guy someday and have that kind of kiss that everyone she loved near and dear to her could witness. Including her big brother. Even if Wally and Barry truly hated each other by then. She hoped that it didn’t come to that and they remained friends, but she needed to live her life
and she wanted Barry to be a part of her life forever.

Barry was shocked when Iris grabbed his face and kissed him. He wanted to run a few laps around the block and tell everyone how happy he was. Surely Iris had forgiven him and wanted to work past their problems. She called him Bear and told him that she didn’t want them to be over either. He loved that. He had hope and a reason to be happy. He stopped thinking about that and focused on the gorgeous little woman in front of him kissing him passionately. The woman he already loved who now owned his heart. He never thought he’d come home with Wally and have that happen, but here he was. He never in a million years thought he’d fall in love with his friend’s sister, but here he was. He was kissing her and his life was back to being great again. They had somehow righted the wrong. The kissing was electric and explosive. He had never in his life kissed another girl and had it feel like this. New Years Eve was weeks away, but he was already celebrating. He didn’t want to kiss another girl as long as he lived. He had never been one of those people that believed in love at first sight, but here he was. He loved Iris the minute he laid eyes on her. Even with her arm raised and a lamp in her hand, ready to bash his skull in. Even after he got the biggest scare of his life when she jumped on him in Wally’s bed and startled him awake. He wanted her to jump on him in the bed forever. He suddenly had visions of their kids coming into their room and doing that. That thought didn’t scare him at all. He wanted that to happen. He hoped Iris wanted that too. The fact that he was 20 years old and had his whole life ahead of him to meet someone else and have that was irrelevant. As far as he was concerned, Iris was the love of his life and that wasn’t going to change.

Iris felt like she could kiss Barry, her Bear forever. But she needed a breather. That kiss was taking a lot out of her. She was mad at herself for thinking that she had to give that up. She couldn’t give Barry up. He was ingrained into her now. The stray puppy and hugely nerdy, dorky and awkward guy she loved and her future husband. If she had thought that she’d be kissing Barry and thinking that she’d marry him a few days ago, she would have shaken or even slapped the person that even suggested it. No way did she think Wally would bring home Barry for her. She knew that Wally never would have thought to do that. But here they were. She was letting the night go and moving past it. The fact that Barry was willing to walk away from his friendship with Wally for her meant a lot to her. She knew that Barry valued his friendship with Wally and didn’t want to lose that. He’d lose it for her, but she wasn’t letting that happen. The plan was back on. Their game night would be something they could joke about later on, like maybe on their honeymoon or something.

She reluctantly and slowly broke the kiss. Barry cupped her face and stared deep into her eyes. He smiled at her. “You kissed me.” Is all Barry can muster at the moment.

“Yeah, I did. I kinda couldn’t help myself.” Iris says as she continues to stare deeply into his eyes.

“And why is that?”

“I don’t know…” Iris lies. She knows why she kissed him. She wanted to kiss him again.

“Are we still broken up?” Barry asks tentatively. He didn’t want her to tell him what he didn’t want to hear. He hoped that she didn’t just get caught up in the moment. He couldn’t bear to hear that.

Iris exhaled and then smiled at him. “No, we’re not still broken up. I’m sorry, Bear.”

Barry felt his heart rate pick up. “So not only did we have one of the shortest relationships in history, we had the shortest breakup in history too.” He jokes.

“I never should have broken up with you when I really didn’t mean it. Do you forgive me?” Iris asks and stares into his gorgeous green eyes more. She could stare into his eyes forever.
“Yes, I forgive you. Do you forgive me?” He asks.

“Yes, I forgive you. I’m sorry I didn’t listen to you. I was a little upset with you. I didn’t mean to be that mean to you.”

“Yeah, you were pretty mean. On top of beating me up earlier. I’m still bruised from that.” Barry says and grins at her.

“I was supposed to be making that up to you, wasn’t I?” Iris asks.

“Yeah, you were.”

“That is until Patty Cakes came over here and ruined our night. I wanted to kill you, her, and Wally.” Iris admits as she rubs Barry’s hand that’s cupping her face.

“I could tell. But really you should only want to kill Wally. This was all his doing,”

“So, how exactly did that happen?” Iris asks. She now wants to know now that she’s cooled off and can objectively listen to him.

“She walked up to us while we were working out. I walked away to text you. When I came back, she asked me out. I was a little shocked, but I turned her down. Then I asked you to call me so that I could get away from her. Wally must’ve invited her then. I had nothing to do with it. I swear.” Barry says.

“I believe you. I should have listened to you earlier. That sounds like something Wally’s smug ass would do.” Iris says.

“Why didn’t you believe me before? I’m not really a huge flirt or a ladies man, Iris.”

“I was too hurt seeing you with her. It made me really mad to see you with her. I didn’t like how that made me feel. Not at all.” Iris confesses truthfully.

“But I’m not interested in Patty. I think everybody in the room could tell that.”

“Except for Patty. She practically threw herself at you.” Iris says in disgust.

“You were jealous?” Barry inquires.

“Yes, I was jealous. Because she got to be with you out in the open and I can’t do that. I didn’t think hiding this would be this hard.”

“I didn’t either. Especially when you Dad knows I like you.”

Iris just looked up at him. “He does?” Iris asks.

“Yeah. He could tell I didn’t like Patty because I like you.”

“Well, he did ask me what was going on between us when you were singing during karaoke. Nice song choice by the way.” Iris says.

“Me? What about you? Your song choices were brutal. I almost cried.” Barry says.

“Sorry. I was angry.”

“Yeah, just like when you threatened me with Wally and your Dad’s gun.”
Iris looked away at that. Barry pulled her face back to meet his gaze. “I’m sorry, Bear. I went too far.” Iris had a thought nagging her that she really needed to get out. She hoped that it wouldn’t be too weird to say this to Barry. But she had the feeling that she could say anything to him and he wouldn’t look at her strangely and judge her. “Something is nagging me, Bear.”

“What’s that?”

“Do you think our moms met in Heaven and made sure we got together?” Now that she said it out loud, it didn’t sound weird. She would hope that her mother was her guardian angel looking out for her and sent Barry her way. She’s had a really good life despite losing her mom. She truly believed in what she just asked Barry.

Barry felt like Iris really did reach in his chest and grab onto his heart when she asked him that. He had been thinking about his mother. He knew for certain that if she was still alive, she’d love Iris. There was no way she couldn’t. Now what Iris asked him really made sense. Iris could never meet his mother and he could never meet hers, but he did have to believe that they met each other. “Iris, I think that’s the only way to explain us meeting.” He pressed his forehead against hers. “She would have loved you.”

“My mom would have loved you too. I think she had to give me a few bad ones before you came along.”

“Does that have anything to do with what you said earlier?” Barry asks and doesn’t elaborate. He knows she knows what he’s referring to.

Iris exhaled. “Unfortunately, yes.” She looked away from him.

“Are you going to tell me what you meant by that?” Barry asks.

Iris looked away again. She pulled her face back towards his. She figured she might as well tell him. She hoped that he wouldn’t be upset about that. She sighed and stared into his eyes. “I think we should sit down.” She says and motions for the bed.

“That doesn’t sound too good, Iris.” Barry says uneasily.

“I know. I’ll let you be the judge in what I tell you.” She says. They both sat down on the side of her bed. She grabbed Barry’s hand. “Well, I dated one of Wally’s friends in high school. His name was Eddie.”

“Did that end badly? I know you said Wally had to rescue you from one of his asshole friends.”

Iris laughed bitterly. “Yeah, it ended badly. I was 14 and I had a crush on him. Of course Wally forbid it and Eddie left me alone until I turned 16. Then we started talking and hid it from Wally. Eddie wanted sex and I wasn’t ready for that yet.” Iris exhaled and looked away. She looked back at Barry. “Then he asked for nude pictures, which I sent him, because I’m an idiot. I didn’t show my face though…”

“You’re not an idiot Iris.” Barry says calmly, though he doesn’t like the direction of this story at all. Not one bit. He hoped that this Eddie douchebag guy didn’t show her nude pictures to everyone.

“I guess not. I was 16 and really didn’t know any better. Well after I sent the pictures, he really started pressuring me for sex. I still wasn’t ready. I ended up in his room one day after school. I couldn’t go through with it so I went to the bathroom and called Wally. He came over and got me, and he and Eddie fought. I’ve never seen Wally that upset. He then got into fights with a few boys
at school that egged him on about the pictures. He broke some guy’s nose.” Iris says.

Barry cringed and swallowed. “I’m sorry that happened to you, Iris. I really am.” He apologized though he wasn’t the one that did it. He just wondered how some dude could hurt Iris like that. He never would. He certainly wouldn’t pressure her into doing something she didn’t want to do. He wondered how somebody could hurt somebody as beautiful and wonderful as Iris.

Iris smiled despite the topic of conversation. “Thanks. It’s not even your fault, but thanks. Means a lot.”

“Don’t mention it.” Barry says and fidgets a little nervously. “So, Wally broke a guy’s nose?” He had to ask.

“Yeah. He was getting into fights all the time over me. Breaking the guy’s nose ended all that.” Iris says. She laughed just a little bitterly at that. She knew what Barry was thinking.

He laughed bitterly as well. “Now you tell me this.”

“I’m sorry, Bear. I really am. I didn’t mean to fall for another of Wally’s friends. And this isn’t just something that I do. That’s why Wally tells all his friends that I’m off limits.”

“He’s going to kill me.” Barry says in a joking tone. Though he wasn’t really joking.

“He’s not going to kill you, Bear. He’s not going to find out. We have to be careful. We’ll be back at school soon. It will be easier then. Unless you want to end this…” Iris offers and looks at him.

“No, Iris. I don’t want to end this. I already love you.” Barry says. He didn’t mean to say that part because he didn’t want to scare her, but it was out there. He did already love Iris and there wasn’t a thing he could do about it.

Iris felt her heart soar at hearing that. “I already love you too.” She says. It didn’t feel weird to say it at all. She loved Barry. She did.

Barry felt his heart rate pick up speed again. It felt like it would beat out of his chest. Iris loved him, and he loved her. Life was awesome again. “You’ve just made me the happiest guy in the world, Iris.”

“You’ve just made me the happiest girl in the world.” Iris says. She grabbed his face and kissed him again. She had really gotten used to his kisses. She had a thought and pulled away. “Wait. What did you say to Patty Cakes?” She asks.

Barry laughed “I didn’t have to say anything to her. She figured out that I was going to let her down because I like you. She did tell me to give her a call when I get over it. I don’t think that’s happening.” Barry admits.

Iris just looked at him and the happy expression on his face. His imaginary tail was wagging. She let his hand go and leaped on him, knocking him down on her bed. She literally pounced on him like he was a ball of yarn and she was a cat. She again crashed her lips to his. Kissing this dork made her get a tingle in her spine. Among other places.

Barry brought his body to the bed while bringing Iris down with him. She was kissing him and it was turning him all the way on. They could really get their sleepover started. He was certainly sure that Wally and Linda already started theirs. He knew that he and Iris wouldn’t be going as far as they would go, but that was ok with him. They were back together and he couldn’t be happier about that. He’d wait as long as they needed to to have that connection. He wasn’t going anywhere.
He broke the kiss this time. “So, I guess our sleepover is back on.” Barry says.

“Of course it’s back on. Are you sure that the me dating one of Wally’s friends thing isn’t a turn off to you?” Iris asks timidly. She didn’t think so, but she needed to be sure.

“Iris, no it doesn’t. I’d be jerk to hold something against you that you did when you were 16. Can you imagine the stupid things I did when I was 16?”

Iris giggled. “I can, but I’m not just talking about that. I don’t want you to think this is a pattern. That I only date Wally’s friends behind his back. That you aren’t special to me when you are.” She says.

“Iris, I don’t think that at all. I didn’t come here thinking that I would meet you and fall in love with you, but it happened. Things happen. You didn’t even know I was coming, so of course I don’t think you planned this. I’m glad Eddie was a jerk, but I’m not glad about what he did to you. I’m glad that Wally handled it for you. I know not to hurt you so that he won’t have to hurt me.” Barry jokes and Iris starts to laugh.

“Thanks, Bear. I’m glad I have that little Wally insurance policy.” She jokes as well.

“You’re not going to need it, Iris. I’m not ever going to hurt you.” Barry admits truthfully.

Iris smiled at him again and grabbed his face. She started to kiss him and felt the same shocks she feels every time they kiss. She knew that she could kiss Barry forever. She was going to. She had met the man she would spend eternity with. She pulled away from him and sat up. She climbed towards her pillows and beckoned for him. Barry happily and eagerly crawled towards her. She pushed him on his back and climbed on him. She straddled his waist and started to reach for his buttons. She smiled down at him as she undid them. She slowly undid each button when she really wanted to rip the shirt off him. Once his chest was exposed, she started to rub on him. Barry was definitely built and put together nicely. Her nerd had a great body. A great body that she was going to have a lot of fun with.

She stopped rubbing on him and grabbed the hem of her shirt and pulled it over her head. Barry’s eyes grew wide at seeing her red lace bra. Iris was just incredibly gorgeous and sexy to him. Just seeing her in sweats turned him on. But that red lace was doing something to him. It was both their favorite color and it looked really good against her brown skin. He had the sudden thought to wonder if her panties matched. He was going to find out soon enough. His eyes really almost bugged out of his head when Iris reached behind her and unhooked her bra. She slowly tossed it over the side of the bed. She loved the look on Barry’s face at the sight of her naked breasts in front of him. He acted like a teenager seeing boobs for the first time. The innocence and awkwardness of him turned her on even more. That and the hidden sexiness that not many people got to see. She loved that about Barry.

“Wow.” Is all Barry can say at the sight of her boobs in front of him. He briefly saw them the night before, but her just being topless excited him. He got instantly aroused.

Iris giggled again. “You’ve seen breasts before, Barry. You’ve seen mine before, just last night.”

“I know. But you weren’t completely topless like you are now. The other breasts I’ve seen are irrelevant.”

“Good answer.” Iris says as she leans forward and starts to kiss him again. She pressed her bare chest to his and felt shocks throughout her body. She moved slightly and rubbed their nipples together. Even if that didn’t do anything for Barry, it did something for her.
Barry rubbed his hands up and down Iris’ back. Her skin was so soft to him and he wanted to do more than rub on and touch her. He wanted to put his mouth on her smooth, soft skin. He was going to do that. He lightly grabbed Iris by her waist and rolled them over so that she was now on the bottom. He got on his knees below her. “How far can I go?” He asks almost eagerly.

“Surprise me.” Iris says. She already planned to go too far with Barry. She’d never regret it as far as she was concerned.

Barry leaned forward and unbuttoned her jeans. He saw the red lace peeking at him and he almost lost it. He just knew she had on matching red panties. He grabbed the waistband and slid her pants down. Iris helping him remove her jeans turned him on fully. He was bursting at the seams. Pretty soon he’d need to remove his own jeans. His erection was increasingly growing out of control. He was focused on Iris at the moment. He lightly tossed her jeans aside once they were off. He just smiled at Iris who was just laying there in her panties.

He wanted her out of them. He really did. She did say ‘Surprise her’ right? That’ll sure surprise her, Barry thought. He rubbed his hands up her thighs. Her legs felt like butter to him. He slid his hands further up her thighs and stopped at her waist. He reached for the waistband of her panties and hesitated. He fully expected her to tell him to ‘Stop’, but she didn’t. She looked up at him and stared into his eyes. It felt like she was giving him approval without words. He slowly tugged at her panties and she still didn’t stop him. Barry was on the verge of losing his shit. He was getting ready to take her panties off and see her completely naked. It was on and he was ready for it. He knew she’d stop him from going too far, but he knew she wanted this as much as he did. And just because she was going to be naked, didn’t mean that they had to have sex. She could be naked and he didn’t have to go there with her.

He tugged more on her panties and slid them down. They were at the top of her thighs and Barry was ready to explode. She was letting him take them off. He couldn’t fucking believe his luck. He slid them down further, and once they got to her knees, he almost passed out. As far as he was concerned, she was naked.

Oh. My. God. Barry thought. He finally removed them the whole way and tossed them aside.

Iris was naked in front of him. She was a stunning goddess in all her nakedness.

“Wow.” Barry says again and this time he really means it. He got glimpses of her being naked the night before, but this was better than that. This was better than Christmas morning. Iris was seriously the most beautiful thing he had ever laid eyes on and he was having trouble keeping his emotions in tact. He couldn’t wimp out and leave her feeling vulnerable and unsatisfied. She might tell him to beat it and never let him get this far again. He had to make the best of it.

He was finding that hard to do though. He just wanted to stare at her gorgeous and nude body forever. Highly unlikely, but that’s what he wanted. He also wanted to completely explore her gorgeous and nude body. He was on his way to doing just that.

“Thanks, I guess. Again, I should remind you that you’ve seen other naked girls before.” Iris says.

“You’re welcome. And again I should remind you that all the naked girls I’ve seen before are irrelevant. None of them looked like you.” Barry admits truthfully. This night was getting better and better. After he initially thought that it was the worse night ever, it was redeeming itself. This could potentially be the best night of his life.

“Well, of course they didn’t. I’m flawless.” Iris jokes. She didn’t feel at all uncomfortable being completely naked in front of Barry. He made her feel beautiful. And while she already felt
beautiful, the way he looked at her solidified it. He looked at her like she was the 8th wonder of the world. She had never had a guy look at her like that before. Sure guys checked her out, but Barry looked at her as more than just some naked girl in front of him. It’s like he was looking at her soul and that made her feel beautiful and incredibly loved. She really picked a winner with him. Barry was awesome and amazing and he was all hers.

Barry smiled down at her. “That you are.”

Iris lightly parted her legs and the sight of that almost made Barry cum in his pants. He was seeing everything and he liked what he saw. Her pussy was peeking at him, waving, begging to be caressed. His getting up close and personal with her vagina the night before was ancient history. It’s like he was seeing things for the first time.

She sat up and pressed her lips to his. She reached for his shirt and started to remove it. God she loved Barry’s chest. And his arms. He had an amazing pair of arms. The six pack really did her in, but his arms were muscular and looked strong. “Lose the rest of this.” She says once she breaks the kiss.

He searched her eyes. “Everything?” He asks to be sure.

“Yes, everything. Or have you no self-control?” Iris asks playfully.

Barry just hopped out of the bed and kicked his Chucks off and pulled his jeans down. He hastily kicked them off. He was just standing there in his boxers and wondered if Iris really meant what she said. He again hesitated. He locked eyes with her and had the answer he needed. He slowly pulled his boxers down and his penis kind of sprung to attention. That made Iris moist in the middle. They were as naked as the day they were both born and she wondered if they’d connect and become closer than ever. She’d cross that bridge when she got to it.

Barry got back in the bed with her and lightly laid on her. Iris opened her legs and Barry’s penis lightly grazed her. That sent a jolt through both of them as his mouth connected with hers. Barry felt his penis grow harder and fuller at being that close to Iris. They didn’t have a barrier between them and that scared Barry and turned him on.

Iris was scared and turned on as well. All he had to do was enter her. If she was totally crazy, she’d reach down and grab him and guide him inside of her. She realized how badly she wanted Barry inside of her and that made her moan.

Barry broke the kiss and stared into her eyes. “Still up for surprises?” He asks.

“Yes.”

“Good.” Barry says and pecks her on the lips. He kissed her cheeks and went to her neck. He knew he couldn’t stay there long because he didn’t want to leave any evidence. He kissed the top part of her chest and made his way down to her breasts. Her ripe and perky breasts. They looked so kissable to him as he kissed them. Her nipples were erect and standing at attention like he was. He nibbled on her nipples. He then sucked on them until they became harder and Iris lightly moaned. They were almost as hard as pebbles and he couldn’t get enough of them. He had never sucked on a girl’s nipples to the point of eruption before.

Iris seemed to squirm beneath Barry. He was extremely good at sucking on her nipples. She started thinking that he was a boob guy. She didn’t mind that at all. He was good at it and her nipples were very sensitive. Him sucking on them almost made her have an orgasm. She felt a mild one soar through her.
He kissed down her abdomen and stopped at her bikini line. He placed a kiss to her mound and grabbed both of her legs to part them. He kissed and licked the inside of her thighs. It was now or never.

“Bear... Are you about to...?” Iris asks. God she wanted him to. She really did. Dammit she wanted him to go down on her.

“You told me to surprise you. Surprise.” Barry says and startles her by grabbing her thighs and opening her legs wider. He was glad that she was so flexible. Iris didn't have a chance to really gather her thoughts before he dove his head between her legs. His tongue made immediate and direct contact with her clitoris. She felt him move his tongue around it a bit before he started to suck on it. Iris had a million thoughts running through her mind at once. First she wanted to know how her Bear got good at doing things like that. She wondered who taught him because he was already amazing at it and he just started.

Oh my god! I can't believe he's eating me out. This stray puppy that Wally brought home gives amazing, AMAZING head. If this was his way of surprising me, then I need to have a birthday every day. Oh my god! He's extremely good at this.

“Oh, my god Bear. Jesus.” Iris panted out. She needed to hold that in before Wally or her father heard. That wouldn’t end well.

He was doing extremely nasty things to her pussy with his mouth and fingers and she couldn’t get enough of it. She wished that they were home alone so that she could really appreciate it and give him the kudos he deserved. This was the best head she had ever had. That teaser from the night before was an incredibly cruel thing to do to her. She could’ve had that the whole time. He knew that her clitoris wasn’t just ornamental. It served a purpose and had a function. He was gifted at showing it appreciation.

It feels so good. I think I’m going to marry this boy. I will if he keeps doing this.

Barry was enjoying the moaning coming from Iris. She was certainly letting him know he was doing a good job. He wasn’t an expert pussy eater, but Iris was making him feel like he was one. He loved the way she moaned and tasted. He could stay down there forever. He never wanted to taste another pussy as long as he lived.

“Bear, I’m about to...” Iris moans. She had the urge to cry out. She swallowed that scream. She had to. Wally and her Dad never needed to hear that. Wally would lose his shit for real if he heard Barry eating her out.

Fuck Wally. Is all Iris could think about. Why am I thinking about Wally when I have an above average, no The Michael Jordan of pussy eating going down on me?

That thought got frozen in her throat as she started to jerk and gave into the orgasm that hit her like a riptide. Who knew nerds knew how to please a girl that well?

She started to shake beneath him. Barry took that as a telltale sign he was indeed doing a good job. He pulled his mouth away from her and looked up at her. “How does that feel?” He asks, though he knows.

“Like magic.” Iris says.

“Good. I’ll make something disappear.” He says and dives his head back in between her legs. He went back to back to licking and sucking on her clit and digging in her with his thumb. He made his
fingers and his tongue disappear inside of her until Iris really felt like she couldn't take anymore. She felt like it was too much for her, and if she screamed out, she'd wake the neighbors. She grabbed his head to steady it and tried to back away. Barry stopped what he was doing and looked up at her to back away from him. He put his arm on her thighs and held her still. Her body went stiff as the waves of the Olympic gold medal winning orgasm soared through her.

She went stiff and just laid there frozen. “Jesus Christ, Bear.” Is all Iris has the strength to say. She put her arm across her forehead and breathed out. She felt like she had just worked out with the squad. But working out never made her feel like this. Her pussy was still tingling.

Barry climbed up from between her legs and laid beside her. He had a satisfied grin on his face. He was glad that he could please the girl he loved in that way.

Iris breathed out and looked over at him. She said nothing and just rolled towards him. She grabbed his face and crashed her lips to his. She could taste herself on his mouth and that made her hot. She climbed on him and reached down to grab his dick. He was going soft. She kissed down his body. She noticed the abundance of freckles on his body that she grew fond of instantly. She decided to play connect the dots with them and her tongue. She rolled her tongue over his abdomen with that six pack that she loved and went lower and stopped at his dick. She licked the tip and put the rest into her mouth.

Barry almost cried out from feeling her mouth on him. He didn’t expect her to return the favor, but was glad that she did. Iris was hot and was giving him an even hotter blow job. The feel of her mouth on him was almost too much to bear. Her tongue licking the thick vein combined with the motion of her hand sent him over the edge. He couldn’t seem to last long during this. The wetness and the friction was too much for him. He was ready to pop. He didn’t know how Iris felt about that, so he warned her. “Iris…Iris…I’m about to…” He couldn’t even get the rest out before he exploded and unloaded.

Iris climbed up beside him and laid down. She had the same mischievous smile on her face that Barry just had.

“I think you just tried to kill me.” Barry say as he looks over at her.

Iris laughs in a seductive tone. "Of course not. I like you too much to want to kill you. But I had to give it to you as good as you gave it to me." She rolled over and looked at the euphoric look on her nerdy Bear’s face. He rolled towards her and pulled her closer. He crashed his lips to hers. “How’d you learn to go down on someone so well?” She teased. “I should thank whoever taught you.”

“I taught myself. I’m majoring in Physics and Chemistry.” Barry says as he looks over at her.

“So there’s Physics and Chemistry involved in giving someone oral sex?”

“Yes. I’m a nerd, remember?”

“Yeah, I remember. So who should I thank because that was awesome. I’m still tingling.”

“You should thank me.”

“I already thanked you. Do you want another hummer?” She asks.

“I want whatever you have to give.” Barry says honestly. They’d just had some really great oral sex and that was enough for him at the moment. He didn’t think they’d go that far, so he was enjoying it. Pleasing her made him feel good and of course she did the same for him.
Iris felt like she needed more. She wanted Barry inside of her. *Fuck waiting*, she thought. They had just done that, so why not? She wasn’t one of those people that thought that oral sex wasn’t sex. They might as well go all the way. They had already crossed to the point of no return. He loved her and she loved him.

She stared into his eyes. “Tell me a secret.” Iris says.

Barry stared deeply into her eyes. “I’m going to make you my wife one day.” He says honestly and truthfully.

“You really mean that, don’t you?” Iris asks, though she knows. She felt the same way.

“I do. Why wouldn’t I? I don’t care that I just met you. And it’s not because of what just happened. I thought that last night.”

“I did too.” She says. She rolled over and reached into her nightstand. She reached for the condoms she had hidden in there and pulled one out. Barry’s eyes got wide from the excitement.

“Are you sure?” He asks just to be clear. He wanted that too. He didn’t go down on her to get sex, but he’d take it.

She climbed on top of him and straddled him. She said nothing as she opened the condom and put it on him. She looked deep into his eyes to silently let him know that she was ready as she grabbed his penis and lined it up at her opening and put it inside of her. He grabbed her ass and adjusted her body some as she started to ride him. Being inside of Iris felt so good to him he thought he would lose it. He was having sex with Iris. She felt so good. Too good. She was snug and wet and he couldn’t stand it. He tried to hold off, but he couldn’t deal with being inside of her and it overwhelmed him. He didn’t have a moment to warn her before he ejaculated.

“Damn. I’m sorry, Iris. That came way too fast.” He says as he pulls out of her. He was mildly embarrassed, but it couldn’t be helped.

“It happens.” Iris says as she removes the condom. She had a hard time believing that she and Barry just had sex, but it felt right. No matter how fast it was. It felt right. They were young and in love. That’s what some young and in love people do.

“Yeah, but it happened too fast. I want to satisfy you.”

“And you did.” Iris says though she needed him inside of her again. They fit like a glove.

He looked at her and stroked his penis and he was back at attention moments later. All he really needed was a minute because he was ready, really ready for her now. “I’m ready again.” He says a little sheepishly, though he wasn’t nervous or afraid anymore. They had gotten over that first hump.

“Good.” Iris says and reaches in the drawer again for another condom. She placed that one on him as well.

He grabbed her by her waist and laid her down gently before he climbs on top of Iris and places a deep kiss to her lips. He continued to kiss her deeply as he placed his hands between her legs and played with her opening. He took the tip of his penis and stroked her clit and rubbed it along her lips before stopping at her opening. He slowly pushed himself into her where he just stayed before leaning down to kiss her. “I love you, Iris.” He says as he starts to thrust his hips into her.

“I love you too, Bear.” Iris says as she clasped her hands around his neck.
Barry moved inside of her gently before pounding into her a little harder. He had gotten his second wind and was ready to please. He maintained steady thrusts inside of her. He felt so good inside of her. Better than she thought it would feel. She didn’t think Barry had that in him. The first time was quick, but she still enjoyed it. Now this was a lot better. Barry really knew how to please her and she was loving that she didn't wait to find out how good he was any longer. She knew that she and possibly many other had underestimated Barry, but she was reaping the benefits of that now. He might be a nerd, but he was her nerd, and she was loving all that she knew and would know about him. Wally already said he was a great guy, and he was. She saw a future with this guy. He said he was going to make her his wife one day and she believed that in her heart. She would marry him even if Wally hated the idea. She had the feeling that her father didn’t and could possibly get Wally on board. Even if he didn’t, she had to live her life as she saw fit. And falling in love and having sex with a guy she just met was what she did with her life at the moment. She didn’t mean to fall in love, but she was an adult responsible for her own actions at this point.

“Oh, wow. Bear.” Iris moaned because the sex was amazing. She was glad she had other sex to compare it to, and she was totally enjoying it. She wraps her legs around his waist as he enters in and out of her. He slowly starts to grind into her as she wraps her arms around him and grabs the back of his hair.

“I know.” He says back to her. He continued to pound into her. He wanted to stay inside of Iris forever. None of the other sex he had compared to this. Not by a longshot. He was glad for those experiences, but they were in the past and didn’t matter to him anymore. He was just glad for them so he wouldn’t be too awkward and turn Iris off. Them losing their virginity to each other would have been special, but they had already been there and done that. Now they could just experience getting to really know each other sexually. He’d learn all her likes and dislikes. So far, he was doing a good job. Iris seemed to really be enjoying the sex they were having.

Barry decided to get bold and grabbed Iris’ legs and put them behind her head. She buried her face into his neck and screamed. She lightly bit him on his earlobe from the deepness of him penetrating her. “Bear…we’re going to wake the house.”

He had to think about that for a second. “God, I wish we were here alone.”

“I do too. I wouldn’t have to hold back.” She panted out.

“No, you wouldn’t. We can’t let Wally and your dad hear. They’ll kill me.”

Iris looked at him funny. “Don’t mention my father while we’re having sex, please. I don’t think he’d appreciate being mentioned while you’re inside his baby girl.”

“You’re right. I’ll never mention your dad while we’re doing this again.”

“And we are definitely doing this again.” Iris says and smiles. She leaned up to kiss Barry deeply. He maintained a steady thrust in and out of her. Iris started to get that warm, tingly feeling throughout her body. She felt the orgasm coming on. Barry got there minutes later. He unloaded and collapsed on top of her.

He rolled over and stared at the ceiling. “Wow.” He says as he breathes out. He felt like he had just run and won a race.

“Wow is right. That was kind of amazing.” She reached over and grabbed the used condom and threw it in the trash can next to her bed. “Remind me to sneak this trash out.”

“I’ll put it out myself. You’re not supposed to put trash out.”
“I don’t, silly Bear. But I was going to sneak that out of here. I don’t even want to know what happens if that gets found out.” Iris says.

Barry looks over at her. “I know I’m dead. Don’t remind me.” He felt a flutter in his chest when he looked at her. He loved this girl. Really and truly did. He knew his mother would approve. He had to tell his father about her. He was going to write him a nice long letter. He couldn’t tell anybody else in the world about Iris, but he couldn’t wait to tell him.

Iris noticed the forlorn look on Barry’s face. She started thinking that Barry had regrets. “You don’t think we moved too fast, do you?” She approached with caution. It was fast, but it already happened. Couldn’t undo that.

Barry reached for her face and rubbed her cheek. “Of course not. We did move fast, but life is too short for slow. I would never want to sit and look back on what we could have had with regret.”

“I was thinking about my father and how I can’t wait to tell him about you.”

Iris smiled at that. “I’m glad you have someone you can tell about me. I have Linda.”

“She is. But I don’t want to talk about Linda.”

“I don’t either.” Barry says.

“Do you think you have enough left in you for another round?”

Barry reached down and rubbed in between Iris’ legs. Touching her there was making him hard again. He couldn’t get enough of Iris. She was a dream come true. He stroked his penis that was hardening in his hand. “Yup.”

Barry and Iris had another round, complete with cuddling and talking until it was time for Barry to sneak out of her room. He got dressed and stopped at her door. Iris beamed up at him. “Last night was incredible, don’t you think?”

“Best night of my life. Well, after that horrible game night.”

Iris playfully rolled her eyes. “Don’t remind me. Patty Cakes came along and put a damper on that.”

“Patty Cakes is history. No need to even worry about her.”

“You’re right. She’s forgotten.” Iris says as she playfully waves her hand.

“So what do we have planned for today?”

“I don’t know. I’ll think of something. You have to go.” Iris warns. She reached for the door and opened it and lightly pushed on his chest to push him through the door.

Barry leaned down to quickly peck her on the lips again. “Ok, I’m gone.”

Barry backed out of Iris’ room just as Wally opened his bedroom door. Iris’ eyes widened in horror.
“Look what we have here.” Wally says smartly.

Barry froze and turned around. He looked at Wally and saw the look of pure anger on his face. “Wally…”

“What the fuck are you doing coming out of my sister’s room?” Wally asks harshly.

“What?” Linda asks. She looked at Iris and the pleading look on her face.

“Wally! Iris says as she steps out of her room.

Linda has now stepped out of Wally’s as well. “What’s going on?” She asks.

Wally kept his eyes on Barry. He briefly glanced at Iris. He was mad as hell at her and Barry. He was ready to kill. “Nothing much. I just found Barry coming out of Iris’ bedroom.”

“What?” Linda asks. She looked at Iris and the pleading look on her face.

“Wally. Keep your voice down.” Iris says.

“Why should I?” Wally asks as he looks at his sister almost in disgust.

“Do you want Dad to hear?” She asks.

Wally ignored her. “I just found Barry coming out of your room. What the fuck was he doing in your room, Iris?” Wally asks harshly.

“What do you think?” Iris asks defiantly.

Wally smirked then laughed. “You fucked my sister?” He asks Barry with force.

“Don’t answer that, Barry. It’s none of his business anyway.” Iris says.

Wally walked towards Barry. “You fucked my sister?” He asks again.

Barry stood a little taller. “Yeah, I did.”

Wally laughed again. “I didn’t bring you here to fuck my sister, homie. I told you she was off limits. You really fucked my little sister? Really?” He asks in shock.

“I didn’t just fuck your sister, Wally. I love her.”

“After two days? Two days? And you? Is this just what you do? Get with one of my friends behind my back? Did you fuck Eddie too and just didn’t tell me?” Wally asks Iris harshly.

Barry didn’t like the way Wally asked that. “Don’t fucking talk to her like that.”

Wally laughed again. He shook his head. Then he hit Barry.

“Oh my God!” Linda says.

Iris screamed as Wally and Barry started to fight in the hallway. Joe came running up the stairs to see his son and his friend fighting, and his daughter and Linda screaming.

“WHAT IN THE HELL IS GOING ON?!?” Joe yells as he walks up to Barry and Wally fighting like dogs.

Iris couldn’t believe her eyes. Wally was madder than the time with Eddie. It was killing her to see Barry and Wally fighting over her. She couldn’t believe it had come to this.
Joe ran up and tried with all his might to pull Barry and Wally apart. “KNock it off! STOP THIS NOW!” Joe yelled.

Iris and Linda were both screaming for them to stop. Joe finally got them apart.

Wally and Barry were both breathing heavy. It wasn’t a pretty sight at all.

“What the hell are you two fighting for?” Joe asks as he stands between them.

Nobody answered.

“Somebody better start talking.” Joe says sternly.

“I caught him coming out of Iris’ room.” Is all Wally says.

Joe looked at Wally, then at Barry, and then at Iris. He didn’t know what to say.

“So what? Linda was in your room. But because it’s me, it’s a problem.” Iris says smartly.

“I’ve been with Linda for years. You just met this dude. He knew not to touch you and he fucked you anyway.” Wally says.

“Watch your mouth, Son.” Joe says. Wally is grown, but he still needed to respect him and his house and not talk like that.

“Sorry, Dad.” Wally says.

“What happens now?” Joe asks.

“He needs to get out of our house, that’s what happens now.” Wally says.

“What?! This isn’t your house. Only Dad can make that call.” Iris says.

“I don’t want him staying here. We’re not friends anymore.” Wally says.

“Come on Wally.” Linda says.

“It’s fine, Linda. I’ll leave.” Barry says.

“What?” Iris asks as she looks at Barry. She didn’t even want to look at Wally.

“It’s for the best, Iris.” Barry says as he pleads with her with his eyes.

Wally just walked away and went into his room. Linda looked at Iris and mouthed “I’m sorry” to her and closed the door.

“So you’re really going to leave?” Iris asks.

“I have to Iris. I’m sorry.” Barry says. “I didn’t mean for this to happen.”

Iris started to cry. “Me neither.” She looked at her father who looked horribly uncomfortable.

“Dad, can’t you do something?”

“Look, Iris. This got really complicated. I think it’s best if Barry did leave. I’m sorry, sweetheart.” Joe says.

“Yeah.” She forgot about her father and walked up to Barry. “I’m sorry, Bear.” She started to cry
some more and buried her face in his chest.

Joe decided to give them privacy and walked back downstairs.

Seeing her cry made him want to. “I’m sorry too, Iris. I really am.”

“So you’re going home, right?” She asks.

“Yeah. Where else will I go?” He says and smiles to ease his pain.

“I guess I’m driving you.” Iris says. “We don’t have anything to hide anymore.” She admits bitterly.

“You don’t have to.” Barry says though he wonders how he’ll get home if she doesn’t.

“I do have to. And I’m going to. I’m sorry about your friendship with Wally, Bear.” She offers sincerely.

Barry smiled again despite the situation. “Yeah, me too.” He says as he wraps his arms around her.

Chapter End Notes

Ok, so I know you guys hate me. I hate me for doing this. But it's in the script. I know you all hate Wally too. I should've titled this "Everybody Hates Wally" LOL.

I know I have Barry and Iris moving fast, but I'm not a beat around the bush kind of author. Especially when a couple are soul mates. We all know that Barry and Iris are. I won't tease you for 20 chapters. If you think this is too fast, and it is, I can't help you.

The next chapter has already been started. Please don't make me have to change anything because a review ruins it. I'm psycho about that.

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed.
"What did you expect?"

Chapter Summary

The morning after.

Chapter Notes

Sorry this update took so long. I was in the hospital. I apologize in advance for this lackluster update, but I had to give you guys something.

You will not like this update. It is what it is.

Thank you to everyone that sent me get well wishes. I truly appreciate them.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Iris felt herself jerk awake. She awoke with the feeling that something wasn’t quite right. She saw that her pillow was wet. She reached up to her eyes and realized that she was crying. She wondered why she was crying in her sleep. She awoke with a feeling of euphoria mixed with dread. She looked around her room and nothing seemed to be out of the ordinary. She laid in bed and tried to replay the night before. She remembered them having game night. Remembered Patty showing up and ruining it because Wally decided to invite her. She remembered being mad at Wally and Barry, and also being hurt. She remembered the activities that went on, Monopoly, karaoke, and Twister. She remembered breaking up with Barry and going to her room to cry. Were her remaining tears because of that? She thought heavily about that. She had the feeling of dread, but it was differently than she felt after they broke up and she returned to her room. She started to think more and realized that her night didn’t end there.

She remembered Barry coming to her room and pushing his way in. She remembered talking to him and them making up. She remembered telling him about Eddie and him not being too concerned about it though he was worried about Wally killing him or even breaking his nose like he did a guy at school. She remembered them really taking the plunge and having sex.

That’s where things began to get complicated for her. She had the memory of Barry leaving her room and Wally catching him. Then him and Wally fighting in the hallway until Joe broke them up. Wally saying that he and Barry weren’t friends anymore and that he had to leave. Joe saying that that’s probably best. Her offering to drive him home and them hugging in the hallway.

Things really seemed to become murky for her then. She remembered nothing after that. Did she drive Barry home? Did they really have sex? Did Barry and Wally fight? She honestly did not know. She doesn’t remember drinking because her father was around. So why was she having trouble remembering everything clearly? She remembered that, but didn’t remember what happened after. Did she imagine all that happened between her and Barry? She hoped not.

She reached over on her nightstand and grabbed her phone. She saw that it was 10:18 a.m. What is going on? Iris thought. Is it the next day? Did I drive Barry home? She rubbed her head and closed
her eyes. Something’s not right. She picked up her phone and texted Barry.

Where are you?

She got no response.

Bear. Talk to me.

She still didn’t get a response and that was totally weird for her. Barry usually responded instantly to her texts. Things definitely were not right. She started wondering if Barry was mad at her too. If he was mad she didn’t fight more for him to stay. That she didn’t offer to leave with him. But somehow she knew that Barry isn’t that kind of guy. He wouldn’t want to come between her and her family and he certainly wouldn’t want her to leave her home for him. She got up and went to the bathroom. She finished in there and went downstairs. She heard talking coming from the kitchen. She walked in and stopped dead in her tracks.

She saw Wally, Linda, and Barry sitting at the table talking and eating cereal. Wait a minute…Iris thought. She had to admit that she was beyond happy to see Barry. It made her heart skip several beats. She felt like she had lost the guy she was going to marry.

They all looked up at her when she walked in and stopped abruptly. “She’s awake!” Linda says happily.

She looked at the three of them in confusion. What in the hell is going on? She thought. But seeing the three of them, mainly Barry and Wally together, gave her hope. “Oh, dear God.” Iris says and clutches her chest. She felt the onslaught of tears at what she saw but didn’t want to totally break down in front of everyone. She felt like her heart had been through the ringer.

They all took in the look of confusion on her face. “What’s wrong, Iris?” Wally asks.

She felt Barry eyeing her a little more intently than Linda and Wally were. She felt this deeper connection to him that she really couldn’t put into words.

Barry was looking intently at the love of his life and wondered what was wrong with her. Visions of their night together flashed through his mind the minute he saw her. He was having a hard time keeping it together after that. It was easy when it was just him, Wally, and Linda. Now he had the reason for all his happiness standing in front of him and he wanted to whisk her away to her room and connect with her again. Make it better than the first time.

Did Wally and Barry make up? They don’t seem to be upset with each other. They were just fighting like enemies. Like two dogs in the street. She remembered how unpretty it was and how she and Linda screamed for them to stop. Neither one of them looked like they had been in a fight. She looked at Barry closely. She again felt that deeper connection to him. He looked different to her. Like he was refreshed and surer of himself.

“What day is it?” Iris asks.

They looked at each other and then looked at her. “It’s Saturday.” Linda says.

Iris shook her head. “Is everything ok with everyone?”

They again looked at each other. “Yeah, why wouldn’t it be?” Linda asks. She’s wondering what in the hell has gotten into Iris.

Barry was truly concerned. He had no idea what had gotten into Iris. Why was she acting so
He then started to think the worst and think that she was acting strange because of what happened the night before. Maybe she thought about it and regretted it. He hoped that wasn’t the case. He had no regrets. None at all. They were moving at the right speed for them.

“Irey, what’s wrong with you? Did you sneak and drink last night while no one was looking?” Wally asks in a joking tone though he’s concerned for his little sister.

“No, I didn’t drink. Things just feel…strange. Are you sure everything is ok?” She asks again. She felt Barry really looking at her. She needed to pull him aside and talk to him. He would have the answers she needs. Or maybe Linda. She’s definitely not going to ask Wally if he caught Barry coming out of her room and drilling Barry about them fucking and then them getting into a fight.

“Strange? Strange how?” Linda asks.

Iris exhaled and rubbed her head. “I think I just had a weird dream, that’s all.” She says. She dared the tears welling in her eyes to fall. She dared them to betray her in front of everyone. She could surely cry in front of all three of them at any given moment, but this would be overwhelming. Especially when she couldn’t explain her tears to everyone.

“About what?” Wally asks.

“Nothing. It isn’t important.” Iris says dismissively.

“Are you sure? You really seemed out of it.” Wally asks his little sister in concern.

Iris waved him off again. “I’m sure. It was just one of those dreams that really makes you think you woke up in an alternate universe. I just dreamt I was already back at school. It felt like Christmas and New Year’s had already happened. Then I saw you guys and realized it was just a dream.” Iris lies off the top of her head. She had to. There’s no way in the world she can explain her dream to the room. She couldn’t even explain it to herself. She had a hard time deciding what was real and what wasn’t.

“Are you going to join us for cereal? None of us felt like cooking.” Linda says.

“Sure. But Linda, can I see you in the other room for a minute?” She asks softly.

“Why can’t you ask her here?” Wally asks almost smartly.

Barry figured she was going to tell Linda about them two and brushed it off. He went back to eating his cereal, though he kept a keen eye on Iris.

“Because this is girl talk, Wallace.” Iris says and leaves the room with Linda following

Iris walked all the way to the living room and sat on the sofa. “What’s up?” Linda asks once she reaches her.

“Did anything strange happen this morning?”

“No, not that I can recall. Strange like what?”

Iris sighed and rubbed her forehead. “I feel like I’m losing my mind.” She says.

Linda looks instantly concerned. “You’re kind of worrying me Iris. What’s going on?”

“I dreamt that Wally caught Barry coming out of my room and they started to fight.” Iris replies as she tries to make sense of what’s going on with her.
Linda’s eyes grew wide. “What?”

“Yeah. I had a dream that Wally caught Barry coming out of my bedroom and he asked him if he had sex with me. He admitted that he did and they started fighting. It was horrible. Barry was going to leave the house and I was going to drive him home.” Iris explains.

“Wow. Well, unless I missed it, none of that happened. Barry was laying on the couch when Wally and I came downstairs. They seem to be fine.”

“Thank God.” Iris says.

“I wonder what made you dream that.” Linda says.

Iris thought for a minute. Did Barry and I have sex? I remember it clearly. She decided to leave that part off until she talked to Barry. She hoped that she didn’t dream that because that meant a lot to her. She hated to think that she imagined that. It was very sensual and they declared their love for each other. She didn’t want to lose that. “I have no idea. It was horrible. Horrible Lin. You and I were screaming for them to stop. Dad came upstairs and finally got them apart. Wally said they weren’t friends anymore and that Barry needed to leave. Dad reluctantly agreed and Barry had no choice but to go along with it. I was of course devastated.”

“Well, hopefully it never comes to that. Are you still mad at him about last night? I asked Wally about it and he said Barry turned her down when she asked him out. He invited her here because he thought Barry was just being his awkward self and was trying to help him out.”

“Well, that’s a relief because that’s what he told me.” Iris says.

“So I guess you two can work that out. It’s obvious how much you two like each other.”

“Yeah. I really do. I just wish Wally would shut up and leave us be.” Iris says a little sadly.

“I wish that too. Maybe he’ll come around one day. I’ll work on him.”

“Thanks. You’re the best. “Iris says and smiles and lets some of the tension she feels lift away. “Now I really need you to be the best again and get Wally out of here so that I can talk to Bear.”

“Of course I am. You’re the best too. And I want nothing but the best for you. I’ll get rid of him. I told you I would take him to Atlantic City today. That’s still on. You guys need your day.”

“I want nothing but the best for you too. But I have to say that I feel sorry for you because you have to spend eternity with Wally.” Iris jokes.

“Hardy har har.” Linda says and they both laugh.

“I told you before, there’s still time to run for the hills.” Iris says and puts her arm around Linda.

“I’m not running anywhere. You’re stuck with me. Wally’s a jerky asshole sometimes, but he’s my jerky asshole.” Linda says.

“Yeah, that he is.” Iris says and they laugh their way into the kitchen. Iris had that feeling again when she looked at Barry. There’s no way in the world I imagined that. She thought. She remembered Barry’s face between her legs and her mouth around him. She remembered being on top of him and him on top of her. She remembered how good it felt when he was inside of her. She has had some vivid dreams in the past, but none like this. She still felt her vagina tingling from the night before. Unless she had some pretty hardcore rounds with herself, then they did have sex.
She still needed to talk to him. She hoped that Linda and Wally were going on their merry little way so that she and Barry could be alone again. She wanted just a whole day alone with him. With no one watching so that they could be themselves. She liked being herself around Barry. Where she could touch and kiss him whenever she wanted. She needed that again. She got to touch, kiss, and do whatever she pleased with him the night before and she desperately wanted to do that again.

“Finished with your girl talk?” Wally asks almost sarcastically.

“Yeah. Would you like to know what we talked about?” Iris asks smartly. She said it in a tone to let Wally know not to even go there.

“That’s ok.” Wally says.

“What about you, Barry?” Iris asks. This is the first time she’s actually said anything to him.

Barry locked eyes with her and saw stars. His heart felt like it would beat out of his chest. He was in love and he loved it. Never felt like that ever before in his life. He never wanted to let it or Iris go. He couldn’t imagine not having that feeling again. He lightly cringed. “I think I’m going to go with Wally on this one. We don’t need to know what your girl talk was about.” He replies, though he can kind of figure out what Iris and Linda were talking about. He was totally wrong. He’d find that out soon enough.

“Well, that’s great. And now Barry, can I speak to you in private for a moment?” She asks. She saw Wally look at her and she didn’t give a shit about his disapproving eye at the moment.

Barry stalled for good measure. “Uh…you’re not going to beat me up without witnesses, are you?” He asks a little timidly.

“Nah. I think you’ve learned your lesson. I just have something I need to say to you and you alone.” Iris says. “No offense guys.” She says and smiles at Linda and Wally.

Wally wanted to object, but he figured Iris wanted to apologize for being so harsh towards Barry. Some of it he deserved for being a jerk, but it needed to be addressed. “None taken.” Wally says.

He truly wanted them to be friends despite not wanting them to get together. He didn’t want a good friend and his best friend hating each other.

Iris walked out of the kitchen and went as far away from it as she possibly could without it looking suspicious. Barry followed at a close distance though he had his eyes on Iris the entire way. He was dying to get Iris alone again anyway.

Iris stopped with Barry on her heels. She looked up into his face and seriously felt nothing but love when she looked at him. She finally noticed the stubble he had growing on his face and instantly realized that she liked it. She was getting off track though and wondered what Barry was thinking when she looked up at him. He still searched her face for what was going on with her. “Iris, what’s going on?” He asks tentatively.

Iris exhaled and made a little frown on her face. She apologized with her eyes. “What happened last night?” She asks quietly.

Barry searched her face again. He’d be lying if he said he wasn’t hurt by her question. “What do you mean?”

Iris exhaled again. She rubbed her head. “What happened last night? I’m having a hard time remembering…” She says and trails off.
“Wow. That really bruises my ego, Iris.” Barry says.

Iris immediately felt horrible. “No, your ego should not be bruised. So we did have sex, right?” She asks, her voice just above a whisper.

“Yes, we did. And obviously it was terrible if you don’t even remember. I say I take you upstairs and refresh your memory.” Barry says and gives Iris a little grin. His ego really was bruised, but he meant every word he said.

“Oh my god, Barry. I do remember. I remember it perfectly. I also remember you getting caught leaving my room by Wally and you two fought in the hallway.” Iris explains.

“What?” Barry asks in a hushed, but incredulous tone.

“Yeah. I remember you sneaking out of my room and Wally catching you. He was livid and asked if you slept with me. When you admitted that you did, he hit you. My father finally broke it up and Wally said you weren’t friends anymore and you had to leave. I offered to drive you home. I cried in your arms. That’s the last thing I remember.”

“Wow.” Is all Barry can say at the moment.

“Yeah. That’s why I was so shocked to see you sitting at the table with Wally and Linda. It seemed so real.” Iris says.

“Well, that explains the way you acted at first. I can ease your fears a little. Wally didn’t catch me coming out of you room and we didn’t fight.”

“Thank God.”

“So you don’t remember last night?” He asks.

“I do remember last night. Last night was awesome. I just don’t remember all of it. I remember we had about 3 rounds and that’s it.”

“Well, you fell asleep in my arms. I snuck out your room, and also snuck that trash out of here, and wound up on the couch before what you dreamed happened.”

Iris blinked away tears. She just pretty much pulled him into her arms. “I’m so glad that was just a dream. I couldn’t stand the thought of losing you like that. It was like our moment got completely ruined. I hated that. I hated that you and Wally weren’t friends anymore. I was halfway to hating Wally as well. It was awful, Bear.” She had to choke back tears at that. “It was horrendous seeing you two fight. It was like Wally and Eddie all over again.”

Barry hugged her back and hoped that they wouldn’t get caught. But he had to take that chance. Iris was hurting and he needed to comfort her. “Hey. Ssshhh. It’s ok. I’m still here. I’m not going anywhere. At least until we go back to school.” He says as he rubs her back.

“You don’t know how happy am I to see that I was just having a terrible dream and you’re still here. I felt like I lost a piece of myself.”

“I’d be losing a piece of myself too if I had to leave like that.”

“Well, now that that’s settled, we need to go back before we really do get caught.” Iris says. She looked up at him. She rubbed his chin. “I like the stubble.”
“Really?”

“Yes, really. I like you scruffy. You should keep it for a while.” She playfully winked at him. “I think I’ll like it if it tickles me.”

“I say I take you upstairs and we get a do over of last night since you don’t remember…” Barry offers. “Plus I can tickle you.”

“I say that you’re on once we get rid of the cockblocker and Linda.” Iris says and walks back towards the kitchen. Barry reluctantly followed. He really did want to go upstairs to Iris’ room and relive their first, second, and third times together. He had the time of his life connecting with Iris in that way and wanted to do that again. Not only that, he just wanted to be in her presence. He just wanted to gaze into her eyes and stare at her gorgeous face. He wanted to hear all her hopes and dreams. Even the bad shit. Her embarrassing moments and her regrets. He wanted to be a part of it all. He and Iris had already talked extensively and learned much about each other. But they needed to learn more. He really didn’t care about past loves and relationships or just hook ups. She told him about Eddie and he was glad she did. He really didn’t have anything to tell her about his past. She knew the bulk of it all. The bad shit that happened to his family. She knew how detached he felt from his remaining family. He knew about the horrible thing that happened to her mother. Now he just wanted to really and permanently become a member of her life and family.

And then they had Wally to deal with. Barry started wishing that he and Wally weren’t even friends. According to Iris’ dream, they wouldn’t be if and when he found out about them. They wound up fighting because of it. Just like with the dude Eddie. Though he was a douche and hurt Iris. Barry would never do that. He wondered if that would make a difference. It had to, right? He wouldn’t pressure Iris for sex or nude pictures. He wouldn’t ask her to choose him or Wally. He wasn’t that kind of guy. He really had to wonder why Iris had that dream though. Was it foreshadowing? Were he and Wally destined to fight over Iris and lose their friendship? What would happen to Wally and Iris? They were brother and sister and best friends. He never wanted to come in between that. He really didn’t know if he could. All he knew was that he and Iris already had enough complications in their relationship and didn’t need more. They really, really had to work hard so that her dream never became a reality.

Iris walked back into the kitchen and over to get herself a bowl and spoon and came and sat at the table next to Barry. She sat down and started to eat her cereal. She silently communicated with Linda to get the ball rolling on both their days. She desperately needed to get Barry alone. It was killing her to not have him inside of her again like she needed.

Wally stared at Iris and Barry and noticed that they seemed to be hiding something. Like there was this secret they were sharing. “So what was up with you wanting to talk to Barry alone?” He asks because he wanted to.

“Nothing.” Iris says dismissively.

“Nothing, my ass.” Wally says.

Iris looked over at Wally and sighed. “You are so nosey.”

“I’m not nosey.” Wally says to his defense.

“Yeah, you are. Linda and Barry both think so, they just won’t say anything.”

“They don’t think that.”
“You’re right, they don’t think that. But I do. But if you must know what this is about, Mr. Nosey, I just needed to talk to Barry about helping me with your Christmas gift.” Iris lies off the top of her head. It was such a good thing that Christmas was a week away and she still had time to actually get him a gift it looks like she put a lot of effort into.

“Look at you being suspicious, and it’s about you.” Barry says.

“He can’t help himself, Barry. He’s always suspicious and always worried about what I do. What did you think? That we were planning on screwing in your bed when you and Linda left to take her home?” Iris asks with much sarcasm.

“No, I don’t think you were planning to screw in my bed.” Wally says.

“Not just in your bed, we weren’t planning to screw at all. I know that’s what you think.”

“Fine. You’ve made your point, Iris. No need to say any more.” Wally says in an almost embarrassed tone.

“I was just pointing out how ridiculous you can be sometimes. Nobody is plotting against you, Wallace. Barry and I aren’t keeping our cool and then going to go to town on each other the minute we’re alone.” Iris lies easily. Actually, that’s exactly what she and Barry were planning on doing. Iris was already in on the plan that Barry really didn’t know about. She couldn’t wait. And no one else would be home? They didn’t have to be quiet like they were the night before. They didn’t even have to just fuck in Iris’ room. They wouldn’t do something as gross and disrespectful as actually having sex in Wally or her Dad’s beds, but the house was pretty big. They could surely fuck around in other places in the house.

“Ok, Irey.” Wally says.

“No, I mean, really? Do you really think that’s what we were planning? Do you really think I’m just dying to fuck Barry the minute you’re not around? Really? Barry?” Iris says and lays it on thick.

“Hey. I know you don’t like me, but I really resent that.” Barry adds and really has to keep his true feelings at bay.

“Sorry, Barry. But Wally is trying to suggest is just ridiculous. You and I are never happening.” Iris says.

“They get it.” Barry says a little sternly.

“Wow. You two bicker like Iris and Wally. It’s clear there’s no love connection. At least on Iris’ part. But I’m starting to think Barry dislikes you as much as you dislike him.” Linda says the exact opposite of what she was thinking and noticing. It was clear that Iris and Barry were crazy about each other. The sexual tension was thick and almost made Linda uncomfortable. She didn’t know why it felt that way.

“You think?” Barry adds with much sarcasm. He appreciated what Linda was obviously doing. They needed to ward off Wally as much as possible.

Iris rolled her eyes because she needed to. “Whatever, Bartholomew.” She asks between bites.

Wally just smiled. Then he started to laugh. “This is great.” He says.

“What’s great?” Iris asks with as much sarcasm as Barry just had. She knows what Wally is
“It’s great that I really don’t have anything to worry about with you two. I did the first day you met, but it’s obvious that you two don’t like each other and I think that’s great.”

“Yeah, your friend showed me what a huge jerk he is.” Iris says.

“And your sister showed me what a huge pain in the ass she is.” Barry counters.

“You just refuse to listen, don’t you Bartholomew?” Wally asks and shakes his head. He would stay in the dog house as long as he was there. Wally was sure of that.

“Sorry.” He looked over at iris. “I’m sorry, Iris.” He says through gritted teeth.

Iris put on a smile that she made look fake, but was real. Her plan was still coming along nicely. “I’m sorry too.” She says sarcastically.

“So, what’s on the agenda today?” Wally asks after that moment.

“Oh, Wally and I are going away.” Linda says surely. She wanted to laugh out loud at what she just witnessed. Watching Iris and Barry in action was almost like watching a movie. They were extremely convincing. If she didn’t know any better, she’d really think they didn’t like each other. The best part was Wally believing the charade. He seemed to visibly relax.

Wally looked surprised. “We are?” He asks.

“Yes, we are. We’re going to Atlantic City.” Linda says and smiles.

Barry kind of cheered internally at that. Wally was going away with Linda. He would kiss her if he could. He needed a Wally free day. He knew that he and Iris couldn’t go because they weren’t old enough to gamble. This was just perfect. He knew that was something that the two put together and he couldn’t be happier. “Atlantic City?” He asks.

“Yeah. Atlantic City is gorgeous this time of year. Plus I want to hit the slots. Sorry you guys can’t come.” Linda says and smiles.

“Linda, that’s a 4 hour drive.” Wally mentions.

“I know it is. That will give us plenty of alone time. We can pull over on the side of the road too. And you don’t have to drive all that way by yourself, I’ll help.”

“I would tell you guys to bring me some funnel cake, but it would be worthless. Just put $20 in a machine for me.”

“What about you, Barry? You want us to put some in a slot machine for you?” Linda asks.

“Uh, sure.” Barry says and smiles.

“So what are you going two going to do today?” Wally asks.

Iris shrugged. “I don’t know. I guess I can finally ‘Netflix and chill’ with Mike today.”

Wally’s eyes almost bugged out of his head. “Are we back on that?” He asks incredulously.

“We were never off it. Even Barry here had a date, and he’s been here what? Two days? Don’t you think I need a date too?” Iris asks.
“No. Especially if you’re going to ‘Netflix and chill’.” Wally says and then started to think. “Wait, how are you going to do that when…?”

Iris looks around the table. Her eyes settle on her big brother who looks so uncomfortable. “What? How am I going to ‘Netflix and chill’ when my period started? You figure that out, Wallace.” She says nonchalantly and goes back to eating her cereal.

“Iris. I know you’re not saying what I think you’re saying.” Wally says as steam almost leaves his ears. He almost looked to be red and on fire like Johnny Storm.

“What? At least I’ll still be a virgin when I get married.” Iris lies easily.

Barry took this time to start coughing. He was mad at himself for doing that. He felt like he was giving himself away. The topic of conversation was heading into dangerous territory. He was afraid to see how far this would go. And now he drew attention to himself by coughing. He certainly had much to be guilty about. He knew that Iris was lying through her teeth. There was no way in the world she’d be a virgin on her wedding day. No way in the world. He already saw to that. After what happened the night before, that was impossible. Well if she became a born again virgin, she could be. But the night they had in her room was the best night of his life and something he would never forget. Even if he got dementia, and was an old man sitting in a rocking chair somewhere, he would remember his first night with Iris. He was going to make Iris his wife. No doubt about it. The second best night of his life would probably be their wedding night. But he had to put that out of his mind. He was coughing like an idiot. He got his coughing under control, and reached for his juice and started to drink. “Sorry about that.” He says. He was totally embarrassed and red faced.

“See? Even Barry is having a hard time processing what you just said. Imagine how I feel.”

“I think you both need to get over what I do or don’t do with any guys, whether it’s with my vagina or my mouth.” Iris says smartly.

Wally scoffed in disgust. “That’s one of the grossest things I’ve ever heard you say. Just the thought of it makes me want to turn green and wreck shit. You never should have said that, Iris.” He says and shakes his head.

“You think that’s gross? I can always talk about my friend that’s visiting.” Iris says, again in a smart tone.

“Please, don’t.” Barry says. He really wouldn’t want to talk about that anyway.

“Thanks, Barry.” Wally adds.

“How about we talk about your sex life, Wallace? Your girlfriend is here. She can confirm what you actually do think is gross.”

“I’d rather not.” Wally says.

“Linda, darling. Tell us. What does Wally like?” Iris says and subtly winks at Linda.

Linda opened her mouth to respond, when Wally put his hand up. “Don’t tell my sister anything.”

“You don’t want me knowing anything, yet you practically have a chastity belt on me. How is that fair?”

“Fine, Iris. You have made your point yet again. You have my permission to go out and sleep with
whomever you’d like to. Just as long as I don’t know him.”

“I never needed your permission, Wallace. My father’s name is Joe.”

“So what are you going to do, Barry?” Linda asks.

“I have no idea. What is there to do?”

“You can call Patty.” Linda offers. She knew that was highly unlikely considering how she thought he felt about Iris. Patty didn’t stand a chance when it came to Barry and how hung up on Iris he was.

Barry’s the one to scoff in disgust this time. “That’s not happening. There wasn’t a love connection between us last night.”

“I don’t see why not.” Wally counters. “You could’ve gotten laid last night.”

Iris took the time to burst out laughing at that. The irony almost killed her. Wally had no idea how true his words were. Iris wanted to tell him that Barry did get laid last night, it just wasn’t with Patty. But she knew if she did, Barry and Wally would be fighting like she imagined/dreamed that she did. She needed to immediately get Barry alone and do it all over again because she had flashbacks of their night the whole time she was sitting at the table with them.

Barry knew why Iris was laughing and he wanted to laugh too. It’s something he and Iris laughed about their first night together. When Iris laughed out loud and reminded Barry that Wally was right about getting him laid one day. He brought him home and he did. With his little sister. The little sister Wally said was off limits. Now he’s telling him he’s an idiot for not wanting Patty because he could’ve gotten laid, and he did. Just with his sister. It was funny and ironic as hell, but he couldn’t laugh along with Iris. He wanted to, but he couldn’t. He decided to poke fun at the situation.

“And why is that so funny, Iris?” Barry asks with much sarcasm. It was all a part in the plan to throw Wally off. This would sure help.

Iris laughed louder. “Nothing.” She says once she stops laughing abruptly. She then started to giggle.

“No, something is obviously funny. I’d like to know what that is.” Barry says as he looks over at Iris. He saw a gleam in her eye that made him fall in love all over again. She was the most beautiful thing he had ever laid eyes on, and seeing her face crumpled up in laughter made his heart bear profusely in his chest.

Iris looked at him and felt her heart dip in her chest. She got butterflies in her stomach when she looked into his eyes. Yeah, she loved that huge dork. No matter how fast it was, how little time she knew him, how against it her best friend and brother was, how different they were, how they’d have to hide it, she loved him. She’s sure she always would.

“It’s funny because Wally is right. She practically laid it out on a silver platter for you, and you didn’t bite. I’m sure other 20 year olds in your situation would have jumped at the chance to bang out an older woman, and you didn’t. If Wally wasn’t with Linda, he would have. Wouldn’t you, Wally?” Iris asks with a hint of mischief in her voice.

Wally briefly glanced at Linda. “No, I wouldn’t have.” He lies.

“Oh, you are such a fucking liar.” Linda says. “You would have if there were no me.” She says
“She’s not my type.” Is all Wally says.

“I call bullshit. Come on. She’s blonde haired, blue eyed, cute and perky. She’s everybody’s type.” Iris says.

“Not mine.” Barry says and everyone at the table looks at him. He never really thought he had a type, but Patty wasn’t it for him. Maybe if there were no Iris. But it was hard to imagine his life without Iris in it now that he has her. So he just had to stick to how he felt. And he only, only had eyes for Iris Ann West.

“Really?” Iris asks.

“Yeah, really?” Wally asks skeptically.

“Yes, really.” Barry answers.

“What about Felicity?” Wally asks.

Iris felt a small tinge of jealousy at hearing Felicity being mentioned again, but Barry says they are just friends and she believes him. She didn’t peg Barry as a liar. Plus she could tell when he was lying.

Thanks Wally. Barry thought sarcastically. “What about her?” He asks, though he wished that Wally hadn’t brought her up.

“She’s blonde haired, blue eyed, cute and perky. Plus she’s smart. She’s as big a nerd as you are. I’m sure she’s your type. She’s actually perfect for you.” Wally says truthfully. He does think Felicity and Barry would make a cute couple. Even cuter than him and Patty.

“Yeah, she’s all those things, but she still isn’t my type. She’s just a friend. Plus she’s into Oliver. I don’t stand a chance.” Barry says.

“So, if she wasn’t into Oliver, you’d be interested?” Wally asks.

“No I wouldn’t be. She’s not my type. She’s just a friend. Why is that so hard to believe?” Barry asks impatiently.

“You really don’t like perky white girls, do you?” Linda asks and laughs.

Barry shrugged. “I never really thought about it before.” He admits truthfully.

“What did your last girlfriend look like?” Linda asks.

Barry thought about it. His last girlfriend was Becky Cooper. She was actually his first girlfriend. She was blonde haired, but her eyes were brown. He thought about it and realized that she looked a lot like Patty. They would surely get a kick out of that. “She kinda looks like Patty.” He answers and shrugs.

Iris again laughed out loud. That was funny to her, but just because of the situation at hand. “I don’t know why I’m laughing. Ignore me.” She says and gets up from the table with her bowl and walks it over to the sink. She finished up by putting the cereal and milk away. All eyes were on her, but for very different reasons. Wally was staring because he knew she was just trying to take the spotlight off herself by keeping herself busy. Linda was looking because she knows how the Patty
thing kind of set her off, yet her laughing had hidden meanings. And Barry was watching her because he was ready to take her clothes off and christen the West house. He wanted to do shit to her that he never did to Becky. Maggie really didn’t count. He was older and did more with Alison, but she really didn’t count either. She wasn’t even his girlfriend. They were just friends that hooked up occasionally. He wanted to do all the freaky and nasty shit he heard the guys on the team talk about. Including Wally. He’d just be doing it with his sister. Last night was just the warm up. He was tired of waiting. He wanted Wally and Linda gone.

“Why is that funny?” Linda asks because she’s dying to know.

“It’s not really funny, but it is. I just wonder why he didn’t like Patty when his last girlfriend looked like her. But now I think that might be insensitive because maybe she broke his heart or something and Patty reminds him of her.”

“No, that’s not it. She doesn’t remind me of her. They just look similar. She didn’t break my heart or anything. I broke up with her after she became a nightmare.” Barry says.

“A nightmare?” Linda asks.

“Yeah. She got really clingy after we…Uh…nevermind.” Barry stammers and turns red.

“She got clingy after you had sex? Is that what you were going to say?” Linda asks. This was fascinating to her.

Barry just shrugged. “Yeah. Something like that.”

Iris and Linda exchanged glances that both Barry and Wally noticed. Iris couldn’t tell Linda just yet, but she knew why that girl got clingy. She didn’t know her name and didn’t care, but she felt like she could do the same thing. And she was never the type to get clingy. But she was drawn to Barry and really couldn’t help that. She wanted to spend all her time with him. Not even having sex, she just wanted to be under him at all times. Who knew that big dork had that affect on women? Iris still had a hard time believing that sex was that great. Her vagina tingled when she thought of how good Barry went down on her.

Barry turned red again and became flustered. “What?” He asks Linda and Iris.

“Oh, nothing.” Iris says and just looks at Linda again.

“Dude, no offense. But I swear I thought you were a virgin.” Wally offers a little apologetically.

“Don’t worry, Barry. He thinks I’m one too.” Iris says and almost regrets it. Barry and Linda were both shocked at Iris’ confession. But really, Wally seriously needed to get over it. They understood he loved and protected his sister, but that can only go but so far. He has to let Iris grow up and do what she wants to do with her life sometime.

Wally looked at her with an unreadable expression on his face. Then he frowned and shook his head. “You’re not?” He asks.

“No, Wally. I’m not. What did you expect? I’m a cheerleader at a college. You know, I cheer for guys that play basketball and football. A lot of them are hot. They think I’m hot too. What can I say?” She just shrugged. She was over Wally protecting her hymen. He could do that with his daughters when he got some one day. She was not this dainty little flower he needed to keep in a glass case. Even if her name is Iris.

“I expected you to save yourself for marriage. Not be at school screwing the football and
basketball teams.” Wally says.

“Like you did?” She asks sarcastically. “And for the record, I haven’t slept with whole basketball and football teams…”

Wally sighed. “I don’t want to hear any more.”

He stood and just shook his head again. He felt like he got kicked in the gut though he had no reason to feel that way. His sister was an adult. A beautiful girl that he’s sure many guys would want to get with.

“Leaving so soon?” Iris says and smiles. She knew she’d get rid of Wally’s ass by bringing up something he would not want to talk about.

“Yeah. We need to get ready and hit the road.” Wally says. He didn’t even want to go there with Iris. It was something he didn’t want to talk about at all. He felt defeated and just let her win. He kind of figured she wasn’t, but wanted to hold onto that image of his pure and sweet little sister forever. Now he knew it wasn’t how he wanted it and he couldn’t do a thing about it. He wasn’t one for crying out loud. She could sleep with guys if she wanted since she’s now an adult. If she wanted to go ‘Netflix and chill’ or whatever she was planning on doing with that dude, he was just going to let her. Keeping Iris from sleeping with and hooking up with dudes just wasn’t on his agenda for the day. He had accomplished his goal of keeping her away from his friends. He had to thank the big brother gods for coming in and helping him with the whole Barry thing. He was glad that Barry made an ass of himself so much so that he turned Iris off of him. He would never be able to go away with Linda thinking that something might pop off behind his back. He was happy that Barry blew it. And he really did. Iris was treating Barry like she did him with her snapping at him, walking around the house and not looking her usual perfect, and talking about things like her period and other dudes. Barry was finished when it came to Iris. That’s all Wally could have hoped for. He just left the kitchen with a wave.

Linda stands as well. She had to give it to Iris. She really socked it to Wally again. “Well, we’ll see you guys later. Have fun.” She says and she’s off behind Wally.

“Our babysitter should be out of here in an hour tops.” Iris exclaims happily.

“I’m shocked you told him that.”

“I had to get his ass out of here somehow. Desperate times call for desperate measures.”

“I think you broke his heart though, Iris.” Barry says and chuckles.

“He’ll live. He’s just lucky I didn’t tell him the thing that I can’t get off my mind.” Iris says and beams at him. She was really getting that feeling again.

Barry raised an eyebrow. “And what’s that?”

“When I found out that the huge dork I fell in love with is amazing in every way possible. You set the bar pretty high.”

“High enough that you won’t be back at school screwing the football and basketball teams?” Barry joked.

Iris smiled and thought about it for a moment. “Nah. You didn’t set it that high. I’d give you 2 out of 5 stars.” She joked as well.
Barry playfully grabbed his chest. “Ouch. Well, I guess I have a huge mountain to climb. Wally needs to get the hell out of here immediately. Or I could just say ‘fuck Wally’ and just take you upstairs.”

“So that you and Wally can fight like dogs like you did in my dream? I don’t think so, Bear. I kind of want to keep you until we go back to school.”

“Fine.” Barry says as he playfully sighs. “But I’m ready to party.”

“I think I’m going to go up to my room and just hang until they’re gone. This waiting feels like it’s taking forever. I’m ready to party too.”

“It does. I’ll just watch tv. Maybe send you a dirty text or two.”

“That sounds like a plan. Just ignore the texts I sent you a little while ago.” Iris says and leaves the kitchen. Barry followed behind her and just sat on the couch and turned the tv on. He hoped Wally and Linda were leaving soon. He was itching to have Iris all alone.

Iris went to her room happier than when she left it. She was greatly relieved the bad part was just a dream. And that the good part was as real as she hoped. She loved Barry and the night before and was glad that it wasn’t just a figment of her imagination. She just had the nagging feeling that it would be just like her dream when Wally finally found out. She didn’t want that at all. She already cost him one friendship, and didn’t want to cost him another. She really didn’t want to cause Barry to lose the small circle he has. It was a sticky situation, but she couldn’t help falling for Barry. Couldn’t help it if she tried. It was done.

She laid across her bed and grabbed her phone. She started to play Cookie Jam to pass the time by. She wanted Linda and the babysitter gone. He wouldn’t be able to just pop up on them. And her father was at work. He would be all day. He loved being at the station. It was like his second home. Iris really got lost in playing and imagining her alone time with Barry, that Wally and Linda standing at her door startled her.

“We’re about to go, Iris.” Linda says.

Iris turned to look at them. Wally still had that hurt look on his face. He needed to let it go. She got off the bed and walked over to them. “Ok. Well, have fun.” She says happily, hoping Wally will join in.

“Still want us to put $20 in a slot machine for you?” Linda asks.

“Nah. I was just kidding. You guys have fun.” She looked at Wally. “Oh, come on Wally.”

“It’s fine, Irey.” Wally says.

“Good. There’s no reason for you to be upset.” She says and gives him and Linda a hug.

“I know. You’re not a little girl anymore. But you’ll always be my little sister.”

“I know that. I have the best big brother in the world.” Iris says honestly as she hugs Wally. She truly meant that. Even if she hated his meddling, she loved him dearly.

“You and Barry try to not bite each other’s heads off while we’re gone.” Wally says.

Iris almost choked at Wally’s words. Almost choked. She was planning on doing things that involved head, but she wasn’t a biter and neither was Barry. She rolled her eyes and made a face.
anyway. “I promise. Just as long as he keeps his mouth shut.”

“Hey. Don’t put it all on him.” Walls teases.

“Whatever. Now get out of here.” Iris says.

Wally and Linda said their goodbyes again and to Barry when they went downstairs. They left minutes later. Barry waited a little bit just in case they came right back after forgetting something. A few minutes after that, Barry came upstairs. ‘Honey, we’re alone!’” He calls as he walks into Iris’ bedroom. He stopped dead in his tracks when he saw Iris was completely naked and waiting on him. “Wow.”

“Lose the clothes, Allen.” Is all she says.

“As you wish.” Barry says and undresses quickly.

“I say we take full advantage of having the entire house to ourselves, don’t you think?” Iris asks as she walks up to him.

“Yes, I do. Where do we start?”

“The shower.” She replies and grabs his hand and leads him to the bathroom. She turned on the water and seconds later they were inside it and all over each other. They kissed like their lives depended on it.

Barry pretty much devoured Iris’ lips. He just couldn’t get enough of her full lips and her kisses. She tasted sweet all over. Even there. He wanted to taste her again. The fact that they were in the shower made it seem hotter. He blazed a trail of kisses from her mouth down the center of her body. He got on his knees and kissed her pubic region. He smiled up at her before he grabbed her leg and put it on his shoulder. He then devoured her other pair of lips. He was very detail oriented when it came to paying attention to her clitoris. He tasted, teased, sucked, and licked on the sensitive nub until Iris felt like her legs would give out on her and she would slip in the shower.

“Bear!” She loudly screamed out. It felt good to not have to hold back.

Barry pulled his mouth away from her pussy and looked up at her. “God I love it when you call me Bear like that.” He says and goes back in for more.

Iris felt what seriously felt like vibrating on her clitoris. If she didn’t know any better, she’d think she was using a personal massager on herself. Or that he was using one on her instead. “God, shit. Bear. I don’t think I can…” She says and has to just shut up and give into the orgasm that she felt in every cell in her body. She jerked and almost forcefully yanked Barry’s hair. “Damn, Bear. I’m sorry.”

“Yeah, you did kind of rip every hair out of my head.” He jokes as he comes to his feet and pulls her closer to him.

“I’m sorry. That just felt so…good.” She says as she kisses him deep on the mouth. She loved tasting herself on him. The kinkiness of it all turned her on. She reached down and started to rub his already erect penis. She wanted it inside of her again, but she wanted to kiss it first. She gave him a playful smirk and immediately got on her knees in front of him. Barry had to use the shower walls to steady himself when she took him into her mouth. She sucked on the head until she had Barry cursing as well.

“Shit, Iris. Wow.” He says as he felt her take as much of him into her mouth as possible. She deep throated him and that sent Barry over the edge. His legs shook and he grabbed the shower wall
harder as he came. He nearly lost his shit when she didn’t stop as he continued to cum.

Iris brought herself back to a standing position. Barry pulled her even closer than before and kissed her on the lips. He stared into her eyes as he lifted her leg again and started to finger her. His dick was pretty much still drooling and he was trying to get hard again because he needed to be inside of her immediately. Iris felt him graze her and that made her wetter. She wanted to skip the foreplay, though it was incredible. She just wanted to fuck. She reached and turned the water off. They could shower together later. “I think we need to head to my bed now.” She says.

They left the bathroom and quickly ran to her bedroom. Barry had the condom on and was inside of Iris in seconds. They were so engrossed in each other that they had no idea they inadvertently invited someone else to their party.

Chapter End Notes

Ok, so I know you hate that the fight was a dream. Sue me. I have another way I want Wally to find out.

Thank you for reading. Don't be too brutal with the reviews lol. Just kidding, I can take it. I'm expecting y'all to be pissed off. Y'all just have to deal with more of my best bud Wally.

P.S. I didn't watch the show, but I heard it was terrible. This update is terrible, but at least I'm apologizing. But hey, I can't do any worse than the show, right? Actually, I should be doing worse since they're the professionals. I just want to hug everyone that's heavily invested in Barry and Iris. Just be thankful we have writers like me and so many others that actually care about Westallen.
"Are you kidding?"

Chapter Summary

Couple time, family time, a date, and a surprise.

Chapter Notes

Hello all. Here's an update. Sorry for the delay. I apologize in advance for the lackluster update. The passion is gone. I'm so sorry, though I blame the show and the fandom. Westallen is totally ruined for me.

During text messages, Iris is in Italics, Linda is bold.

This is the beginning of the end. I think there will be two more chapters, and then we have to say goodbye to the Iris and Barry I wanted to see. I'm sorry to the people that wanted more than just two more chapters. I had high hopes. :) 

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Iris started getting the feeling that something wasn't quite right. She knew that she and Barry were completely alone in the house but she couldn't shake the feeling that they weren't alone. She started thinking that after she and Barry went at it like crazy for a while. She knew they were being so ridiculously messy and she needed to get on top of that. She didn't need for her dream to come true. Or even worse, have them actually get caught in the act. She knew that wouldn't go over well. She liked, loved her adorable Bear too much to let that happen to them. She knew what Wally would do. She wondered about what her father would do if he caught them.

Granted he's not as overprotective as Wally is, but he could still completely go apeshit if he found her and Wally's houseguest having sex. She needed to get them out of harm's way before all hell broke loose.

She was laying in her bed and Barry was sleeping peacefully beside her. She thought he looked adorable while he slept. She figured she must have worn him out. That thought made her smile. She didn’t want to go full on creep mode and just watch him sleep. She lightly brushed her fingers over his neck until he started to stir. Barry momentarily forgot where he was until he looked directly into Iris’ face. That was a great way for him to wake up.

“Hey.” Barry says and smiles at his gorgeous girlfriend.

“Hey.” Iris says as she smiles back. Barry’s smile would forever do something to her.

“So, I guess I fell asleep.” Barry says.

“Yeah, you did. It’s ok. I fell asleep on you last night. Must be all that good lovin’.” Iris jokes.

Barry laughed. “I guess so. You did keep me up most of the night. I barely slept after I went
downstairs."

“I’m not going to apologize for that. I kind of can’t get enough of you.”

“I can’t get enough of you.” Barry counters.

“So, I figure we both should really shower this time, get dressed and head out. I don’t want us to get caught like this.” Iris says as she gestures towards their naked bodies.

“Because that would be tragic.”

“It would be. I don’t know if my dad will act as ok with it as he did in my dream. He did think it was best if you left the house.”

“Well, I’m just glad that it was just a dream and I don’t have to leave you until Wally and I both make that drive back to Starling City.”

“I’m glad too, but it’s going to be hard when you leave Bear. We won’t see each other for at least 2 months.”

Barry felt a dip in his chest at just thinking about it. He just met Iris and now he can’t imagine his life without her. He thought it was funny how things just worked out like that. “I know. Spring Break. What are you doing for Spring Break anyway?” He asks.

“Well, before I met you, I was going to go to Miami. You know, party hard. I didn’t go last year because I was a freshman. Now I don’t know what I’ll do. I’d rather see you than party in Florida.” Iris admits truthfully.

“I was just going to go home, though I really don’t want to. I know the guys were planning something too, I just don’t know where. I know Wally was going to meet up with Linda.”

“Then that’s what we’ll do too. You can lie and say you’re going home since you didn’t go for Christmas. I’ll just lie and say I went somewhere else. I doubt Wally will really check up on me anyway. How does that sound?”

“That sounds perfect.” Barry took the time to get out of Iris’ bed. She couldn’t help but take in his naked body. He was tall, lean, and long, and she loved his body. Really did. Barry caught her staring. He loved that she was staring and the look that was on her face. “Are you ok, Iris?” He purposely just stood there and made no attempt to put his pants on.

“I’m ok, I guess. I just wish that we didn’t have to fear getting caught all the time. I’d pull you back into the bed with me.”

“I wish we could. But, like you said, we definitely don’t need to get caught.” Barry says as he finally slips on his pants. He just grabbed the rest of his stuff and balled it up. “You’re going to use the bathroom first, right?”

“No, I’m going to use my dad’s. You go ahead. I’ll meet you downstairs in about an hour.”

Barry made a playful face. “An hour? That’s all? I thought it took you forever to get ready.”

Iris playfully threw one of her pillows at him. “I wake up flawless. That’s just the time I make people wait on me.”

“That you do.” Barry says and smiles.
“Oh, you are the cutest human puppy ever.”

“I am. You are lucky to have me.”

“I am.” Iris says and smiles.

“See you in an hour.” Barry says and heads for her door. He slowly opened it and looked in the hallway. Once he knew the coast was clear, he jetted to Wally’s room.

Iris just laughed and got up. She stripped her sheets, and got rid of any evidence that she and Barry were together before she headed to Joe’s room to shower. She almost jumped out her skin when she walked out of his bathroom and found Joe in his room. “Dad! You scared me! I didn’t know you were home.” Iris says and seriously wonders just how long he’s been home.

“I didn’t mean to scare you. I figure you’re in here because Barry is in the other one, right?”

“Yeah. No sense in waiting.”

“What are you two getting up to?” Joe asks. He had just a hint of fatherly concern in the way he asked her.

“What? What do you mean?”

Joe looked at her with the fatherly wisdom that he has in knowing his children. He knew them both better than he let on and they thought he knew. “I was just asking what you two are going to do today since Wally is gone. Or did I miss his car being gone?”

“Oh, yeah. Right. Yeah, Wally and Linda went to Atlantic City. Barry and I are too young to go. We were just going to go to the mall. I have some Christmas gift shopping to do. Plus, he’s going to help me pick out Wally’s gift.”

“Are you sure that’s it?” Joe asks.

“What do you mean?” Iris asks to buy herself some time. She figured playing dumb was the best route.

“Iris, I can clearly see how much you and Barry like each other.”

“Dad-“

“I can. Don’t try to make me think I don’t know what I’m talking about. I can see it. I can feel it.” Iris admitted defeat. “Yeah, we do. But Wally doesn’t want us dating. So, we won’t so that it won’t ruin their friendship or me and Wally’s relationship.”

“Like it did with Eddie?” Joe asks.

“Yeah. I don’t want a repeat of that. Getting involved with him was the dumbest thing I’ve ever done.”

“Don’t beat yourself up about that. You were young. But Barry isn’t the same kind of guy that Eddie is.”

“Dad, you barely know him.”

“Yeah, but Wally has told me a lot about him. He’s a good kid. Had some horrible things happen to
him and is still a good kid. I’m not Central City’s best detective for nothing. I know how to read people.”

“Yeah, he’s a good guy. I wish he wasn’t Wally’s friend.” Iris admits truthfully.

“I wouldn’t go that far. I just wish Eddie hadn’t did what he did and made Wally hate the thought of you ever being with one of his friends. He told me that. I hate what Eddie did even more than Wally does, but that’s on Eddie. And not on the rest of Wally’s friends. I want my baby girl to be with a great guy. Barry’s a great guy. It should make me mad the way he looks at you, but it doesn’t.” Joe says.

“What?”

“Exactly what I said. He looks at you with hearts in his eyes. He doesn’t ogle you like a piece of meat. I have to admit that it’s funny watching him pretend to not be in love with you around me and Wally. He fails miserably.” Joe says and chuckles. “You do too.”

“Can Wally tell?”

“No. To him you seem like your normal self. I could tell you did not like Patty being here last night at all.”

Iris smiled in spite of this information her father is giving her. “No, I didn’t. I like Barry. I do. But it’s just not meant to be, Dad. I’d rather save the good relationships we all have over some little crush I have on another one of Wally’s friends.”

“Ok.” Joe says and just leaves it at that. “You do know what tomorrow is, right?”

“Of course. You know you can’t work tomorrow, right?”

“Yeah, I know. But I had to have some extra cash to buy you guys’ Christmas gifts. Gotta get the new kid something too.” Joe says.

“Awww, that’s great you’ve taken Barry on as your surrogate son.”

“I like the kid. He’s great. He lost his parents. Wally told me he felt out of place staying with his relatives. I think that’s tragic. If he was Wally’s friend before now, I would have taken him in.”

Iris got a little teary eyed at hearing that. “That’s great, Dad. You’re the best father in the world. You do know that, right?” Iris confesses as she hugs Joe.

“Thanks baby girl. I do alright.”

“You do more than alright. We lost Mom, and you did a great job raising me and Wally, if I do say so myself. I realize how hard that must have been for you. To just lose your wife suddenly, and was instantly forced to raise two kids on your own. You could have fallen apart, but you didn’t. Grandma Esther helped a lot. I miss her and Mom, but I’m glad we still have you.”

Joe got a tear in his eye himself at that. He only did what he was supposed to do. He knew his kids loved and appreciated him, but it felt good to be reminded. “Thanks baby girl. I just did what I was supposed to do. Plus your opinion is biased. You’re a Daddy’s girl.” Joe says proudly. He loves his son with everything in him, but he and Iris shared a special bond.

“I wouldn’t have it any other way. I have the best Daddy in the world. I will fight anyone that says differently.” Iris says and gives Joe a kiss and another hug.
She retreated to her room to get ready. She spent so much time talking to her father that she knew that Barry was probably waiting on her. She hasn’t really seen the full effects of how Barry is late to everything. She decides to throw on something cute even though Barry seriously wouldn’t care. But she always wanted to look cute, so that’s nothing new. She put on a black and white shirt dress and leggings. She paired it with a pair of black boots and thought she looked fairly cute for a date with Barry disguised as a trip to the mall. She did her hair and makeup, grabbed her purse, and was ready to go. She ran into her father again in the hallway when she opened her bedroom door.

“Funny meeting you here, Iris.” Joe joked.

“I know!” She says and smiles. She wondered where her Bear was. She trudged down the stairs with Joe following. Barry was nowhere in sight. Minutes later he came rushing down the stairs. Iris took in what he had on and again thought he looked really good. His black, gray, and white plaid shirt, black jeans, and Chuck’s looked good on him. Iris couldn’t help but notice that they matched. She would point that out to him later.

“Hey. Sorry. I hope you weren’t waiting too long. I’m kind of always late.” Barry apologized. “Hey, Mmmmm…..Joe.” He says. He almost called him Mr. West, but remembered that Joe didn’t want to be called that.

“You almost had it. In a few more days, you won’t even want to call me Mr. West anymore.” Joe says.

Barry fidgeted. “I guess I’ll get the hang of it. How are you, Joe?” He asks. He hopes he doesn’t look too nervous. It’s the first time he’s seeing Joe after he and Iris had sex. He didn’t want to give himself away. The good thing is he’s always a nervous wreck, so he looks normal.

“I’m good, son. How are you?”

“Great!” Barry says with much enthusiasm. Iris subtly eyed him to bring it down a notch.

“So, you guys ready to head to the mall?” Joe asks and almost blows his cover at their reaction.

Iris’ eyes widened in horror and Barry became a jittery mess. “You’re going with us?” She asks. She hopes he doesn’t look too nervous. It’s the first time he’s seeing Joe after he and Iris had sex. He didn’t want to give himself away. The good thing is he’s always a nervous wreck, so he looks normal.

“You should see the look on your face. You too, Barry. I should have taken your picture.”

“Sorry.” They both say simultaneously.

Joe laughed and patted Barry on the shoulder. “Have fun kids.” He says before he heads for the kitchen.

“Let’s go before he decides to change his mind and come.” Iris says as she grabs her jacket.

“Good idea.”

They quickly hurried outside to Iris’ car. She was upset she had to let her car warm up. She just wanted to immediately pull off. She looked over at Barry. “We match.” She says and smiles.

“We do. Are we going to be that couple that dresses alike? I know not now, but in the future?” He wonders.

“You think we’ll last that long?” Iris asks, just a little hopefully. She wanted them to last.
“Yes, we will. Even after Wally finds out and kills me.” Barry says.

Iris smiled despite hoping it never came to that. “I’m glad you managed to keep a little bit of cool around my dad. It’s a good thing you’re always an awkward ball of nervous energy.”

“Are you making fun of me, Iris?”

“No, not at all. But I can. Because you’re my awkward ball of nervous energy. Don’t you know how lucky I am?”

“I’m the lucky one.”

“That you are. How many other cheerleaders would let you hit a home run? Wait, I take that back. Patty Cakes was definitely going to let you at least get to third base.” Iris says and smiles at him.

Barry just looked at her and the smile on her face. He was so in love it was ridiculous. Iris could say and do anything, and he’d find it cute. “You just had to bring up Patty, didn’t you?”

Iris kept her smile on her face and shrugged. “What can I say? She was thirsty, Barry. Thirsty. On second thought. She would have let you hit a home run too. Say I’m wrong, Bartholomew Henry Allen. Say that I’m wrong.” She taunts.

“You’re not…wrong. I don’t want to hit anything with Patty. I have you. You set the bar pretty high, Iris Ann West.”

“You don’t have to keep flattering me, Bear. I already slept with you.”

“You deserve flattery, so I’ll give it to you. You deserve the world, Iris.”

“Smooth.” Iris says as she laughs and puts her seatbelt on. She was waiting for Barry to join in, and when he didn’t she looked over at him. She took in the look he had on his face. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing. I wasn’t kidding, Iris. You are seriously the best thing to ever happen to me.” Barry offers sincerely.

Iris’ heart swelled at his confession. “I love you too, Barry.”

Barry put his seatbelt on as well. “So, will you stop teasing me about Patty?” He jokes.

“Nope. You two were even matching last night.” Iris joked and pulled off.

“I think I’m going to call Patty and have her meet us at the mall. We can have a triple date.”

“You call Patty, and I will drop you off on the side of the road somewhere. Wait! No, I’ve got it. How about we do call her and then call my dad, and set them up on a date?”

Barry lost it at that. “Are you kidding? You want to set your father up with Patty?”

“Yeah. They get along. She’s younger than he is, but so what. She’s legal. She looks older than her age, but that’s to be expected.”

“That’s harsh, Iris. And what do you mean by that?”

“I know you’ve probably never heard this term, but ‘black doesn’t crack’. Sorry, babe. That’s just the way that it is.”
“What?” Barry asks in confusion.

“I knew you’ve never heard that before. If you’re going to be with a black woman, there’s some things I need to school you on.”

“I already know I can’t, and don’t want to say the n word.”

“I know that. I know who and what you are. But that’s not all. Remember the head wrap thing?” She asks.

“Of course. Wally told me to never mention that to a black woman and to never touch your hair or ask about it. He told me I was doomed with you, but at least I would be prepared if I ever dated a black woman in the future.”

Iris looked at Barry and smiled. “You can touch my hair, Barry. You already did. Plus you got a crash course into the head wrap. I’m proud of you for surviving. You went from 0 to 100 with that.” She says and laughs. “Do you know how free I feel that I can do that in front of you with no worries?”

“I’m glad I can provide that for you.”

“Ok, now the black don’t crack thing. Well, black people, especially black women age gracefully. Meaning, we can look much younger than our ages because we don’t get wrinkles early because of the melanin in our skin.”

“So, I’ll look like a raisin while you’ll still look like a teenager when we get old.” Barry replies with playful sarcasm.

“You’ll be the envy of all your friends. Let’s just hope my ass stays great, Barry.” Iris says and Barry laughs. She laughed too. It felt great to talk about these kinds of things with him.

“I’ll still think your ass is great, no matter what it looks like.”

“It might go south after I have a kid or two though, Bear. Sorry. I shouldn’t just bring up kids to you. I didn’t mean to plan out your future.”

“I want kids, Iris. More than one. I’m an only child and I feel so alone now that my family is gone. My dad is the only immediate family I have left. Plus I love the way you and Wally are. Makes me wish I had that.”

“Ok. I do too. I can’t imagine my life without Wally in it. I want my kids to have that. I’m pretty sure Wally and Linda will have some, so they’ll have cousins too. I’m just hoping Wally gets all girls. I already feel sorry for them. He’ll be a great father though.”

“He will. He’s an awesome team captain. He’s a great big brother. I get why he’s the way he is with you. I consider him like a big brother.”

“Well, if things really work out, he’ll be your brother in law. Unless he can’t accept us. I don’t think I’ll be able to handle that though, Bear.” Iris admits truthfully.

Barry looked over at her. He rubbed her leg. “I know.”

“So what do you want? A little Bartholomew Jr.?” Iris playfully asks.

“We need to let that name die with me.” He jokes. “No, I want little girls that look like you.” He
confesses.

Iris looked over at him. She looked in his eyes and could tell he really meant that. “You’re about to make me cry.”

“Just being honest.”

“Well, I want a little boy that looks like you. But who knows what our kids will look like. Mixed children sometimes get all of one race and not the other. Or they get a perfect blend of both. I guess like Linda. I think she looks Asian, but some people just think she’s white.”

“Linda’s mixed?”

“Yeah. You didn’t know that?”

“No. I just thought she was Asian. I saw pictures of her and just assumed she was.”

“Yeah, she is. Her mother is white and her father is Korean.”

“Not to change the subject, but we’ve been driving for a long time. How far is the mall from where you live?”

“Pretty close, actually. But I’m going to another mall where I won’t run into anyone I know. I want to actually hold your hand in public.”

“Good idea. I forgot all about that.”

“We’ll have to separate for a bit so that I can pick out your Christmas gift.”

“You don’t have to get me anything, Iris.”

“Yes, I do. You know Christmas is my favorite holiday. You’re my favorite guy, so you’re getting a gift.”

“Ok. Just don’t make a big fuss over me. I’d be perfectly happy if you just got naked and tied a big red bow around yourself.”

“That’s doable, Bear. But I’m still getting you a gift you can unwrap in front of Wally and my father. Do you think we’d make you sit there and watch us open gifts?”

“No. But I remember Wally telling me that Christmas is a big deal at your house. What do I get your dad?”

“You don’t have to get him anything. He knows you’re a struggling college student.”

“I have to Iris. I’m staying at his house and sleeping with his daughter.”

“He doesn’t know you’re sleeping with his daughter.” Iris corrected.

“I know that. I just wouldn’t feel right about not getting him something.”

“Get him a box of cigars. Or you can buy him a top end bottle of liquor. He’ll love that.”

“I’m not 21 yet. I can get Wally to get it. What are you getting him?”

“A jazz album. He still listens to his record player.”
“I remember you said you broke his record and he took McSnurtle the Turtle from you.”

“Awww, you remembered McSnurtle’s name.”

“Yeah, I did. I remember everything about you.”

“Where have you been hiding all my life, Barry Allen?”

“I was being a huge dork at school. Where have you been hiding all my life, Iris West?”

“I was being a huge goddess at school.” She says and smiles. “Do you ever stop to think if we would have ever met had Wally not brought you home with him?”

“I do think about that. I don’t know. I’d like to think we were destined to meet. Maybe if you came to visit Wally at school, maybe? I don’t know. I’m just happy we did.”

“Me too.” Iris parked the car. “Well, we’re here.”

“I’m glad it took us this long to get here. Really gave us time to talk.”

“I’m glad too. Come on, Bear. I’m ready to be disgusting in public.”

“Are you saying what I think you’re saying?” Barry asks hopefully as he gets out of the car.

“What? I was talking about us being gross with huge amounts of PDA. What are you talking about Barry?”

“Oh, nothing.”

Iris thinks for a moment. “Oh, I know now. You’re talking about how we both said we wanted to have sex in public, aren’t you?”

Barry turned red from embarrassment, even if it was just Iris he was talking to. “Yeah, I was. I’m sorry. I thought that’s what you meant.”

Iris walked up to him and pressed him against the car. She kissed him deeply and reached for his crotch. She felt him instantly get aroused. She rubbed it for good measure. “We can fuck right here if you want to.” She says once she breaks the kiss.

“Get back in the car.” Barry hissed.

“How about I just blow you right here?” Iris asks as she nibbles on his ear. She then crouched down in front of him and Barry lost it when she reached for his pants.

“Iris….As bad as I want you to do that, we can’t. I see people walking towards us.”

Iris stood up and just pecked him on the lips. “Chicken.” She says and walks toward the entrance.

Barry quickly follows. He easily caught up to her with his ridiculously long legs. “That was unfair, and you know it.”

“I’ll make it up to you.” Iris says as she grabs his hand.

They walked into the mall and it felt good to be able to do that openly. They stopped several times to kiss. People did look at them, but neither one of them gave a shit. They were young and in love. They didn’t give a shit about the bigots looking on or just the folks grossed out because of how
They both started with their shopping. They both easily got Wally’s, Linda’s, and Joe’s gifts. They were walking hand in hand when Barry spotted a Build A Bear. “Want to go in here?”

Iris looked at him like he lost it. But then it became cute. “Build A Bear? Really, Bear?”

“You can tell all your friends that your boyfriend took you to Build A Bear for a date.”

“That is the cheesiest thing ever and I love it!” She says as she pulls him inside. Everyone inside the store had kids with them or worked there. They knew they were out of place but again, they didn’t care. They toned down the PDA since there were kids around, but they still had fun. They looked around to find their bears.

“What kind of bear are you getting?”

“A tall, lanky, nerdy one.” Iris joked.

“Then I’m getting a short and feisty one.”

Iris was looking through the outfits when she gasped. “Oh my god, Bear! Look!” She says as she holds up a red track outfit. She also saw a red cheerleading outfit.

“It’s us.” He says happily.

“It is us. Oh this is so cheesy, but I can’t resist. I’m about to cry.”

“I think I should be rewarded for being the best boyfriend ever.” Barry says.

“You are the best boyfriend ever.” Iris says and pecks him on the lips quickly.

“Was that my reward?”

“No, you’ll get your reward later. There are children around Barry.”

“You’re right. We need to finish up so we can get out of here.”

“You’re right. But I’m enjoying our date.”

“I am too.”

“I think this is better than our first date. I’m glad you suggested we come in here.” Iris says.

“Best boyfriend ever. Dating a nerd is a good thing.” Barry says and smiles.

“You’re a cheesy, huge dork. And I love you for it.” She’d love him eternally for that.

Iris and Barry finished up making their bears. They were met with people eyeing them strangely, but they didn’t care. Iris happily carried her bears out of the store. She had them both in her arm while she held hands with Barry. She looked like a little girl holding her baby doll.

“You know you have to keep both of these, right? How will I explain having a bear dressed like a cheerleader? Even the one with the track suit.”

“Oh, I’m keeping Rosie and Bear with me. McSnurtle will have some friends to keep him company.”
Barry chuckled. “Just when I thought I couldn’t like you anymore, you do things like this and I like you even more than I already did. You make me keep falling in love with you.”

“I keep falling in love with you too, Bear.”

“I’m not changing the subject again, but I seriously need to eat. All I had today was that cereal earlier.”

“I know. Let’s head to the food court. Then we’ll split up and get each other’s gifts.”

“That sounds like a plan, Iris.”

Iris and Barry headed to the food court where they were again gross with their insane amount of PDA. They even went as far as to feed each other. It was cute and disgusting at the same time. They didn’t give a shit about the stares they received.

“Ok, it’s gift shopping time. I’ll meet you back here in a half an hour. If you need more time, text me. If we run into each other, no peeking. Got it?”

“Got it. Are you sure all you need is a half an hour? I know how girls are about shopping.”

“Do you want to find your own way home, Barry?”

“I’ll see you in half an hour.” Barry says and off he goes.

Iris heads straight for the store that has Barry’s gift and has time to spare. She wondered what Barry was going to get her. She sat at the food court and just looked around. She saw the photo booth she didn’t notice the first time. She wanted to do that with Barry, but decided that having evidence wasn’t a good thing. She didn’t want pictures of them coupled up floating around. She had a few pictures of him and them on her phone, but she had them hidden. She hated that she had to hide the guy she loved. She was just looking at her bears and how that was so cheesy but also so awesome that they did that. She loved her bears. She loved her Bear. She then wondered what Wally and Linda were up to. She decided to text Linda.

Hey Lin. Having fun?

Linda took a few moments to reply.

Hey Iris. Yes. We’re having fun. Wally won some money playing blackjack. I won some playing the slots. I had some funnel cake just for you.

That’s great. Tell Wally I want a cut of his winnings.

I will. How are you and Barry doing?

We’re doing great. We’re at the mall right now. Guess where he took me for our date.

Where?

Build A Bear.

You’re kidding.

I’m not.

Iris took a picture of her bears and sent them to Linda.
Omg. That’s you and him. That’s so cute. It would be so weird for me and Wally to do that, but it’s perfect for you two.

I know! Lin, I’m in love.

I know. He is too. I’m happy for you.

Thanks. Guess what?

What?

We had sex.

I knew that would happen the minute you two were alone. How was it? ;)

Awesome. Amazing. But we had sex last night. I didn’t tell you because I didn’t know if it was part of the dream.

Really? Well you two played that off perfectly because I certainly couldn’t tell. I know Wally can’t. He told me to tell you to beat it.

Tell him that’ll give me more time to ‘Netflix and chill’.

He said he doesn’t want to hear about it. And to use condoms. JFC.

Oh! That reminds me. I need to buy more. Tell Wally I said Thanks. Have fun. Love you guys.

We love you too.

Iris was smiling when Barry walked up to her. “What are you smiling about?”

She looked up at him and smiled even more. “I was just texting Linda. She said she and Wally are having fun and they won some money. He told me to make sure I use condoms when I ‘Netflix and chill’. I just smiled thinking that he reminded me to buy more.”

“At the rate we’re going, we need a case.” Barry jokes.

“I will stop at Costco and get them. But that’s going to slow down. We won’t get that much alone time anymore. You might have to settle for a hand job.”

“I’ll take it. I guess that goes for you too.”

“Yes. I’ll sit next to you at the table at all times and we can get each other off that way.”

“That sounds incredibly hot.”

“It does. Sit down.” Iris says as she gives him a naughty smirk.

Barry took in the look on her face and knew she was planning on doing. He sat down close to her. “Are you going to…?”

“Yup. Put your bags in your lap.”

Barry did as he was told. Iris slowly slid her hand to the front of his jeans and unzipped them. She slid her hand inside and grabbed his penis. She started to stroke and Barry almost lost it just from the thought of being out in the open and being caught. Iris stroking him in public almost put him
over the edge. “I’m about to blow, Iris.”

“You’re going to ruin your jeans.”

As soon as Iris said that, he came. He came all in her hand. “I’m so sorry.”

“You did warn me.” She took out her hand and pecked his lips. She looked up and saw that they were being watched. Iris just smiled at the two guys watching them. “I’m going to go wash my hands and then we’re off.” Iris got up and almost sauntered to the bathroom.

The two guys watching just watched Iris leave and then looked at Barry.

“Where did you find her?”

Barry decided to be a jerk. “She just sat down and offered me a hand job. What was I going to say?” He says and just gets up, and grabs their bags to follow Iris.

“Really?”

“No, I’m kidding. That’s my girlfriend.”

“You’re a lucky guy.”

“I know.”

Barry waited outside the bathroom for Iris. She smiled when she saw he was waiting for her. “Hey!”

“Hey.”

Iris took in that Barry still had his orgasm face on. “Fix your face.”

“What does my face look like?”

“Like you just came.”

“Oh, well that’s to be expected. Are you ready to go?”

“Yes. I want to be alone again. We have to take advantage of that. So, did you find me a gift?”

“Yes. You’re going to love it.” Barry says as they leave the mall and head for Iris’ car. He had a plan.

They settled inside the front seat. Barry slowly slid his hand toward her thighs. He slipped his hand down the front of her leggings and into her panties. Iris gasped when his fingers found her slick slit. He found her sensitive nub and started to rub. She cursed when he changed speed and intensity gradually. His two fingers found her tight opening and slowly entered her. His thumb continued to rub her clit. Iris gripped the steering wheel tightly as she came on his fingers. She got deeply turned on when he put his fingers into his mouth and licked them clean.

“I’m about to get addicted to you.” Iris says as she catches her breath.

“Good.” Barry says as he puts his seatbelt on.

“Yeah, I’m starting to think I’ve been hoodwinked. Is the whole awkward nerd thing a front to get girls? It is, isn’t it?” Iris jokes.
“You caught me. I’m really a superhero, and Barry Allen is just my alter ego. Why do you think they call me The Flash?”

“No wonder you have magic fingers.” Iris says as she puts her seatbelt on and started up the car. They again talked like they knew each other all their lives. They finally got to the West house and found Joe on the couch watching tv. “Hey, Dad.” Iris says once they enter the house.

“Hey, Joe.” Barry says.

“Hey kids. How was shopping?”

“Great. I got all my shopping done. So what are you up to?” Iris asks.

“Nothing. Just watching tv. I can put on a movie if you want to join me.” Joe says.

Iris knew that he wanted them to sit with him. “Sure. Let me run upstairs and put this away, and I’ll be right back.”

“Me too.”

Joe chuckled to himself as Barry and Iris darted upstairs.

“So much for us being alone. Sorry, Bear.”

“It’s ok. I don’t mind watching a movie with him. I wish I could do that with my father.”

“I’m sorry you can’t, Bear. You can borrow my father for the night.”

“Thanks, Iris.”

“You’re welcome. I’ll see you downstairs.”

Iris went to her room to put her things away in her closet and got changed into more comfortable clothing. Barry put his things away as well and really had to hide the gift he got for Iris.

Barry, Iris, and Joe settled into the living room and watched Sleepless in Seattle and The Brave One until Joe retreated upstairs. They started watching Forrest Gump until Iris again fell asleep on Barry. He just laughed and picked her up and carried her to her room and went to Wally’s. Barry vaguely remembered Wally stumbling in late as hell, or early as hell, depending on how you looked at it. He awoke before him and found Iris and Joe in the kitchen getting breakfast ready.

“Good morning.” He says.

“Good morning.” Joe and Iris say together.

“Wally’s still asleep. He got in really late.”

“Well, we have to wake him because we go to pick out the Christmas tree today. It’s a family thing.” Iris says and smiles.

“Oh.” Barry says a little sadly.

“You’re coming too, silly. You’re a part of the family now.” Iris says.

“She’s right.” Joe says.

“You guys really do take Christmas seriously, don’t you?”
“Yes. You’ll see. It’s kind of like 7 days of Christmas. Today is tree day. Then we have cookie
day, snow day, ugly sweater day, carol and Christmas music day, Christmas movie day, and then
Christmas day. We do a lot on Christmas day. I hope you have a suit because we’re going to
closest to church, plus Christmas dinner.”

All Barry got out of that was ugly sweater day. “Ugly sweater day?”

“Yeah, we put on hideous Christmas sweaters and take pictures. The person that keeps their
sweater on the longest gets a gift. I have a Rudolph one with an actual light up nose that has your
name on it.” Iris says.

“Really?”

“Yes. You should see the collection.” Iris noticed the look on Barry’s face. “Hey, it’s tradition.
Plus I make Grandma Esther’s egg nog. Light on the bourbon.” She says and winks.

“I always loved her definition of light.” Joe adds and laughs.

“What does that mean?” Barry wonders.

“It means it’s nowhere near light.” Joe replies.

“Oh.” Barry says. “I really can’t wait for this. I haven’t really been excited about Christmas since I
found out Santa Claus wasn’t real.”

“Devastating.” Iris replies and she and Barry laugh. “So, I’m making omelets today. Kind of like
an omelet bar. Then we’re heading to get the tree. Then we decorate it.”

“Ok.”

Barry and Joe settled at the table while Iris got started. Wally came in the kitchen yawning and
rubbing his eyes. “Morning.” He gruffed out.

“Good morning.” Barry, Joe, and Iris say.

“I should still be sleep, but I smelled food cooking and was reminded of how hungry I am.”

“Well, I was going to wake you because you know we have to go and get the tree today.” Iris says.

“I know. I’ll just go back to sleep once we’re finished.”

“So, how was Atlantic City?” Joe asks.

“Good. I won a little bit of money that Iris thinks she’s getting a cut of, but she isn’t. Me and Linda
had fun.”

“I am getting a cut of that money.”

Wally ignored her. “So what did you do yesterday?” He asks Barry.

“Me and Iris went to the mall, then we watched movies with Joe.”

“So you two managed to get along the entire day?” Wally asks as he looks between Iris and Barry.

“For the most part. I only threatened to leave him on the side of the road or at the mall and he
would’ve had to find his own way home twice.” Iris says.
“Yeah, after she offered to call Patty and have her meet us at the mall.”

“Hey. I was just trying to help you out. She was interested. Thirsty even.” Iris says with much sarcasm.

Joe took in what was going on and laughed. He laughed because he knew that they way Iris and Barry were acting was just a front. He was there with them the night before. He figured they were pretending to not like each other for Wally’s sake. He knew that without a doubt, Iris came up with that plan. He knows his daughter. “I think it’s safe to say that Barry isn’t interested in Patty, so I don’t think you should force it.” Joe says.

“Listen to your father, Iris.” Barry says.

Iris rolled her eyes. “Whatever.”

The West family, and Barry, finished up their breakfast and got ready to head out to pick out their Christmas tree. Iris was starting to get giddy because this was her favorite holiday and time of year. She got dressed with childlike excitement and went downstairs to find the guys waiting for her.

“Are we all ready to go?” Joe asks.

“Yup. I’m riding shotgun.” Iris says and hurries out to Joe’s car.

Wally and Barry just decided to let Iris have her way. No sense in arguing with her. They all settled in Joe’s car and chatted along the way as Joe drove to the lot to get the Christmas tree. Iris was truly in her element. Just the smell of the trees made her happy. They walked around looking for the perfect tree. Joe ran into a detective that retired and went to go catch up with him.

Barry and Wally just pretty much followed Iris around while she looked for the tree they would take home. She started to squeal when she thinks she found the right one. It was huge and gorgeous.

She clapped excitedly. “I think this is it boys.”

“It’s a great tree.”

“I know. I can’t wait to decorate it.” She exclaims and claps her hands again.

“I see you still haven’t outgrown your love for Christmas.”

Iris turned to the sound of the voice and was taken aback. She was face to face with her first love, Joshua Miller. “Josh?” She says in surprise.

His face lit up and he smiled down at her. “In the flesh.”

He held out his arms and Iris immediately hugged him. He picked her up and spun her around. Barry was seriously pissed off and uncomfortable. Wally was too but for totally different reasons. “Oh my god, I’m so happy to see you!” Iris exclaimed as he spun her around.

Wally and Barry just looked on. Who in the hell is this dude spinning Iris around? Barry thought to himself. He took in the guy. He was black, tall, almost his height of 6’2”, good looking (it was hard not to notice) well built, and wearing army fatigues. He saw the name tag: Miller. Iris called him Josh. Who in the hell is Josh Miller? Barry again thought to himself.

“I’m happy to see you too.” He says and finally puts her down.
Iris looked over at Wally and Barry. She couldn’t help but notice the pained expressions on both their faces, especially Barry. He looked hurt, mad, and uncomfortable. She figured that’s how she looked when Patty was at the house. She quickly averted her eyes. “Wally, you remember Josh don’t you?” She asks.

“Yeah. You’re taller than I remember.” Wally says.

“Yeah. I think I was only 5’10” the last time you saw me.” Josh says as they shake hands.

“Barry, this is Josh, Josh, this is Barry. Wally’s friend, roommate and teammate from school.”

“Nice to meet you.” They both say as they shake hands.

“When did you get back?” Iris asks.

“Not too long ago. I went home and my mom insisted we come straight here. You see I still have on my fatigues. My mom put off getting the tree as long as she could.”

“Yeah, I see. Where have you been stationed?” Iris asks.

“Germany. I’m not quite fluent yet, but I’ll get there.” He says and flashes his pearly whites. Barry saw a twinkle in his eyes when he looked at Iris that he really didn’t like. He didn’t like it at all.

“That’s great. I’m really glad to see you safe at home.” Iris says in delight. She kind of had that same sparkle in her eyes. Barry really didn’t like that. Wally didn’t like it either.

“Me too, but that’s the life I chose.”

Wally wanted to break this conversation up. Barry did too. Neither one of them liked how this dude was looking at Iris. “Thanks for serving.” Wally says and sticks out his hand again.

“My pleasure.” He says and smiles. He then looked back at Iris.

Barry wanted to hit him.

“So, Iris. How’s life? Are you still cheering? What are you majoring in?”

“Yup, still cheering. I’m majoring in Journalism.”

“I can totally see that for you.” He says and just stares at her.

Wally and Barry just watched the exchange. They were both uncomfortable watching what looked like eye sex to them. This dude literally fucked Iris with his eyes.

“What?” Iris asks.

“Nothing. I know I told you not to wait for me, and now I see that that was a mistake. That’s all.” Josh says.

Shit. Iris thought. Shit, shit, shit.

Chapter End Notes
So the Build A Bear date thing is something I totally ripped off from a post on Tumblr. I can't remember who originally posted it, but I can't claim that. I just thought it was cute and would fit Iris and Barry.

You'll find out who was at the party in the next chapter.

For a visual reference, I'm picturing Josh as Lance Gross. If you don't find him attractive, I don't care.

Once again, I apologize for how things turned out. I completely understand people unsubscribing and unBookmarking this story. It stings, but I understand. :)

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed.
"I blame you."

Chapter Summary

Heartbreak and angst city.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone. Here's an update. I'll spare you my feelings.

During text messages, Iris is in Italics, Linda is bold.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Why did you have to go and say that? Why, why, why would you say that, Josh? Why do this to me? Iris thought to herself. Not only did he say that to her in front of Wally, but he said it in front of Barry. Of course he had no idea who and what Barry is to her, but still. She didn’t know which reaction she should fear more. Granted she and Josh ended when he went into basic training and he told her not to wait around for him and go on with her life. They were over. He didn’t want the life of a military wife for her. He didn’t want her to have to constantly uproot herself and not live her life. He didn’t want her sitting around waiting for bad news. While he grew up in a military family, he knew what his mother went through. The one thing that was different about his family from other military families is they never moved around. They stayed in Central City no matter where or how long his father got deployed. His father didn't want his family bounced around and having them start over in different states or even different countries.

Joshua knew that Iris wouldn’t be any different, especially since her family was in Central City. And he knew that she would wait for him. As bad as he wanted her to, he didn’t want her to put her future and life on hold for him. That’s a sacrifice he had to make. Now seeing her again, made him realize that was a mistake. He loved Iris. She was his friend first. His first love. His first everything and he was hers. It was hard not to love a girl like Iris. He still didn’t want her to put her life on hold, but he seriously missed her and still loved her. Just missed being in her presence. Seeing her smile and hearing her laugh. Just seeing the bright light and life in her eyes. He thought about that always while he was deployed.

Iris just looked at him and then subtly looked over at Barry and Wally. She knew they both had questions. Shit, shit, shit. Iris thought. Shit.

Wally knew that she and Josh were friends and had a kiddie relationship, but he didn't know everything. He knew they went to junior and senior prom together, and that they were boyfriend and girlfriend, but that’s it. He was away at school and didn’t see them together. He didn’t see how into each other they were. He didn’t see them really fall for each other after waiting for Wally to flee the scene and allow Iris to live. Wally was still under the impression that Iris was a virgin until recently. He now knew she wasn’t, so he’d probably put two and two together and figure out that she has slept with Josh.

Then she had Barry standing there. Two guys she slept with. Her first and her last. This was so
freakishly messy that Iris either wanted to laugh, cry, or evade reality by drinking herself into unconsciousness. She never in a million years thought she’d have two guys she slept with, the guy that was her first and she would always share a special bond with because of that. Then her last. The guy that she just met and loved dearly that she knew she would always share a special bond with as well. She had to hide that bond because the other important guy in her life besides her father hated the idea. This is so messy. She thought. Josh and Barry. The only two guys she has loved outside of Wally and her father. She truly did love Josh, and truly did love Barry. She hoped that she and Barry were in it for the long haul. She didn’t want anybody else. Now Josh springs this on her.

“That’s…not what I expected to hear from you.” Iris says, finally. She just wished that he hadn’t said that in front of Wally and Barry. She honestly didn’t care about Wally’s feelings at the moment. Things were fine. He knew she wasn’t a virgin and now she had the guy she lost her virginity to standing right in front of him. He should already be over knowing that his little sister hasn’t saved herself for marriage.

But Barry. She didn’t want him to think the worst. She didn’t want him to think she really did have a boyfriend that went off to the army that she conveniently forgot to tell him about. She didn’t want him to feel like she felt when Patty brought her ass to game night when no one wanted her there. That was a rough night for her. So rough it made her break up with him. However brief it was. It still caused her a lot of pain. She and Barry were infants, newborns in their relationship. Their relationship was less than a week old, but she saw forever when she looked at him.

“I know. I know it’s the last thing you expected to hear from me. I’m sorry to just spring it on you like this.” Josh says as he smiles at Iris again. He still had that damn sparkle in his eyes that Barry hated seeing. He fucking hated it. He wondered if that’s how he looked at her. He figured the way he looked was worse because he really had it bad and knew for certain that this guy didn’t love Iris the way he did. It was impossible for another guy to love Iris more than Barry did.

“Yes. I wasn’t even expecting to even see you, Josh.” Iris says.

“Another thing I know. I thought about you a lot when I was gone. A lot.” He says and looked at her like she had the world in her hands. “Being deployed in another country where I don’t know anyone was harder than I thought it would be. Seeing my brothers get letters and things and having video chats was an enlightening experience.”

Iris looked at Wally and Barry. “Uh, could you two excuse us for a moment?” She asks.

“Sure.” Wally says as he deadpans Iris then does the same thing to Josh.

Barry said nothing. He was just watching the exchange and hating every single second of it.

Before they have a chance to leave, Joe walks up. “Josh?! Hey! It’s good to see you.” Joe says as he pulls Josh into a hug.

“You too, Sir.” Josh says. Joe knew that Josh would never call him by his first name due to his military upbringing.

“Where have you been? All over the world, I guess.” Joe says.

“I was in Texas for a while, then I’ve been in Germany the past two years. I was so lucky to be able to come home for Christmas. My mom almost lost it when I knocked on the door.”

“I’ll bet. I’m happy to see that you’re safe. Thank you for your service.” Joe says and shakes his
“Yes, sir. You’re welcome.” Josh says.

Barry felt a sense of dread. This dude was perfect. Absolutely fucking perfect. If he could, he’d hate his guts. He does. He does hate his guts. He knew that was just his male ego, jealousy, and pride talking. This guy seemed like the whole package. Even he could see that. With his good looks, firm handshake, perfect smile, above average manners. A fucking soldier. It doesn’t get any better than that. Top that off with the twinkle in Iris’ eyes and Joe’s stamp of approval. Barry wanted to find a hole to crawl in and die. He knew how Iris felt when Patty was at game night. She felt bad enough to cry and break up with him. He wanted to cry. He wanted to tell Iris to go ahead and be with Captain America because they’d be the perfect couple. He bitterly thought that their kids would be gorgeous with gorgeous smiles. He again knew how Iris felt when she said people would rather see him with Patty than with her. People wouldn’t look twice at Iris and Josh. Well they would. At how fucking good looking they were. He noticed but also didn’t give a fuck how people looked at him and Iris the day before. He figured some looked at them and wondered how he got Iris since she’s gorgeous and he’s a gangly white dude. Iris told him he was handsome and adorable, but right now he felt like he was one of Santa’s elves standing next to this Josh guy. He again thought of Iris saying people would rather see him with a white woman. He noticed how some white women and black men looked at them. Some shook their heads. He really didn’t give a shit about people’s racist bullshit. He didn’t care that he was white and she was black. Didn’t care that the children they might have wouldn’t look a thing like him. He didn’t care that he was night and she was day, that she was the sun and he the moon, that she was his opposite but still perfect for him. Iris was just perfect and there wasn’t a woman alive that could take her place. He never wanted to have regrets like this Josh guy did. No matter how bad he felt about being reminded of that. Of seeing her past come back and stare him in the face.

Iris was about to pull Josh off finally when his mother walked up. “Josh, I’ve been looking for you. I found the tree. I’m sorry. Iris?! It’s so good to see you! You never come by and visit me anymore.”

Iris gave her a hug. “I’m sorry, Lorraine. I really am. I’ve been busy at school. I miss you.” She says as she hugs the woman she was really fond of. She and Lorraine really did share a special bond because she lost her mother and dated Josh. She hugged her tightly and didn’t want to let her go.

“I miss you more. I’m all alone now that all of you are gone. John was in North Carolina. He’s all the way in another country…” Lorraine trails off as she gestured towards her youngest son. “I still hold out hope that you’ll be my daughter in law one day.” She says quietly in Iris’ ear. But everyone heard her. Maybe she didn’t say it quietly enough.

Barry was intensely uncomfortable with that notion. Here Iris had a guy that was supremely a good catch. He devoted his life to protecting the country. Who wouldn’t love that? Then Iris was mom approved. He bitterly and gravely thought that he didn’t have a mother around to approve of Iris. He knew that she would have loved her, but it still hurt nonetheless. Barry seriously wondered what he had just stumbled into. It seemed like Iris and Josh had some unresolved shit going on. It broke his heart to watch it unfold. He started to get the weighing and crushing feeling that Iris still had feelings for this guy. He could see it in her eyes. And now he thinks he was wrong. Josh was about as in love with her as he was. It was like looking in a mirror. He wondered how things would turn out. This guy just came back. He just walked into Iris’ life days ago. Would that matter? He knew he didn’t get there first, but would it matter? What if he was too slow or just not enough?

Everyone just kind of stood there and watched the women hug. Josh looked on with a loving and
approving eye. Wally was just taking everything in. He really wanted to talk to Iris when he got the chance. Joe really didn’t know how to feel. He loved Josh. He was a good guy and good to his daughter. He had a great upbringing and was raised right. Came from a good family. He was a soldier in the army. And while Joe didn’t want that kind of life for Iris, he thought Josh could become a good husband for her. He understood that his being in the army really wasn’t that different from him being a cop. He saw what Iris saw in the guy. Then he had the new kid Barry. Also a good kid that was raised right. He came from a broken family, but was still a good kid. Had the worst shit a kid could have happen to him and still turned out alright. He could potentially be a good husband for Iris as well. Then he had Wally working against him. Joe could look at Barry and see the love he had for Iris in his eyes. He could also see the look of hurt and confusion in his eyes at the moment. He probably didn’t know a thing about Josh and what he meant to Iris. He wondered if he knew about Eddie.

Iris knew that she couldn’t, and didn’t really know how to respond to Lorraine’s statement. “I’ll get better at visiting you. As much as I gab on the phone, I know I should call you.”

Lorraine hugged Iris tighter then released her. “Come past the house one day before you go back to school. Please?”

“I promise.” Iris says and smiles.

“I’m sorry for being so rude. You guys know how much I love Iris. She’s the daughter I wish I had but I got stuck with boys.” She joked. She gave Joe a hug and Wally one. She even gave Barry a hug. “I don’t know you, but I’m a hugger.”

Barry laughed, despite how uncomfortable he was. He couldn’t help but notice how good it felt to have this woman hug him. He envied that Josh had a mother around that could make someone she just met feel that way. Joe decided to speak up. “This is Barry. He’s a new family member. He’s Wally’s roommate from school.”

Lorraine smiled. “Well, I’m Lorraine. It’s nice to meet you Barry. Any member of the West family is ok in my book. We have to be going. We have to get this tree set up. I know John is mad at me for making him stay with the one I picked out. It was good to see you guys. We have to get together before the holidays are up.”

“We will.” Iris says and Lorraine hugs her again.

“I’ll talk to you later, Iris.” Josh says with a huge smile and that twinkle in his eyes. He hugged Iris again and gave her a kiss on the forehead. “Mr. West, Sir. It was good to see you again.” He says and shakes Joe’s hand again. He did the same thing with Wally and Barry.

Josh and his mother Lorraine walked off and Iris had that dazed look in her eyes. Barry hated how she looked. Hated. It.

That damn hug and forehead kiss did something to him entirely.

Barry was going off pure jealousy and male pride, but he hated Josh’s guts. Hated him because he was perfect. And he was perfect for Iris. Any fool could see that. They’d make the perfect couple. That’s all he could think about. He started thinking that Iris deserved better than him and could do better. She obviously did with this Josh fellow. He wouldn’t be surprised if this dude got a special and handcrafted personal endorsement from Barack Obama himself. All he was was a nerd that ran fast. What does Iris even see in me? He thought. She could have any guy she wanted. She was supposed to be with guys like Josh. A good looking, well mannered, family guy that was in the damn military. Joe even liked him. He could tell. Barry really wanted to find a hole to crawl into
and die. He knew there was a reason he didn’t like Christmas. Suddenly, being home with his relatives seemed like a good idea to him. At least he’d just feel bad. He felt bad and was heartbroken now. This sucked big time.

Wally took in how gloomed and doomed Barry was. He couldn’t blame him one bit. The way Josh looked at his sister made him uncomfortable. Barry saw firsthand what his competition really looked like. Iris looked like she was glowing or something. He knew that Barry had it bad for her, but he wasn’t going anywhere with that. And while it wasn’t confirmed exactly what went on between Iris and Josh, it was kind of hard to ignore. He figured something must have happened between them after he graduated and went off to school. He remembered Josh perfectly. He was a good kid. Came from a good military family. Went to school with him and Iris. Everybody loved Iris, and this guy was no different. Iris seemed to forget about him when pretty Eddie came along. Wally now remembers the prom pictures. Iris went to both her proms with him. He was shorter and scrawnier then. Now being in the military did wonders for him. He was his height, but neither of them were as tall as Barry and his father. Wally hated to admit it, but Josh and his sister looked good together. He could get behind them being together, though he hated the idea of his sister being a military wife. He didn’t want her to become a young widow or anything. Which is why he was kind of hesitant about following in his father’s footsteps. But he wanted to be a cop like his dad. He did. He thought he’d make a good detective. He didn’t want Linda to get the dreaded call either. But he knew that was his calling. His father fared well. He knew he would be alright. And if he wasn’t, Linda still had Iris. He loved that his sister and future wife were so close. He’d have to be close with whomever Iris married, and that Josh guy was good dude. Nobody was good enough for his sister, but he came close.

Barry and Iris were quiet as hell. The air was thick with tension. Joe could feel it and so could Wally. They needed to get back on track. It was Christmas. The best time of the year, and a really great holiday for the West family. “So, is this the tree you want?” Joe asks.

Iris seemed to be a million miles away. Joe looked at Wally, then Barry. He looked purely crushed. The kid looked devastated. He looked like he saw Iris and Josh kissing, or worse. Iris shook her head. “What?” She asks as she looks at the three men standing around her. Barry looked awful. Just plain awful. That was her fault he felt that way. He looked how she felt when Patty brought her perky ass to game night. Then when she touched Barry. Iris saw red. Barry didn’t look like that though. He looked hurt. Like he could die from the pain.

“I asked if this was the tree you like?” Joe says again.

“Yes! It’s perfect, isn’t it?” Iris exclaims happily. She had to get back into the mood she was in before her world got disrupted. She did not expect to run into Josh. She certainly didn’t expect to run into him, in front of Barry and Wally, and have him say what he said. She figured that was where her sense of things not being right. Things really felt wrong now. And oddly, things felt right. She had no way of explaining that. All she knew was that things had to get back to normal. Whatever that was.

“Yes. It’s perfect. I need to pay for it and get it on the top of the car. You guys ready?” Joe asks.

“Yup.” Wally says as he eyes Iris carefully. He really, really couldn’t wait to talk to her alone.

“What?” Iris asks impatiently. She was tired of the way Wally kept looking at her. She wasn’t in the mood for his bull. She figured she’d have to deal with his and Barry’s and it was killing her mood. Christmas has always been her favorite holiday and she didn’t want it ruined. She deserved that.

“Oh, nothing.” Wally says, but that’s not what he’s thinking.
Iris cut her eyes at him. “Good. Because I’m not in the mood for your stuff today, Wallace.”

“I didn’t say anything. And stop calling me Wallace.”

“How about I call you Rudolph?” She asks as she refers to his middle name.

“Now you’re just being evil.” Wally says. He isn’t a fan of his middle name at all.


Wally clenched his teeth. “No. That’s my middle name.”

“Your middle name is Rudolph?” Barry asks with a goofy grin on his face. Iris’ goofy grin appeared seconds later.

Wally just looked at him then back at Iris. “Thanks, Irey.” She just shrugged.

“So your middle name is Rudolph? Like Rudolph the red nosed reindeer?” Barry asked again.

“I don’t know why you’re talking Bartholomew. That’s just as bad. Actually, it’s worse.” Wally says as he looks at Barry.

“It is. But if I can get through life being named Bartholomew, you can do alright having your middle name be Rudolph. I’m calling you Rudy from now on.” Barry says.

“You call me Rudy, and I’m going to kick your-“ He stopped abruptly and looked at Joe.

Joe had an amused expression on his face. “What was that, son?”

“Nothing.” Wally says.

Iris laughed then stuck her tongue out at Wally. She walked off to the front.

All Wally could think of was how he was seriously going to get Iris back for that. He was going to get her good.

Barry chuckled and patted Wally on the back. “Come on Mr. Shiny Nose.” Barry jokes.

“Two can play that game, Mr. Simpson.”

“Don’t have a cow, man.” Barry says in his best Bart Simpson impression.

Joe had to laugh at that one. “You two really act like you’re brothers.” He says. He was already considering Barry like a surrogate son. He felt like Barry needed that kind of guidance. He probably longed for it since he couldn’t have that with his own father.

“Yeah, he’s alright. But I have to do horrible things to him that I couldn’t do with Iris since she’s a girl. I think I’m going to stuff him in the dryer when we get home.” Wally jokes.

“Then I’ll have to do horribly annoying things that a little brother would do. I can’t wait until Linda comes back over.”

“And I’ll just call Patty. Tell her you were just too much of a coward and were scared of her. Invite her over the house again. That’ll fix you.”

“Dad! He’s trying to set me up with a girl I don’t like.” Barry says in a childlike voice.
Joe cracked up laughing at that. Even Wally had to join in. Barry started laughing too. He hasn’t felt that great in a long time. He really loved the West family. Wanted to be a part of it forever. Seeing Iris with that guy Josh still hurt him like hell, but joking around with Wally and his father instantly put him in a good mood. He really wished that he could have grown up in that house. But Wally was so right about how he would feel staying with them. He has not once felt out of place. Well he did when Patty was there, but that has nothing to do with the family. He thought he’d be the odd man out being the only non-blood related family member, who just happened to be of a totally different race. But he was so wrong. The Wests were an awesome family. Even if Wally wasn’t his friend and Iris wasn’t his girlfriend and the love of his life, he would still feel that way.

“Come on. Let’s get this tree before Iris goes postal on us. You know how she is.” Joe says.

Wally and Barry grabbed the tree and just walked off towards the exit. Joe just looked at his kids and followed behind happily.

An hour later, the West’s and Barry were back home after getting the tree into the living room. Iris pretty much took charge over that. She considered that her tree. “Ok, so I need my ornaments.” She says.

“Your ornaments?” Joe asks.

“I’m sorry, the ornaments for the tree. Could you guys get them for me? Pretty please?” She says as she bats her eyelashes at Wally and Barry.

“That face doesn’t work on me anymore.” Wally says.

She then poked out her bottom lip and tugged on Wally’s shirt. “How about now?”

Wally’s tough big brother exterior crumpled at that. He sighed. “What can I say? That face always gets me. Come on Barry.”

“Thanks, guys.” Iris says and smiles. Barry followed behind Wally. He looked back at Iris though he really didn’t mean to. She felt a little tug in her chest at that. Things were not perfect for her and Barry by any means. She knew he was hurt and confused. She was too. She also didn’t like how that felt and didn’t want that for Barry.

“So, it was great running into Josh and Lorraine.” Joe says once Wally and Barry are down in the basement and out of earshot.

“Yeah, it was.” Is all Iris says.

“Really?” Joe asks in fatherly concern. He knew how Josh and Iris felt about each other. He was there to see it. He saw the way they looked at each other. He saw how he looked when he picked her up for prom both times. He saw the dreamy look in his eyes in the pictures. He saw the way Iris looked at him. He saw the stars in her eyes as well. He knew Iris liked Josh because he was a good guy. Plus he reminded Iris of him. Iris was truly a Daddy’s girl that loved her father dearly. She thought he hung the moon and that he was a superhero. Josh had a lot of the same qualities Joe had. She loved that boy. She was heartbroken when he went off and joined the army. Especially when he told her not to wait and go on with her life. Joe was relieved and also dismayed about that. He didn’t like seeing Iris hurt, but he knew she would have been devastated if something happened to Josh. He didn’t want that kind of life for her. She got over that and went off to school herself. She put away the prom pictures before she left though. She had already made her peace with it and
said goodbye to Josh in her own way. Joe figured she moved on, and it seemed like she did. Now he’s seeing that same look in the eyes of Barry and her. He knew his daughter well enough to know that she was a little heartbroken about how Wally felt about it. She wanted Wally to be supportive. And that was impossible for him to do after the Eddie fiasco. Joe couldn’t blame him, but he also thought that Wally should let it go because Barry isn’t Eddie. Joe was a good judge of character. He knew that Barry would never intentionally hurt Iris. Even if he didn’t have to worry about her protective older brother or her cop father. He was just a good guy too.

“Yeah. Why wouldn’t it be, Dad?” Iris asks.

“Because I know how you felt about Josh. Those feelings came rushing back, didn’t they?”

Iris looked up at Joe. “A little.” Iris says.

“Is that making you question the decision you two made?”


“Plus you have these new feelings for Barry that you feel like you can’t do anything with.” Joe says.

“Dad. I just like the guy and think he’s cute. That’s all. It’s not that big of a deal. I think Josh and I were a bigger deal than this silly little crush on another one of Wally’s friends. I mean, he left Dad. He left and told me to move on with my life. What was I supposed to do with that? What was I supposed to do? He was my friend and then my boyfriend so I already loved him and I knew he was going to follow in his father’s footsteps so I knew what to expect. I didn’t expect him to just force me to move on, right? He should have known that I would’ve waited for him because I knew what that life was like because I have a father that risks his life for his career. I would have waited for him though it scared me to death because I horribly thought that he would come home with missing legs or arms or worse. I feared that I would have to go to the airport and see a coffin with the American flag draped over it instead of his smiling face. I would have waited. But he just didn’t even give me a chance. So I had to get over him. Even when he has a mother that I love and was totally a replacement for the mother that I lost that I miss terribly but found it hard to go around because of what her son made me do. I cut him and his mother off and got over the longing for a mother I felt and over how great he is. I had to because it would’ve destroyed me. And I did. And then Barry came along and he’s great and also a good guy that I can’t even begin to develop feelings for because that’s a disaster because my brother won’t ever want me to date his friends because of his other friend despite me really liking his friend and being forced again to do things against my will that are different from the things I want to do and it’s unfair to me and everyone involved. I’m just fine with everything. I’m fine! Ok, Dad?” Iris rambles on until she’s out of breath. She wanted to cry.

Joe just looked at her with wide eyes. He didn’t know Iris was holding all of that in. Iris really never let things get to her and now he wondered if that was because she was holding things in and pretending things weren’t affecting her. He hated the thought of that. He didn’t want to be that absent in his parenting that he didn’t recognize that his daughter needed him more than she let on. He walked over to her and pulled her into his arms. She kind of collapsed at the feel of her Daddy holding her. She always felt protected by Joe and Wally, and right now she needed that. “Iris. Iris baby, talk to me. It’s ok. It’s ok to feel how you feel.”

Iris exhaled deeply and forced her tears and cries to stay inside. She didn’t want it to be Niagara Falls when Barry and Wally came back. “I’m just tired of people making decisions for me. I’m capable of thinking and talking for myself. It’s just too much, Dad. People are always telling me what to feel, how to feel, what to do, and I’m sick of it Dad. I am. I’m sick of it. I’m sick of being
controlled.” She did start to cry then. It was no use trying to hold it in anymore.

Joe understood that perfectly. He was guilty of making decisions for Iris. She was capable of thinking for herself. Nobody asks Iris what she wants. He felt heavy hearted at hearing her say that. It made him feel like less of a father and man because he let Wally do what he wanted. Granted Wally was an adult, but legally so is Iris. He devoted his life to and spent so much time protecting Iris that he didn’t stop to think that he and Wally were smothering her. Joe rubbed her head. “I’m sorry, baby girl. I’m sorry that you’re hurting and dealing with that. Do you want to talk about it? What does Iris want? What do you want?” Joe asks as he continues to comfort Iris.

Iris was about to respond when Wally and Barry walked in carrying boxes. They both saw Joe hugging Iris and wondered what was wrong. Barry felt like he was intruding on a father daughter moment. He again felt uncomfortable. Wally wondered what was going on with his sister, though he figured it had something to do with that Josh dude. “What’s going on?” Wally asks as he puts down the large box he’s carrying.

Iris turned to look at him and Barry. She wiped her tears away. “Just missing Mom, that’s all.” She says and that’s partly true. Seeing Lorraine and the bond they shared did make her miss her mother. Her mother had been gone for 12 years and she missed her every day. She knew that Wally would understand that. Barry would too. He lost his 9 years ago.

“Me too.” Wally says

Barry put down his box and just looked at the wounded and hurt look on Iris’ face. He certainly knew how she felt. That time of year really made him miss his mother. His father was still alive, but he was rotting in a prison. “Sorry, Iris. I can relate to that.” He says truthfully.

“I’m sorry too, Barry.” She says as she looks at him. She hoped he picked up on the hidden meaning behind her apology.

Barry did pick up on it. He just wondered how much she was sorry about. If she was feeling like she felt after Patty. That’s how he felt, even if he wanted to keep Iris closer to him than ever. He didn’t want to let her go. He didn’t want to feel like Josh felt. He wondered if Iris had the same regrets. Is that what she’s apologizing for? He asked himself that. Is she going to go back on her stance of saying they rushed things? Is she going to go back with Josh? He had no way in knowing. He needed to talk to Iris alone. He figured that wouldn’t happen until much later because they were going to do the family thing now.

“All right. Group hug. This is supposed to be a happy time. It’s Christmas. Come on kids.” Joe says as he waves them over.

Wally and Barry just walked over and nearly buried Iris between them. Iris really wanted to just settle in Barry’s arms. She liked being in his arms. She wished Wally and her father weren’t around so that she could. She’d have to find a way for that to happen. Maybe they’d make an appointment to do that late at night after Joe and Wally were asleep. She needed her Bear at the moment. She loved that dude more than she thought she should. “I can’t breathe!” Iris says and laughs. That group hug lightened the heaviness of what was going on. She needed to put Josh out of her mind and focus on the matters at hand. She had a tree to decorate.

The guys pulled away and laughed. “We’ll be back. We have more boxes to get.” Wally says and he and Barry are back off to the basement.

Iris started looking through the boxes while Joe just quietly observed her. “I know you just said that to get Wally to back off. You need to talk about your feelings, Iris.”
“I really do miss Mom though, Dad. Seeing Lorraine made me realize just how much I miss having a mother. You’re great and a wonderful father, but I need my mother. I know she’s gone and never coming back, but I still long for her. I have Linda, but she’s more like my sister. Sometimes I just need to bond with a female that isn’t my friend or my age.”

“I know baby girl. I know I can’t take your mother’s place. A girl does need her mother. Wally still had me and I’m sorry you didn’t have that.”

“Thanks, Dad. But it’s not your fault I didn’t have my mother. I did have the best father I could ever ask for. I pray my children have that.”

“Oh, they will.” Joe says. “The guy you marry has to be approved by me. I’m assuming Wally too.”

Iris laughed. “I feel sorry for the guy that has to put up with Wally.” She says.

Wally and Barry came in moments later with more boxes. The irony of Barry walking in as soon as Iris said that wasn’t lost on Iris or Joe. Iris pushed that away for all their sakes. She pushed it away even if she could see herself being Iris West-Allen.

“I heard my name.” Wally says as he puts his box down.

“You heard your name because I was talking about you.” Iris says smartly and walks over to the box marked lights and opened it.

“Why were you talking about me?”

“Because you make it so easy.” Iris started sorting out the lights and started to plug them in to see if they were still working. “Don’t think I don’t know that these aren’t all the decorations. Where are the outside ones?”

“I was hoping you wouldn’t notice that.” Wally says.

Joe looked at him like he was crazy. “You really thought she wouldn’t notice?”

“I was hoping she wouldn’t. I’m so not in the mood to hang up lights outside.”

“I suggest you get in the mood.” Iris says smartly.

“We should make you go outside on a ladder and get on the roof and hang up Christmas lights.” Wally says just as smartly.

Iris laughed. “This is one of the great times in my life where I’m glad I don’t have a penis. That’s all on you, Rudolph.”

“What does not having a penis have to do with this?” Wally asks.

Iris laughed. “It has everything to do with it. Hanging up Christmas lights is a manly thing to do. Plus you have extra help this year.” She glanced in Barry’s direction at that statement.

“What?”

“You have Bartholomew to help you.”

“What did I do to get called Bartholomew?” Barry asks.
“You came home with Rudolph.” Iris says in a playfully sarcastic tone.

“I’m starting to resent the names you call us.” Wally says.

“I agree. I say we come up with a name for her. How about Petunia?” Barry offers.

Iris scoffed in disgust. “Petunia? That’s an awful name!”

“Petunia it is.” Wally says.

Joe laughed out loud at that. He loved watching the exchange between his son and daughter and the new kid Barry. Barry just seemed to fit right into their family. Of course he and Wally got along because they were friends and roommates, but he and Iris got along great as well. The funny banter between them was what most people would call puppy love. It was noticeable that they were attracted to each other. But to him it seemed like more. It’s like Iris and Barry were like different sides to the same coin. They got along like they had known each other forever. They also bickered like a couple that had been together forever. Joe started thinking that he wouldn’t have a problem with Iris and Barry at all. Even if his son did. He didn’t want to tell Iris that and push her because of what she just said, but it was just a thought. Not just a thought. He really felt like Barry and Iris would be perfect together.

“That’s not fair. I call you guys by your legal names. My name is Iris and not interchangeable with the likes of another flower name. An ugly one at that.”

“Naw, we’re gonna call you Petunia. You started this. Just remember that.” Wally says.

“I blame you.” She says as she looks at Barry. She rolled her eyes for good measure.

Barry scoffed and looked at Wally. “Did you know that petunias can tolerate relatively harsh conditions and hot climates?”

“Harsh conditions? Yeah, that’s the perfect name for her.” Wally says.

Iris just looked at them and smiled. “You two are so cute.”

“What do you have planned?” Wally asks as he picks up on the tone in Iris’ voice.

Iris giggled. “Oh, nothing. Who wants egg nog?” She asks.

“I’ll take some.” Barry says.

“Great!” Iris chirps enthusiastically.

“I don’t think you should, Barry.” Wally says.

Iris looked around the room, then stopped on Wally. “What are you trying to imply?”

“I just think Barry and me shouldn’t drink anything you offer us right now.”

“Do you really think I’d put something in the egg nog? Really, Wallace?”

Wally playfully thought about it. “No, I know you wouldn’t do that.”

“Of course I wouldn’t. I’d get you two back in another way.” She says and then walks off to the kitchen.
The second she was in the kitchen, she pulled out her phone. She needed to send out the sister symbol to Linda. She wanted to talk, but a text would suffice. She didn’t need anyone to eavesdrop.

*Houston, we have a problem.*

Linda replied moments later.

**What kind of problem?**

*Level 9.*

**Oh God. What happened? Did Wally catch you and Barry?**

*No. But we ran into Josh and his mother when we were getting the tree. Barry was there.*

**What?!**

*Yes.*

**What happened?**

*Josh told me that he made a mistake in telling me not to wait for him. Barry looked crushed. Feelings I didn’t know I had came rushing back. I tried to pull him off to the side, but his mother came up. She laid it on thick about missing me and me never visiting her anymore. Plus the daughter stuff. He kissed me on my forehead and told me he’d talk to me later.*

**Oh shit Iris.**

*I know. Do you have any idea how awkward it was standing in front of two guys I slept with, my first and my last, in front of my father? And Wally.*

**I can only imagine. What are you going to do?**

*Get drunk and not deal with it. I’m about to make egg nog. That’ll be my excuse for being wasted.*

**Iris, you can’t just avoid this.**

*I know I can’t.*

**Do you still have feelings for Josh?**

*Yes and no. He was my first. You know how I felt about him. I had to force myself to get over him. And I did. Now he’s back and I’m just confused.*

**Tell me what to do, Lin.**

*I can’t.*

**I feel your pain. I get it. It would be easier with Josh because he isn’t Wally’s friend. But he’s in the army. He’ll be gone a lot unless you go wherever he goes. I know you don’t want to leave your family. Then you have Barry whom you’re in love with but he’s Wally’s friend and you don’t want to mess that up or you and Wally. I don’t envy you right now.**

*I know. Everything you said is true. I’ll call you later. I need time to think.*
Ok.

Iris put her phone away and got lost in thought thinking of how messy things were.

Once Iris was gone, Joe looked at Wally and Barry. He just laughed. “I really miss this.”

Wally knew exactly what he was referring to. He missed being home as well. “Yeah, me too.”

Barry couldn’t relate, but he loved being there. “I’m having a much better time here than I would if I was staying with my relatives. Thanks.” He offers sincerely.

“You’re welcome. But I told you that you would love it here.” Wally says.

“Yeah, you did.”

“Have I ever steered you wrong?” Wally asks.

“Yeah, you did. Remember Patty? You basically tried to force me to have something with her.”

“Hey, I was just looking out for you like a big brother would. I’ll pick a much different girl next time.”

“Next time? No thanks.” Barry counters sarcastically.

“This is the thanks I get for saving you from your relatives.”

“You bringing me home with you was awesome, because I’d be miserable there. But I don’t need to be set up.”

“Barry, you are always welcome here. You’re a good kid. If you decide that you don’t want to go home during the summer, you can stay here. I’m not trying to keep you from your family, but you are now a part of this one.” Joe says.

“Thanks, Joe.” Barry says.

“You’re not going to cry are you?” Wally asks playfully.

“No, I’m not going to cry.” Barry says though he really wanted to. He seriously loved that family. The West’s were awesome people and a great family and he was proud to be a new member of it. He felt like he belonged with them. They weren’t his blood. Hell they weren’t even the same race as him, but they were his family. He thought back to the conversation he had with Iris about them inventing a reason for him to have to stay with them. They didn’t even have to do that now. He and Iris were going to last. No matter what. He loved her and couldn’t lose her. His life wouldn’t be right or complete without her in it.

“I don’t know Barry. I see tears.” Wally jokes.

“You two really act like brothers.” Joe says.

“I always wanted a brother. I guess I have one now.”

“I wanted a brother too. I got stuck with Iris.” Wally jokes.

“You know you can’t live without your sister.” Joe reminds Wally.

“She’s alright.”
“You two act like brothers and Iris and Linda act like sisters. I started out with 2 kids, now I have 4.” Joe says.

“They really do act like sisters. They never fight though. I don’t think they’ve ever been mad at each other.” Wally says.

“I don’t think so either. Aren’t you glad you have a girlfriend your family actually likes and likes as well?” Joe asks.

“Yeah, I am. I already told Iris that I have to approve of the guy she gets with. I think Josh is a pretty good dude.” Wally says.

Barry felt his heart sink at that. Josh was Wally approved as well. He knew he was doomed. His friendship with Wally wouldn’t survive. And while he loved Wally like a brother and considered him his best friend, he’d choose Iris over him. He had to. He just didn’t want there to be any tension between Wally and Iris. This was a messy situation.

Joe watched as Barry tried to hide how uncomfortable he was at Wally’s statement. He understood why he felt that way. The boy had it bad. Joe was trying to drop hints to Wally, but figures the whole Eddie thing has ruined his perception of his friends dating his sister. Joe could already see that Barry and Eddie were two totally different dudes. He had to admit that Josh was a good kid too. But his opinion shouldn’t matter. Neither should Wally’s. Iris had the right to choose which guy she wanted to be with. Joe was ready to respond when Iris walked in with a tray of glasses.

“Uh, these ornaments are not gonna hang themselves.” She says with a smile. She handed Barry a glass first. “Grandma Esther’s recipe. Light on the bourbon.”

“I always loved her definition of light.” Joe says and takes a sip. The light laughter was broken up by Joe’s cell ringing. “Detective West.” He says when he answers.

Iris and Wally looked at each other. They knew it wouldn’t take long for him to get called in.

“And the Christmas tradition continues.” Joe adds. “Sorry kids, I need to run to the station. Make sure there’s some nog left for me when I get back.”

“No promises.” Wally says.

Joe left the house and left them alone in relative silence. Iris wished that Wally either wasn’t there or that Linda was there too. She had a bad feeling about things. She just drank her egg nog then started to get the tree lights together. She did that in silence while Barry and Wally just pretty much watched her.

Wally was itching to say something. Barry was too, but he couldn’t say it in front of Wally.

Iris felt their eyes boring into her and she honestly couldn’t take it anymore. “What?” She asks Wally rather harshly.

“Wally, I really don’t feel like playing this game with you. Just say what’s on your mind.”
“Should I leave?” Barry asks.

“No. You don’t have to.” Wally says.

“Spit it out, Wallace.” Iris says tautly.

“That Josh dude.” Is all Wally says.

And here it is. Shit. Shitshitfuckshitfuckfuck. Iris thought to herself. *Fuck it. If he wants to know, then I’ll tell him.* “What about him?”

“You slept with that dude, didn’t you?” Wally asks.

Barry was extremely uncomfortable. He thought he already knew the answer, but it still made him uneasy. He knew Iris wasn’t a virgin, and that wasn’t a big or even a small deal to him. But seeing the dude ruffled his feathers.

“What?” Iris says just to fuck with Wally.

“I asked you if you slept with that dude.”

“Why?” She asks as she looks at him. She wasn’t sure if she should say the answer in front of Barry.

“I’d just like to know. So I won’t feel like I’m losing my mind.”

“Why would you feel like you’re losing your mind, Wally?”

“Because that guy literally fucked you with his eyes right in front of me. You only look at a girl like that if you slept with her.” Wally adds.

Barry was about to start shaking in his boots. He wondered if he looked at Iris like that. He wondered if Wally would pick up on it.

Iris just deadpanned Wally. She subtly looked at Barry and saw him coming undone. “What?”

“Iris. Stop avoiding the question. I know it’s none of my business—“

“You’re right. It isn’t any of your business.” Iris says smartly after she interrupts him.

“I know. I still want to know. You were all for telling me about not being a virgin and going over some guys house to ‘Netflix and chill’, but you don’t want to answer this. So I believe you did.” Wally says. He’s really only saying it to mess with her.

“Why do we have to discuss this though? Can we talk about your sex life?” Iris asks.

“Sure. What do you want to know?”

“Nothing. Just like you shouldn’t want to know about mine.”

“Do you see how defensive she’s getting about this, Barry?”

“I wouldn’t say she’s defensive.” Barry says. He figured Iris was avoiding answering Wally because of him.

“Thanks, Barry.” Iris says.
“Whose side are you on?” Wally asks Barry.

“He doesn’t have to take sides about this.”

“I’ll ask Linda. I bet she knows.” Wally says.

“Oh, for the love of God! Dammit Wally. You are a pain in the ass.” Iris says.

“I am. We all know that. I’ve been a pain in the ass your whole life and that’s not changing. I’m not letting this go. I’ll just ask you again in front of Dad.” Wally says and gives Iris that smile to let her know he was just getting started with his asshole tendencies.

Fine. He wants to know, I’ll let him know. Barry already knows I wasn’t a virgin. Oh well. “Fine, Wally. Yes, I did. He was my first. Is that what you wanted to hear?”

“I knew it. I knew you did. The way he looked at you.” Wally says. “I knew it.”

Barry knew it too. And while he didn’t care about that, he wondered how Iris felt about the guy. He needed to know if he was going to get his heart broken.

“Now you’re just being dramatic. He didn’t fuck me with his eyes like you’re suggesting.”

“Yes, he did.”

“Guess what else he did? He taught me how to-“ Iris begins but Wally cuts her off this time.

“Stop! I don’t even want to hear that.” Wally says.

“Why not, Wallace?” Iris asks as she smiles. She knew she had gotten his ass back for his bullshit. She could say more. She and Barry already became as close as possible. He knew almost the same stuff Josh knew.

“Because I don’t want to have to go kill that dude.”

“You are ridiculous. I don’t think you’ll just be able to kill him. He’s in the army. You two are probably exactly the same height. I think he can take you. No, I know he can.” Iris teases.

“I don’t care if he’s in the army. I can still kill him.”

“Kill him for what? Because he had sex with me? He didn’t force me to do anything with him. I wanted to. He’s a good guy.”

“I know he is. I approve. I think you should get back with him. It’s obvious that’s what he wants.” Wally says.

“What?” Iris asks.

Great. Just great. Wally really does approve as well. This is just great. He loved Iris and would never get Wally’s approval for that. If he didn’t already hate Josh’s guts, he did now.

“I’m assuming he didn’t say he told you not to wait for him and that that was a mistake for nothing. Am I right? I think you would still be with him if he hadn’t said that.”

Goddammit Wally! You’re talking too much! Iris thought, though Barry was already there to hear it. He probably thought the same thing. She didn’t want to face that truth. “Josh and I are over and have been for over 2 years.”
“But you guys didn’t end on bad terms. You can get back with him. At least I know you’ll be with a good guy. I remember Josh from school. While we’re not friends, I can see him being my brother in law.”

Shit, Barry thought.

Shit! Iris thought as well.

“You don’t even know Josh though. Who’s to say being in the army hasn’t changed him? You have no idea what he may have seen.”

“True. But I think he’s a good guy. Dad even likes him. You still like him.”

“I didn’t say that.” Iris says as she subtly tries to look at Barry. He looked like he was on the verge of losing it. She felt incredibly sorry for him. Should I have said, No, I don’t? She asked herself.

“You don’t have to. I saw the way you looked at him. Plus he was your first. You never forget your first.” Wally adds.

Shitshitshitfuckfuckshitfuckdamn. Iris thought. Wally really needed to shut his big mouth. “Can we change the subject?” Iris asks.

Wally ignored her. “His mother said she still holds out hope you’ll be her daughter in law one day.”

“You heard that?” Iris asks.

“Yeah, I heard that.”

“I did too.” Barry says.

“That doesn’t mean anything. I became close to his mother because I missed my own. She’s a great woman. I needed a mother. You still had Dad.” Iris says as she blinks away tears again.

“I’m sorry, Iris. I really am. It’s hard growing up without a mother. Especially for a girl. We had Dad, and you’re a Daddy’s girl, but you still needed a mother. I get that.”

“I get that too. I mean I really get it. I lost my mother and my father. My father is still alive, but he’s gone. Then I have these relatives that think my father is scum. I don’t even have siblings I can relate to. You guys are lucky to have your father and each other. But I feel both of you guys’ pain.” Barry says.

“It’s good to have someone that can relate to what you’re feeling.” Iris says.

“Well, now you have us. I told you I’m your honorary big brother.” Wally says. “My father is claiming you as well.”

“Thanks.” Barry says. He just looked at Iris and the pained expression on her face. His pain felt greater than he thought it would and looked on Iris. She does have an awesome father, and she mentioned not having a mother and being a Daddy’s girl when they talked. It made sense that she longed for a mother. And as much as it hurt him to admit it, Josh was better for her than he was. He was a good guy, Joe and Wally approved, he could tell she still had feelings for him, and he had a mother she could reconnect with that loved her. It broke his heart to admit it. But he loved Iris enough to let her go and have the life and happiness he thought she deserved.

This is not going to work out for me. I have to let her go. Guys like me don’t get the girl. He
thought with much sorrow. He figured he’d save Iris the trouble of giving him that talk and end things the minute they were alone.

Chapter End Notes

I'm picturing Lorraine as CeCe Winans if you need a visual reference.

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed. Reviews are hugs.
Iris felt like she really needed to have a talk with Barry. She didn’t like the way he was acting. She didn’t like it at all. She felt like he was doubting them, doubting her. Sure seeing Josh fucked her up in more ways than one, but he was a part of her past. The only thing they could be was friends from now on. She truly believed that. Though he was her first love and she always would love him, she wasn’t in love with him. She was in love with Barry. She wholeheartedly believed that Barry was sent to her by her mother. Nothing and nobody was going to change that. That became shockingly clear to her. Barry was now a part of her. She couldn’t let him out of her life now. Even if he did look like he was ready to lose it. The boy looked utterly miserable and she hated seeing him look like that. She much preferred him with a smile on his face. He looked to be in agony. She knew he probably thought the worst. Plus her asshole big brother certainly wasn’t making things better. She needed to get that tree decorated, have Wally and Barry put up the decorations outside, and have Wally get lost so that they could talk. She knew he was planning on going back to bed when they were done because of his late night in Atlantic City. As much as she loved her brother, she needed him to get lost.

“Ok, so are you two ready to go outside? I know you said you were tired.” Iris says to Wally.

“No, I’m not really ready to go outside, but what choice do I have?” He replies.

Iris rolled her eyes. “Ok. So you do that, then you can get lost.”

“I love you too, Petunia.” He says as he stands and laughs.

“I blame you.” Iris says as she looks at Barry.

He just shrugged. “I wouldn’t have come up with that name for you if you didn’t insist on calling me Bartholomew.”

“That is your name.”

“Yeah, it is. I just don’t normally go by Bartholomew.”

“Duly noted.” Iris says and smiles. The day had been so heavy for her and she needed to do away with that. It was spoiling her holiday mood.

Barry just kind of awkwardly stood there and stared at her. His internal thoughts would be the death of him. He wasn’t sitting well with the decision he just made. Even though it was killing him, he felt like it was necessary. He had no business falling for Iris in the first place. She was off limits, too different from him, and way out of his league. That didn’t stop him from falling for her. That was impossible. He would have fallen for her in any setting. His stupid feelings just took control. He felt like Iris was embedded into his soul.
Iris just looked at him and tried to communicate with him silently. They needed to talk. Really soon. She had to reassure him that Josh was just her old high school boyfriend and first love, but that was it. Of course she and Josh would have still been together if he hadn’t told her not to wait for him. That hurt her to her core, but she moved on. She deemed it totally natural to have those feelings rush back, but Barry was who she belonged with. She wasn’t going to hurt him. Josh made his bed and he’d have to lie in it. Though she didn’t feel at all good about hurting him, he closed the door on them. Barry wasn’t going to pay for that. He’d have to find a way to live with his decision to send her on her way. He was an awesome guy and would surely meet someone else. She was now with Barry and was going to stay with him.

“Are you ready, Barry? I hope you’re not afraid of heights.”

“Yes, I’m ready and no I’m not afraid of heights.”

“Good.” Is all Wally says before he heads for the door.

Iris watched him walk out the door and immediately turned to Barry. “I’m so, so sorry Bear.”

He shrugged again and tried to keep it together. “Sorry for what?” Though he knew, it was killing him to hear it.

“I know what I’m sorry about. I can see that you’re hurt.” Iris replies.

Barry just shrugged and nervously fidgeted. He shook his head and smiled at her. Looking at Iris always made him smile. That made him feel a little better though he felt like he was dying on the inside. She was apologizing. She was going to let him down easy. She was going to break up with him again. This time it would stick. She was irrational the first time she did so over Patty. But this? This was totally different. He could tell Iris had feelings for Josh. She had already been with him. He was her first. And just like Wally said, you never forget your first. He’d never forget Becky even if he no longer had feelings for her. Moreover, he could see it on Iris’ face. He could feel it. Patty wasn’t at all relevant and never would be, especially when it came to Iris. Patty would never stand a chance when Iris was around. Now Josh, he had clout. He had a special place in Iris’ life and heart, and she his. Their families knew each other. His mother loved Iris. Still held out hope that she would be her daughter in law. She was a substitute mother for Iris. He couldn’t give her that. He could however give Iris more love because he knew that Josh didn’t and couldn’t love Iris more than he did.

“We’ll talk later, ok?”

“Sure.” Barry says and walks off behind Wally.

Iris watched him leave. She could tell he was hurt. She knew Barry well enough to know that he was. He was failing miserably at trying to hide it. It hurt her to see him hurt. Especially when he didn’t need to be. She would always go back to how she felt when Patty was there. That almost tore her apart. She had never pegged herself as territorial, but she was that night. Just the sight of Patty having her hands on him made her sick with jealousy and borderline rage. And Barry wasn’t even interested in her. He had no interest in her but it still hurt like hell to see. She and Josh however had history. She knew it must have really did Barry in to see Josh swing her around and then kiss her on the forehead. She wondered how he felt hearing her say that he was her first and that he was a good guy. She knew Barry didn’t care that she had been with someone before him, but he couldn’t have felt good seeing the guy. They even shook hands. And while there shouldn’t be any animosity or hostility between the two men, it must have felt odd to think about it in hindsight. She still couldn’t help but think about Barry and how it hurt her to see him hurt.
Wally and Barry started sorting through the outside decorations to help kick off the West family's Christmas. Barry was happy to help Wally since he was staying at the house, but he really wasn't in a festive mood at all. This time of year was really not a good time for him. His family was gone and Christmas always proved to be a family centered holiday. Not only had he started hating Christmas when he found out Santa Claus wasn't real, it just painfully reminded him how broken and destroyed his family really was. He came home with Wally and met the love of his life and made this time in his life seem a little brighter. That was short lived because he now felt worse than he did at first. He should have turned down Wally's offer and taken his ass home. He regrets that now. He knew what to expect from that part of his family and could deal accordingly. He didn't know how to handle what was going on in his life at all. He wished that he had someone to talk to about it. It was moments like this that made him realize how much he needed his father. He could call him and talk to him but he needed to see him face to face. He made the mental note to do that. He'd hop on a train and visit Iron Heights. Christmas was coming so it seemed like the perfect time. He just wished that he could actually hug his father. He hadn't had a hug from his father in 9 years and he really needed it. His mother either. It must be why he felt so loved when Joe and when Josh's mother Lorraine hugged him. The love from a parent was totally different and he needed that. He really wished that he could talk to Joe and honestly tell him how he felt but he knew he couldn't do that. So he'd have to settle for a hug from Joe, and heart to heart talk with his father.

He got lost in thinking about that as he and Wally hung Christmas lights. Wally picked up on how quiet and how miles away Barry seemed to be. He thought he knew what was wrong with him, but he didn't want to make assumptions. "You know you can talk to me, right?" Wally says.

Not about this, Barry thought to himself. "Yeah, I know. It's just Iris talking about missing you guys' mother really made me think of mine."

"I don't know how you feel exactly, but I can relate. We both lost our mothers suddenly. That shit is hard on a kid. Anybody, really."

"Yeah, it is. I lost my mother and my father the same day. The last words I heard from my mother was, 'Run, Barry! Run and hide.' I don't think I'll ever forget that as long as I live. She had just tucked me into bed and she was happy."

"I can relate to that a little. Our mother was smiling and happy too. She had just dropped me off at school and told us she loved us. Then she was gone. I still remember how she looked laying in her casket. She looked happy, like she was sleeping. Iris kissed her goodbye before they closed the lid, but I couldn't. We're lucky because we still have our father, but I can understand how you feel. I really can."

"I remember how my mother looked too. My dad couldn't even come to her funeral. Then I had to live with people that hated my father. Sometimes I felt like they hated me too. I hated staying there. It hurt too much to know that people though my dad would do that to my mother." Barry confesses. It honestly felt good to get it out with someone that could somewhat feel his pain. The same when he talked to Iris about it.

"I'm sorry, Barry. I know that must be tough." Wally says.

"I think it's just this time of year that really gets to me. Then my birthday is coming up. My mother always made a big deal about my birthday." Barry replies.

"Well, we'll do something for your birthday when we get back to school. You're turning 21. You've got to party hard." Wally says to pull him and Barry out of the darkness of talking about the deaths of their mothers. Wally didn't really like to talk about that too often, but at least Barry could
sympathize with him. Most folks just offered kind words, but didn’t really know how he felt.

"What do you mean by 'party hard'?"

"You'll see. I partied hard for mine. Maybe we’ll get you a stripper or something.” Wally jokes.

Barry looked horrified when he looked at him. A stripper? He didn’t know how to feel about that. He thought he was too much of an awkward nerd to handle a stripper. He’d embarrass himself immensely. He would much rather see Iris strip for him. She could put on her cheerleading uniform and then take it off. He damn sure couldn’t tell Wally that. Would that be considered cheating? He didn’t even know if he and Iris would still be together. He figured they wouldn’t. He didn’t want to lose her. But he knew that she probably wanted to get back with Josh. He loved her enough to want to see her happy even if it wasn’t with him. That didn’t mean it didn’t hurt like hell.

“Uh…A stripper? Why…why would you get me a stripper?” Barry asks coyly.

Wally then looked at Barry like he was insane. “Why wouldn’t you want one?”

“Did you have one?”

“You’re not going to tell Linda, are you?” Wally asks cynically. He didn’t think Barry was the type to do that though.

“Of course I’m not going to tell Linda. You didn’t sleep with the stripper, did you?”

“Of course not. I would never do something that gross. I would never cheat on Linda. Sometimes I wish I knew what it was like to be with other women. She wasn’t my first, but she’s the only woman I can see myself being with. She’s the only one I’ve been with since I was 16.” Wally confessed.

“She wasn’t your first? Really? I thought you guys have been together since you were like 12.” Barry exaggerates.

“No, since I was 15. I may have slept with someone before I got with Linda. I know I was young, but that’s the only thing that was on my mind at 15. A couple of my friends had sex before that.”

“Wow. I can’t really pass judgement because I was almost 17. I know you thought I was a virgin still.” Barry adds derisively as he deadpans Wally.

“Hey! I’m sorry. It’s not like I didn’t think you couldn’t, I just thought you didn’t.” Wally adds.

“I guess I can say thanks. You don’t think I’m a total lost cause.”

“I never thought that. I just told you to lose the sweaters. You see how interested Patty was because you weren’t wearing one.” Wally points out.

“You are not allowed to bring up my sweaters again.” Barry states with finality.

“As long as you admit that I was right.” Wally counters.

“Fine. But I did want to talk to you about something.”

“Shoot.”

“It’s about Patty.” Barry says and gives Wally a sheepish expression.
“Patty? What about her?”

“I think I changed my mind about her. Maybe I shot her down too fast.” Barry says. He honestly couldn’t believe he was even saying that. He started thinking that if he said it out loud, he’d really start to feel it.

Wally looked at Barry and the less than enthusiastic look on his face. He wondered what exactly was up with him. It was clear that his face and body language didn’t match the words coming out of his mouth at all. “Really?” Wally asks with much cynicism.

“Yeah.” Barry says and swallows. He hoped that bile wouldn’t rise from his stomach. He honestly wasn’t trying to feel that bad about it, but he guessed that maybe his body was ignoring what his mouth was saying.

“Why? What changed?”

Iris’ ex came back and he’s better for her than I am so to save face I’m going to break up with her and try to start something with Patty though I really don’t want to. Barry just shrugged. “I guess I just thought about how she was interested in me. I’m not really used to having girls that in to me. Maybe I should give it another shot with her. She’s kind of adorable.”

“Does this have anything to do with Iris?” Wally inquires. He knows that it does, he just wants to hear what Barry is going to say.

Barry instantly becomes nervous. “Iris? Why would that have anything to do with Iris?” He asks incredulously.

“I’m guessing it had to do with what went on between you two, then seeing her with her ex. Now you’re somehow making this statement with attempting to move on with Patty.”

Barry just stared at Wally for a moment. He was right. He should have done a better job of trying to sell being interested in Patty. “I like Patty.” Barry lies. He hoped with all his might that he sounded convincing.

Wally looked at Barry closely. He could tell he was lying. “No you don’t.”

“Well, maybe I don’t. But I could. I guess.” Barry says and shrugs again. He added a smile for good measure.

“Barry, I think you should go ahead and leave that alone. You’re not the kind of guy to use a girl to get over another one. I was trying to help you out by inviting her here, but I was wrong. Just let it go. You’ll meet a great girl. You don’t have to force yourself to like Patty. Just lose the sweaters when we get back to school. You’ll have chicks falling over you.” Wally says and gives Barry a friendly pat on the back.

“I thought I told you not to mention my sweaters anymore. When we get back to school, I’m telling everyone your name is really Rudolph. Wait ‘til the guys hear that.”

“I’m going to kill Iris for letting that out. Just like I’ll kill you if you let that out. As your team captain, I’d have to make your life miserable.”

“Miserable how?”

“Tell the team my name is really Rudolph and you’ll see.” Walls adds as he finishes with the last of the lights he’s holding. “I need a break.”
“Yeah, me too. It’s getting a little cold out here.” Barry says just as Joe pulls up. He’s glad that Wally has talked him down from the Patty fence. He really didn’t want to ask her out or try to force something to happen with her. But he knew he was destined to be miserable until he went back to school. Surely Iris would spend all her time with Josh depending on how long he’s staying home. He’d probably have to see them around the house. He knew he was going to hate every fucking second of that. He was hoping that Wally would spend more time with Linda away from the house so that he could stay cooped up in his room. He was literally stuck there for about 3 weeks. He hoped that Iris would just spend her time with Josh at his house. Hopefully, she wouldn’t be that cruel to parade Josh around in front of him. He was starting to resent Josh more and more. If he didn’t love Iris, he’d resent her too. Resent her for breaking his heart. He knew she still had feelings for Josh. He was her first. They had history; something that he didn’t have with her. He had slept with her, but so had Josh. He didn’t have a leg to stand on. He did believe Iris to her word when she said she loved him, but he had a feeling that she loved Josh more. He just had no way of winning in this situation. Josh just had to bring his ass home for the holidays and run into Iris. He could have stayed in Germany and Barry never would have known he existed. The dude literally ruined it all. But Barry started thinking that was unfair to him. He should be able to be more confident in their relationship even if he wasn’t in another country. He just didn’t have that kind of power. Everything and everyone he loved and held near and dear to his heart left him. His mother, his father, now Iris. The love he had for his parents was of course different, but he has never loved anyone as much as he loved her. He’d always love Iris. Always. Which is why he couldn’t really blame Josh for the way he felt. He was essentially him. The only difference was Barry was going to feel the pain and longing that Josh now felt. Well, not for long. Iris would surely give him the best Christmas gift he could receive besides being able to come home to his family. It left an extremely bitter taste in Barry’s mouth.

“It is. Plus I’m still tired. I think I got 4 hours of sleep. I’ll be dead to the world in a few hours.” Wally says as he makes his way down the ladder with Barry following just as Joe is getting out his car.

Joe was deeply impressed with the progress the guys made. He was glad that they got that far and he wouldn’t have to help. He’d keep that piece of info to himself. “Hey guys. You two did a good job. Did Iris come out here and yell at you?”

“Actually, no. I guess it was easier for me to get it done since I had Barry’s help.”

“Barry, Patty told me to tell you to give her a call.” Joe says with a straight face. He watched as a wave of emotions covered Barry’s. He didn’t know the kids’ emotions that well, but it looked to be one of annoyance, with underlying tones of guilt. He then tried to cover it up with a smile.

“Really?” He asks almost morosely.

“No, but I can see just how excited you’d be about it if she did.” Joe says and laughs.

Wally joined in. “You missed him telling me that he wanted to give it a second chance with her. I believed that just as much as you just did.”

“Ok, ok. You two have made your point. Patty and I just don’t work. I really don’t understand what’s wrong with me. I should be interested in her, but I’m not. I mean, she’s adorable. But…”

“She’s not Iris.” Joe says and deadpans Barry. He didn’t even care how Wally felt about that. Anyone with eyes could see how bad he has it for Iris.

Barry again gets nervous. “Anyone can see she’s not Iris. What does that have to do with anything?”
Joe just ignored Barry and looked at Wally. They both just went into the house without a word. Barry slowly followed behind them. He needed to get a lot better at faking it until he was out of that house.

Iris felt like she was thinking way too much. She needed to lose herself in decorating the tree. That always soothed her because of how much she loved Christmas. It really was the most wonderful time of the year. She loved everything about Christmas even if it hurt her terribly that her mother wasn’t there to celebrate with them. Seeing Lorraine really made her think of that. While she didn’t want to rekindle things with Josh, she still wanted a relationship with his mother. It really dawned on her just how much she missed the woman. Sometimes she used to sit and wish that her father would remarry. He still wore his wedding band and Iris had her mother’s. She knew if he moved on, it wouldn’t be like he was forgetting about her, but sometimes she just wanted another female in the house. Grandma Esther filled that void while she stayed at the house for a while. Then she died when Iris was 11 and Wally 13. They didn’t have any aunts, so she was missing having a mother figure. She pretty much latched on to Lorraine. Now she couldn’t wait to spend time with her. Iris just hoped that she wouldn’t go into dangerous territory and try to get her with Josh again. They were over and she hoped that Lorraine and Josh understood that perfectly for what it was. She didn’t want to lose them both forever, but she had moved on as far as romance was concerned. She hoped that neither one of them would hold it against her. She again got lost in thinking when her phone went off. She had many friends she hadn’t even thought of talking to since she came home. Being with Barry made her forget things like that. She turned right into one of those girls that gets so enveloped with her boyfriend that she forgets about her friends. She never thought she’d be that type, but it happened. Her Bear had that kind of effect on her. She wanted to spend all her waking moments with him. She wanted him to sleep in her room as well. That fucking Wally put a damper on that.

Iris answered her phone without checking to see who it was. “Hello?”

“Iris? It’s Lorraine.”

“Hi, Lorraine! Are you already eager for us to get together?” Iris asks.

“Yes. I want you and your family to come over for Sunday dinner. I’m not taking no for an answer. It’s kind of like a Welcome Home thing for Josh.”

_Shit._ Iris thought. She invited the family too. How would that go over? “Um, well you know we have a house guest. We can’t just leave him here.”

“I know you can’t. He’s invited too. I still want us to have our time together as well. Just us girls. I miss you.” Lorraine says.

“Ok. I miss you too. Do you want me to bring anything?” Iris asks just because, though she knows Lorraine won’t hear of it.

“Absolutely not. You know better than that. Just bring your lovely selves. Be here at 5.”

“Will do.” Iris says just as Barry, Joe, and Wally walk into the house. She ended her call and just looked up at the 3 men she loved dearly. It felt weird as hell earlier when she was standing there with them and Josh too. This didn’t feel so weird though she and Barry had shit they had to work
out. “You guys finished with the decorations?”

“Almost. We needed a break. We’ll finish and then I’m going to take a long nap.”

“Negative, big brother. We were just invited to dinner.” Iris says. She hoped Barry didn’t think the wrong thing.

“Invited to dinner where?” Wally asks.

“Lorraine just called and invited us to a Welcome Home dinner for Josh. I’m happy that saves me from having to cook tonight.”

The three men walked further into the house. She saw the look on Barry’s face and again did not like it. He was thinking the worst. She had to nip that in the bud before he did something crazy like want to leave and go home or even worse, break up with her.

“All of us are invited?” Barry asks. He doesn’t like that idea at all. He didn’t want to go over Iris’ ex boyfriend’s house. He didn’t want to be around that dude at all. Not one fucking bit.

“Yes.” Iris says and smiles. She knew Barry was uncomfortable, but there wasn’t a thing she could do about that until they got alone.

“Cool. As long as she’s a great cook, I’m there.” Wally says.

“She is. She’s a better cook than I am, actually.”

“That’s probably only because she has more experience. Grandma Esther taught you well.”

“Thanks, Dad. So, what do you guys think about the tree? Are there awards for tree trimming because this is award worthy?”

“It looks great. What time is this dinner?” Joe asks.

“She wants us there at 5. Plenty of time for us to finish with the decorations and then head over.”

“Great. Did you kids leave me some nog?” Joe asks. He glanced over at Barry and wondered how he was taking the news of having dinner with Iris’ ex. He felt sorry for the kid. He was a wear his heart on his sleeve kind of guy, and deeply into his feelings for his daughter.

“Of course we did. I can always make more. You’re gonna have to stock up on the bourbon though.” Iris says and gives Joe a huge grin.

“You aren’t even old enough to drink, young lady.” Joe says as he waves his finger at Iris. He then takes off his jacket and walks over to the tree. He just started grabbing decorations from the box and adding them to the tree.

Iris scoffed and made a face at him. “Oh, come on Dad. I’ll be 21 before you know it. I just can’t legally buy alcohol and get drunk.”

“Still.” Is all Joe says.

“Wally started drinking way before he was 21. Didn’t you, Wally?”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about Iris.”

“You both think I’m an idiot.” Joe states.
“We do not.” Iris and Wally counter simultaneously.

“I think you do. Remember, your dear old dad is Central City’s best detective. I know all about both of your fake id’s.” Joe offers as his own counter to his stunned children.

“Come on Barry, let’s finish outside.” Wally says and darts back out the door. Barry just laughed and shook his head and followed him.

Joe was glad to now have that alone time to talk with Iris again. He could see that she had a lot on her mind. He wanted to be there for her like he felt like he’d been lacking in the past. It made him feel like he wasn’t as good a father as he wanted to be. His kids meant more to him than anything, and seeing his baby girl hurt, hurt him. “So, we’re going to Josh’s house.” Joe starts and lets it hang.

“Yeah. It’ll be nice to spend time with the Miller’s.”

“Is that all?”

“Yes, Dad.” Iris replies.

Joe looked at her doubtingly. “Then why do you look like you’ve got a lot on your mind?”

“Because I do.”

“And what’s that?”

“Josh told me that he wished he hadn’t told me not to wait for him. That hurt me when he told me not to wait, but I’m over that now. I’m not glad that he told me that, but I don’t want to go backwards. Now I feel like I’ll have to hurt him. I care about him and don’t want to do that. I think it’s just better if we keep things the way they are. I’m figuring out a way to tell him that and not be the bad guy.” Iris says as she finally looks up at her father.

“Tell him exactly what you just told me. He’s a good, level headed guy. He should understand that you’ve moved on. Moving on doesn’t make you a bad person, Iris.”

“I know. I just don’t like hurting people I care about. Lorraine said she still hopes I’ll be her daughter in law one day. I love her like a mother, but Josh and I aren’t getting married like she wants.”

“Lorraine will have to get over it. I’m sure Josh can find someone else to be crazy about. He’ll never find someone as amazing as you are, but he will. That is if you’re truly over him.”

Iris only thought about it for a few seconds. She was. She still loved Josh and always would, but it wasn’t romantic love anymore. It was just familial and old love. He was her first love. He’d always be special to her, but he wasn’t the guy she was supposed to end up with. That was Barry. She thinks seeing Josh really made her realize that. No matter how short the time she had known Barry, she was going to love him forever. She was going to spend eternity with him. That thought made her happy. Even if Wally never approved, she was going to. Barry was her soul mate and no one was changing that. She looked directly at Joe and answered him. “I am. He’s not the one, Dad.”

“I’m glad to hear you say that. I don’t want you to do something because of your loyalty to people. I thought you would get caught all up in how you felt about him. I feared that one day you’d wake up and realize you married the wrong guy. I don’t want that kind of life for you. Or him.”

“Yeah, we both deserve to meet someone amazing.”
“Speaking of meeting someone amazing, Wally told me Barry talked to him and decided to give it another go with Patty. I think they make a cute couple.” Joe says and waits for Iris’ reaction.

She revolted from the news. Her heart sank. She felt like she’d been slapped. She tried to keep it together, but it was no use. She was hurt and angry and confused. All in that order. “What?”

Joe kept his poker face on. He hated doing this to his daughter, but he had to. “Yeah. That’s what they told me when I pulled up after I told Barry that Patty asked me to tell him to call her. He says he jumped the gun in shooting her down. He said he’s going to give her a call. I told him he can borrow my car if he wants to take her out.”

_Oh my god. He really does like Patty. This can’t be happening._ Her heart thudded loudly in her chest. “Oh my god.” Iris says out loud this time.

“Iris? Is something wrong?” Joe asks.

“No. Nothing’s wrong.” Iris lies. She wanted to scream and throw things. Most importantly, she wanted to cry. Her heart wasn’t cut out for this kind of treatment.

“Good. Because I’m lying.” Joe says.

“What?” Iris asks in confusion.

“I said, I’m lying.”

“Why? What’s the point in making that up?”

“To see you let down your guard. He did the same thing outside. You’ve got feelings for Barry and he’s got feelings for you too. No amount of lying either of you do will change that.”

“So Barry does want to give it a go with Patty?”

“I think he just said that because Josh came back into the picture. Barry doesn’t like Patty like that. No matter how much he tries to force it. He admitted defeat when I told him that he’s not going to want her because she isn’t you.”

“Dad…”

“Don’t ‘Dad’ me. I know what I’m talking about. What did I just say? I’m Central City’s finest detective. I know what I see and what I know. I’ve never seen two people fall in love so fast, but I know you’re meant to be together. Just being in the same room with you two and I see it and feel it. You’re only trying to hide it because of Wally.”

“I don’t want a repeat of Wally and Eddie. I don’t want that for Barry.” Iris says as she wipes a tear away.

“I know, baby. I know. But this is where I’m leaving it in you and Barry’s hands. I’m not going to get in the middle of that with you and Wally. You said you’re tired of people making decisions for you and I’m respecting that and staying out of it from here on out. You get to choose your own destiny. Now let’s finish with this tree.” Joe says as he pecks Iris on the head and finishes with the tree without a word.

Wally and Barry finished the outside decorations while Iris and Joe finished the inside. The house looked especially festive. They all retreated upstairs to get ready for the dinner at the Miller house. Iris looked in her closet and wondered what she should wear. She decided on a navy blue dress.
She got dressed and thought that she looked great for a quiet dinner at Josh’s house. She didn’t want to do something overtly petty and try to make his see what he was missing or play games. This wasn’t the time to play games. If he was just that asshole David from school that she dated, then yes she would do that. But Josh is a totally different guy. He didn’t deserve to be treated that way despite him breaking her heart when he went away. She wasn’t paying him back for that either. They were just at simply different places. She was with Barry now and didn’t want to leave him. Barry didn’t deserve that. If she was single, she would’ve given it much thought. She and Josh were over and it needed to stay that way. Nothing was changing that. Even if Barry was seriously thinking about getting with Patty. She’d just be using Josh like Barry foolishly wanted to do with Patty. She didn’t have a thing against Patty, except for her putting her hands on Barry and trying to rub her face in it, but she didn’t deserve to be a replacement for her. She wondered what the hell Barry was even thinking. Then she had to remember that he’s a 20 year old guy and lots of them are idiots. He was her idiot though. Just like Wally was Linda’s jerky asshole. They picked winners for sure. She imagined them being much older and talking about the crazy things that Barry and Wally still did. She got a kick out of sharing that with her future sister in law. She just giggled to herself and made her way downstairs to wait for everyone. She assumed they were taking one car. They might as well since they were all going to the same place. She just walked over to the tree and inhaled its scent. She would always love the smell of Christmas trees. It reminded her of her childhood, snow, and fresh baked cookies. She just stood there and admired how pretty it turned out and thought about the conversation she had with Joe there a few hours earlier. She liked that he had given her his blessing. She kind of wished that he said he would work on Wally, but she’s glad that’s he’s letting her make her own decisions despite Wally’s butting in. She appreciated that. The dumbest mistake she made was with Eddie, but she learned from that. She and Barry weren’t making a mistake, but she was glad that if it somehow turned out to be, it was her mistake to make. She again got lost in thinking when Joe came downstairs.

“You look really pretty.”

“Thanks Dad. You’re looking pretty swanky yourself. I think you need to go out on the town and find you a date.” Iris says as he way of thanking him for giving her his blessing and giving him her own.

“I haven’t been on a date in a lifetime, Iris.” Joe explains.

“I know you haven’t and I think that’s a shame. Mom won’t mind. I don’t.”

Joe instinctively looked down at his wedding band. He missed his wife more than he could describe. He did get lonely, but he didn’t know what to do with that. “I’m not gonna try and replace your mother.”

“I know you’re not. You can’t. But just because she died doesn’t mean you’re dead too. I don’t know how I’d feel about you moving another woman in here, but you’re perfectly welcome to find someone. Why should you be lonely forever?”

“I’m not lonely.” Joe lies.

“Yes, you are. It’s ok. Loneliness is a part of life sometimes. I’m pretty sure Wally feels how I feel.”

“Did you two discuss this?” Joe wonders.

“No, but I know my brother. You won’t be letting him down. He only wants to stop me from dating.” Iris adds with sarcasm.
“And I told you what to do about that. I’m staying out of it.”

“Staying out of what?” Wally asks as he comes running down the stairs.

“God you’re nosey. I can’t have a conversation without you being in it or wondering what I’m talking about.” Iris says smartly.

“Maybe you should talk in private if you don’t want people infringing on your conversation.”

“We were talking in private, Rudolph. You interrupted that. Where’s Barry?”

“He’s still upstairs getting ready, Petunia.”

“Do not ever call me Petunia. That name is horrible.”

“It fits you. Just embrace it. I don’t even mind you calling me Rudolph anymore.” Wally says as he sticks his tongue out at her and goes to sit on the sofa.

“I hate you sometimes, did you know that?” Iris asks.

“Yup.” Wally replies smartly.

“Yeah, keep that up Wallace. I know how I can get you back. You know too.” She says and smiles at him.

Just then Barry came running down the stairs too. Iris found it funny how he and Wally were always running. She guessed it came from them being runners. Barry seemed to be in a hurry though. He told her that he was always late, so she figured that’s why it seemed like he was rushing. Iris took in what he had on and wanted to laugh at the fact that Barry had on a navy blue sweater and dark blue jeans. They matched again. She hoped he noticed.

Barry stopped abruptly when he completely laid eyes on Iris. He thought she looked really beautiful in the navy blue dress she was wearing. Iris was beautiful even in sweats and a hair bonnet. She was just the most beautiful woman he had ever laid eyes on. Plus they matched again. He wondered if that was a sign. They seemed to be so in tune to each other and it amazed him considering they just met. It’s like they spied on each other throughout life and memorized everything. It also confused him because he and Iris didn’t really have that much in common. But they matched perfectly. It made his heart ache to know that but think about her being with Josh. He figured she got dolled up and beautiful for him. Now he had to go and watch it. He was thinking about pretending to be sick but decided against it. He figured he really would get sick once he watched Iris and Josh together. Just the thought seemed like an obscene gesture in his mind. He hated this shit. He should have went home to his relatives.

“So, is everyone ready to go?” Iris asks. She wanted to get this show on the road. The sooner she got to Josh’s house, the sooner she could talk to him and the sooner she could talk to Barry. She had to wait for Wally and her father to go to bed. It’s not like they haven’t done that before. They really had something to talk about now. She wanted to dispel any notions that she was getting back with Josh. She knew Barry well enough to know that’s what he thought. She could see it in his eyes and on his face. Her human puppy was a sad sap. And she was tired of it. She didn’t like her Bear this way. She didn’t like him this way at all. She liked him when he was confident. She was the cause of him acting like he lost his favorite sweater. She was going to put an end to that once and for all. She couldn’t wait to get this dinner completed and have Barry in her room.

“Yup. I’m starving.” Wally says and stands.
Joe just looked at his three kids and again decided to stay out of it. They were all adults. If Iris and Barry really wanted to be together, then they needed to do that. He actually wanted them to just tell Wally to shove it just to see what would happen. But he knows how upset he was about Eddie. He understood both sides which is why he decided to stay out of it. “Me too. I need a drink.”

“Are we taking one car?” Iris asks as she walks over to the coat rack to grab hers.

“Might as well.” Joe says.

“You sure you don’t want to take yours? You might want to stay behind with Josh.” Wally says. Asshole. Iris thought. Asshole, asshole, asshole. He was doing that shit to be funny. She wanted to choke Wally sometimes. She stared at him and watched the small smirk that formed on his face grow wider. “Actually, I think I will. You guys follow me since I know where it is.”

Barry wanted to knock the shit out of Wally for that one. She had no reason to come home now. He was hating this night more and more. He agreed 100% with Joe about needing a drink. He hoped they didn’t give him any shit about not being 21 because he almost was. He was going to get himself a drink if he had to steal it from Joe. He needed an escape.

Iris practically sprinted to her car even in heels. The guys followed behind her. She waited until she knew they were settled and her car was warm enough before she pulled off. Her tires actually screeched when she did. Joe looked at Wally and Barry and pulled behind her. “What the hell.” Joe says out loud. He had to speed to keep up with her. He hoped that she didn’t get pulled over. The good thing was he was there to get her out of it. He wanted to call her but he didn’t need to distract her.

Barry just watched in amazement as Iris sped towards Josh’s house. He figured she really wanted to see him. This night was getting on his nerves. “Does she always drive like that?” He asks just to have something to say.

“Only when she’s pissed off.” Wally says and shakes his head. He knew exactly why she was pissed off, but it was still hilarious to see. He knew she’d probably give him the silent treatment after tonight. He hoped she didn’t do more than that.

Iris forcefully turned on her radio as she sped to the Miller house. She knew she would get a lecture from Joe about the way she was driving but she didn’t care. She wanted to slap the absolute shit out of Wally. She was going to pay his ass back for that sly remark. He was relentless and she was really resenting his smug ass. If it wasn’t for Barry, she’d put on a show with Josh just to fix him. She pulled up in front of Josh’s house and just said a silent prayer before getting out of her car. She saw Joe’s headlights in her rearview mirror and decided to get out and face the music.

Joe walked up to her car with Wally and Barry following behind him. He stared at Iris for a moment. “You want to tell me what the hell that was?” He asks sternly.

“What?” Iris asks as she feigns confusion.

“What? You drove over here like a bat out of hell. What if you had gotten pulled over?”

“Then my finest in Central City detective father would have gotten me out of it.” Iris says and smiles.

“This isn’t funny, Iris. What the hell were you thinking?”

“I wasn’t thinking. I’m sorry, Dad.” Iris says. She felt like she was 10 years old. Joe just shook his
head and walked off. Wally made a face at her and she gave him the finger. “Fuck you, Rudolph.”

Barry was shocked to say the least. So was Wally. “Wow. You’re giving me the finger and cussing at me. You’re acting like I did something Barry level bad.”

“Leave me out of this.” Barry says. He had his own problems with Iris already. He didn’t need any more.

“Yeah, you leave Barry out of this. This is about me and you, you jerk. I’ve had it with you. No fucking funny business at all tonight and I mean it. Or I’ll just have to tell Linda some things.”

“Tell Linda what?”

“You’ll see if you try me tonight.” Iris says and walks off up the walkway to a waiting Joe.

Barry watched the exchange with wide eyes. He wondered if Iris had any dirt on Wally. He really hoped that she did. It would serve his ass right. “I think you made her mad.” Barry says as he looks at Wally with a straight face.

“Shut up, Barry.” Wally says and walks off too. He was afraid to try Iris. He didn’t know what she would tell Linda. They were extremely close. He kind of had the feeling Linda liked Iris more than she loved him. He didn’t want to ruin anything between them. Iris knew things about him that even Linda didn’t know.

Barry finally got up to the door with the rest of them. He really didn’t want to go into that house. Iris put on a fake smile and rang the doorbell. Lorraine answered it almost immediately. “Welcome West family!” She says and hugs everyone again. Barry again felt loved like when she hugged him earlier. He again fully understood Iris’ attachment to this woman. He never really thought about how much he longed for a mother as well. It made him want to cry. He always missed his mother terribly, but he didn’t really think he needed one. He now sees how wrong he was. He felt drawn to her and it was totally different from how drawn to Iris he was. He realized he envied Josh more than he did in the beginning. He had everything Barry wanted, and truthfully, what he needed. He got lost in thinking about that and realized that Lorraine was talking. “So have a seat and make yourselves at home.” She says and then walks off to what Barry knows is the kitchen.

He watched as Iris sat down in the adjoining chair and Joe did the same. He sat down on the sofa with Wally. He looked around for a moment and realized how inviting the home was. He didn’t feel like he felt in the West house which truly felt like home to him, but he still felt welcomed there despite having never set foot on the premises and his desire not to. His eyes traveled along the table and he saw it: Iris and Josh’s prom picture. He didn’t want to stare at it, but he couldn’t help himself. Iris had on a gorgeous pink dress that she truly looked like an angel in, Josh had on a tux with a pink bow tie that matched Iris’ dress. They were both smiling broadly. They looked in love. Barry wanted to hurl the picture across the room.

Wally looked at what Barry was looking at and grabbed the picture. He looked at it for a moment then turned it towards Iris. “Nice picture.” He says devoid of sarcasm. He really meant it. Iris and Josh looked nice together.

“You’ve seen that picture before.” Iris says.

“Yeah, but it’s not on display at our house.” Wally replies and puts the picture back where it was.

Iris shifted in her seat and crossed her legs. She hated this shit. She saw Barry was staring at that picture. He couldn’t get mad at something that happened before she even knew he existed, but she
knows that having it in his face couldn’t have felt good. “I put them away when we broke up.”

Joe watched the sullen expressions on Iris and Barry’s faces and kept his reaction to it to himself. Barry seemed to really be on the edge. He knew the kid did not want to be in that house and see that picture. He was thinking of a topic for small talk when Josh came down the stairs. His brother John was right behind him. Joe didn’t know him too well, but knew that he had to be a good kid too.

Josh lit up at seeing Iris. He went through introducing his brother to them. He didn’t take his eyes off Iris. She was deeply uncomfortable. He wasn’t looking at her like she was on the menu, but he was staring her down and looking at her like he used to. This was not good.

“Everyone follow me.” Josh says. Iris stood and he grabbed her hand. Barry’s eyes zoomed in on their linked hands and felt his heart sink again.

*I should not have come here,* he thinks to himself.

Iris managed to sneak a look at him. She apologized with her eyes. She silently prayed that Josh didn’t try to kiss her or anything. She figured he wouldn’t try to do that in front of her father and brother. Right now she didn’t care about them. She didn’t want anything to transpire in front of Barry.

The men just followed Josh and Iris into the dining room. Lorraine came out of the kitchen with Big John and greeted everyone. “You guys get to know each other better while I take my girl with me.” Lorraine says and pulls Iris into the kitchen with her.

Iris was happy to have this alone time with her. It easily took the Josh and Barry pressure off. She looked at all the food Lorraine had cooked and just smiled. “I know you have army men in this house, but you’re not feeding an actual army.” She joked.

“Yes, I am. They missed having my cooking. I know you guys probably missed home cooked food too.”

“Yeah. That’s all Wally kept talking about.”

“And all Josh keeps talking about is you.” Lorraine says as she smiles at Iris.

“Really?” Iris asks. It was worse than she thought.

“Yeah. He regrets what he said. He said that time away from everyone he knows gave him a lot of time to think.”

Iris didn’t want her to say anymore. “Lorraine, I met someone.” She says and stares at her. She couldn’t tell her everything, but she wanted to talk about Barry and not give her any false hope. She felt like it was the decent and right thing to do.

Lorraine looked at Iris and the apologetic look on her face, which was also tinged with the glow of love. “Of course you have. You’re a wonderful girl. Of course you met someone.”

“I didn’t have the chance to tell Josh. I don’t want to hurt him.”

“I know you’d never hurt him. It’s not in your spirit to hurt people. He’s going to be disappointed, but it’s his own fault. I told him not to let you go. I told him.” Lorraine says. “I’m guessing it’s serious?”

“Yeah. It is. I love him, Lorraine. It feels weird telling you this when it’s not your son, but I do.”
Iris admits.

“Does he make you happy?”

“Yes.”

“Then, you have every right to tell me about it. You’ll always be my daughter, no matter what happens. You do know that right?”

Iris felt a tear slide down her cheek. “Yes, I know that. I missed you so much. I’m sorry I abandoned you.”

Lorraine gave Iris a hug. “You didn’t abandon me, but I understand why you kept your distance. Just don’t do it again.” She says once they break apart.

“I promise.”

“So, tell me about this guy.” Lorraine says.

“Well, he’s really smart. He’s tall. He plays sports. He’s an only child. We don’t have much in common, but opposites attract right? He’s like the total opposite of me. He’s kind of shy. He’s a huge nerd honestly, but an adorable one. He treats me really well. We talk like we’ve known each other forever. I kind of want to spend forever with him.” Iris decided to leave the fact that he was sitting in the next room to herself. She didn’t want Lorraine to give that away.

“Well, he sounds great. You met him at school I presume?”

“Yeah.” Iris lies. She sure couldn’t tell her she met him in Wally’s bed. She knew how that sounded.

“I won’t say anything in front of Josh until you have the chance to talk to him.”

“Thanks Lorraine. You’re amazing and I love you.”

“You’re amazing and I love you more. You have no idea how much I missed seeing your face. You’ve got a good one.”

Iris giggled. “I missed seeing yours too. I really missed your hugs.”

Lorraine just walked back over to Iris and gave her another one. “You ain’t said nothing but a thing! You know I love to hug!”

In the other room, the men started to chat. There was far less tears and hugging involved. Barry wanted to cry, but felt like it’d be a pansy thing to do. He hated this night. He hated this almost as much as he hated Patty coming to game night. He hated that simply because it made Iris sad and hurt her. That wasn’t his intention. Deep down he knows that it’s not Iris’ intention to hurt him. But the heart wants what the heart wants.

They were all offered beers and Barry wanted to down his. It really wasn’t doing anything for him. He wanted something stronger. He didn’t want to get sloppy drunk. Just enough to pass out for the night. His life was a disaster and hard liquor would help him face that reality. Iris was gone. Not officially, but she was. The reason for that was feet away, smiling like he just hit the lottery. He did because Iris was truly a prize. She was the best thing to happen to him and he was going to lose her. He scoffed and took a sip of his beer.
He started getting courage from some outside place and decided that he wouldn’t give Iris up without a fight. She was worth fighting for. He knew Josh would probably kick his ass, but he’d still try. He wasn’t just going to let him have her, unless that what Iris truly wanted. He hoped that wasn’t what she wanted. His chances of winning when going up against Josh were slim to none, but he considered himself still in the running. He was technically still her boyfriend. He might not be the crowd favorite or the first, but he was the last guy she was with. He knew she loved him. He wasn’t naïve in that. He felt it when he looked at Iris. He didn’t have Wally’s stamp of approval either. He got the feeling that he had it from Joe, though he wasn’t entirely positive about that. Josh had a lot going for him though. More than he had if he was being honest. He had a family and roots. Iris was a family oriented person. Iris didn’t have to hide Josh. But Josh had something working against him. He was in the army and pretty much belonged to them. He had to go where they told him to go. Barry didn’t have that problem. Sure he had his scholarship to SCU, but with his grades he could go anywhere he wanted. And he would follow Iris to the end of the earth. He knew she was staying put in Central City because Joe and Wally were there. Josh had the family there, but he wouldn’t be. He wondered if Iris wanted that life. They never talked about that because they didn’t have a reason to. All he knew was that they were essentially doomed because of Wally. He wished that Wally would pick up and move somewhere with Linda, but he wasn’t doing that. He was sticking by his family too. He just knew he needed to stop making assumptions and talk to Iris. She held the key. He wasn’t giving Josh any more power than he deserved. He wasn’t in control of his life. If he wanted Iris then he’d have to take her. She was the love of Barry’s life and he wasn’t going to let her go easily.

Iris and Lorraine came out of the kitchen with their arms around each other and Barry couldn’t help but get happy at the expression on Iris’ face. He knew she was longing for a mother as well and Lorraine had quite the effect on people. Iris and Lorraine truly did look like mother and daughter. They both had smiles that lit up the room. He understood perfectly why they liked each other so much. Just thinking about Iris and seeing them together instantly put him in a better mood. He hated coming over that house, now he felt alright about it.

“Did you boys all play nicely?” Lorraine asked.

“Of course we did.” Big John says. He was a colonel in the army and was nearing retirement. He made a life out of it. It made him happy that both his sons decided to follow in his footsteps. His father was an army man as well.

“Did you two have a nice talk?” Josh asks almost hopefully as he grinned at Iris.

“Yes, we did. You know I missed my girl.” Lorraine says as she pulls Iris closer to her.

“I missed my girl too.” Josh says and flashed a huge grin again.

Iris put on a fake smile. She felt Lorraine give her a light squeeze and every eye was on her. She really felt Barry’s eyes on her. They needed to get this dinner started. She had half a mind to pull Josh to his room and tell him then, but she didn’t want to make the dinner more awkward. She just needed Josh to shut up. She understood he wanted her back and had no idea she moved on and that his replacement was right in the room, but he needed to shut up.

Lorraine knew that Josh really did miss Iris and had huge regrets about letting her go, but she didn’t want him to make a fool of himself. She would have been all for how he was talking had Iris not told her that she met someone. She wanted to pull him aside too and tell him to let it go, but she’d let Iris do that. “So, are you guy’s hungry? Iris and I are.” Lorraine says.

“Starving.” Wally says. He could tell his sister was uncomfortable. He could tell Barry was too.
“Well, everyone have a seat. I’ll start bringing the food out.” Lorraine offers.

“I’ll help.” Iris states to make a mad dash for it.

“Nonsense. You’re a guest here. Have a seat.” Lorraine says and makes a bee line for the kitchen.

The men that lived there went to chairs. Iris didn’t know where to sit. She wanted to take the safe route and sit next to her father or Wally. She couldn’t sit next to Barry like she desperately wanted to. Sitting next to John seemed like a good option. She didn’t want to sit next to Josh.

But he beat her to it. He pulled out a chair. “Here.” He says. Always a gentleman, but now wasn’t the time for that. She wanted to curse. She couldn’t be rude. She just couldn’t. She walked over to the seat and sat down. She wanted to run and hide. The men all sat down after she was seated. She felt like she was on display. She was seated between Josh and John. Barry was seated directly across from Josh. She didn’t know if it was a blessing or a curse that Wally was directly in front of her. He gave her a comforting smile. Joe did the same. This situation was entirely messy. He was happy when Lorraine started bringing out the food. The sooner they ate, the better. He was almost hoping he’d get a call and have to leave.

Lorraine finally finished with the feast she prepared. He loved how Josh jumped up to pull out Lorraine’s seat and all the men stood to let her sit down. It was like something that was choreographed. Josh was such a good kid, but he wasn’t who Iris wanted. He could tell his baby girl was struggling. So was Barry. He could see that out of the corner of his eye.

They started passing food around and Big John said grace. They started eating and making small talk. Lorraine then asked Barry a question. “So, Barry, tell us about yourself. You’re the newcomer. I’d like to get to know a new member of the West family.”

Barry smiled awkwardly because of his discomfort. “Well, there’s not much to tell really. I go to SCU with Wally. We’re on the track team together and we’re roommates. I don’t have any brothers or sisters, but Wally is my honorary big brother. I’m double majoring in Chemistry and Physics.”


Barry nervously shrugged. “I’m a huge nerd. Can’t you tell?” He says and the guys chuckled. Then it hit Lorraine. She just smiled and glanced over at Iris. Iris took a sip of her drink and she knew. She saw Iris silently plead with her to not rat her out. He was the one.

She just continued to smile at Barry. “There’s nothing wrong with being a nerd. You’ll run the world one day.” She didn’t want to ask too much about his family because she got the feeling there was a story behind that since the West family claimed him.

“That’s amazing, Barry. Have you ever thought about joining the military?” Big John asks. He figured Barry would be a huge asset to them.

“Are you really trying to recruit at dinner, Dad?” John asks.

“He could do great things for us.” Big John says.

“Not necessarily the military, but I’d like to work for the FBI.”

“You run, right? I’d much rather have you with us than the FBI.”

“John.” Lorraine says and smiles.
“Sorry. Force of habit.” He says and goes back to eating. They had more small talk while they ate. Lorraine watched as Barry eyed Josh and Iris. He looked ready to pass out. Lorraine couldn’t wait for their dinner to be over.

“Anyone want dessert?” She asks as she stand once they’re done. She got a chorus of “sure” and “yes”.

Iris made it her mission to get Lorraine alone. She had to. “I’ll help.” Once she and Lorraine were in the kitchen, Lorraine was eyeing her with motherly intent.

“You lied to me, young lady.” Lorraine says.

“I’m sorry. I really am. I didn’t mean to, but I had to.” Iris respected her too much to even insult her intelligence.

“I get it. You could have told me. I’m guessing you’re keeping it a secret from your brother.”

“Yeah. You know how he is.”

“How is that going to work in the long run?” Lorraine asks in concern.

“I don’t know. You could really tell?”

“Yes. When he started talking, it wasn’t hard at all. Then the way he’s looking at you and Josh. I feel horrible for inviting you guys here. We need to end this dinner so you can talk to Josh.”

Iris gave Lorraine a hug. “Thanks. For everything.”

They finished with their dessert and mingled. Lorraine put the brakes on that dinner. Iris was glad she had her in her corner. Josh was practically embedded onto her side the entire night. She hated that he was so eager and she was going to put a damper on that.

Iris squeezed his hand and looked at Josh. “Do you want to take a walk?” She asks. She didn’t want to do it in that house, plus she needed fresh air. She felt like she was about to suffocate.

“Sure.” He says.

“You want us to wait for you?” Joe asks. He would, but he knew she’d get home safely.

“No. I have my car. I’ll drive straight home. I promise.” Iris says and smiles.

Barry felt a sense of dread as he watched her put her coat on while Josh did the same. They left the house. He was ready to go. They said their goodbyes and he was in the backseat of Joe’s car in minutes. He was glad that part of the night was over. He knew exactly how Iris felt at game night and the shit didn’t feel good. It didn’t feel good at all.

Iris and Josh fell into a slow stroll in relative silence. She finally exhaled and stopped walking. “Josh…”

Josh searched her face and knew he was right and so disappointed. “You don’t feel the same way I feel anymore.”

“It’s not really that. I met someone. I tried to tell you earlier. I could’ve called but I felt I owed it to you to do this face to face.”

“I told you that telling you not to wait for me was a mistake, didn’t i? My mother did too.”
“I’m sorry, Josh. I really am. If there were no him, we’d be having a different conversation.”

“Can I ask you a question?”

“Of course.” She says and smiles.

“Don’t take this the wrong way, but is it Barry?”

“What?” She asks.

He stared at her and raised his eyebrow. “Come on, Iris.”

Iris exhaled again. “Yes, it’s Barry. How did you know?”

“Because he looks at you like I do. At first I thought I was imagining it, then I just thought that he liked you. Now I see what I thought was for me but is really for him on your face.”

“Again, I’m sorry. I really am. It just happened.” She wanted to say that it was meant to, but she didn’t need to hurt him further.

“You don’t have any reason to be sorry. You were allowed to move on even if I hate it. I’m the one that’s sorry. I never should have let you go. I’m gonna live to regret it.”

“You’re going to meet someone amazing, Josh. You’re amazing. You know that.”

“Thanks. She won’t be you though, Iris.”

“You’re putting me on a pedestal. Stop it. There are so many amazing women out here. You’ll travel the world and forget all about me.” Iris says.

“Impossible. I’ll always love you. You know that, right?”

“Yeah, I know. I’ll always love you too. We started out as friends.”

“So how does Wally feel about you and his friend?”

Iris laughed despite herself. “He doesn’t know.”

Josh again raised his eyebrow to her. “That’s interesting.”

“Yeah, it is. I don’t want to come between them and Barry doesn’t want to come between us. It’s complicated.”

“Well, if it ever ends, keep me in mind.” Josh says and flashed her that smile that she loved.

“You betcha.” Iris says and gives him a hug. They made the trek back to his house and he opened her car door for her. “Tell your mother I’ll call her.”

“You don’t have to do that, Iris.”

“I want to. I love your mother. I missed her.”

“Will do.” He says and pats the roof of her car. He watched her drive away and again thought about how he’d live to regret letting her get away.

Iris drove home with a heavy heart. She hated hurting Josh, but it had to be done. She didn’t want to hurt Barry. She loved him too much. She texted Wally that she was on her way so that he could
meet her outside. She was instead met with Barry. “Where’s Wally?” She asks as she gets out her
car. They slowly walked up to the house. Iris stopped and looked up at Barry. They were hidden in
an area on the porch where they couldn’t be seen from inside the house. Iris and Wally figured that
trick out years ago.

“He went to bed. Said he was tired and asked me to look out for you.”

“Good. I’m glad he’s gone to bed so that we can talk.” Iris says and smiles at him.

“I know what you’re going to say.” Barry reluctantly says.

“You do?” Iris asks in surprise.

Barry shrugged and looked at her. He put his hands in his pockets. “I think we should end this.” He
says to beat her to the punch. He felt like he had been punched when he said it.

“I knew you were going to say that. I knew you would.”

Barry just looked at her strangely. “I’m giving you the space and freedom you need to get back
with Josh. I’m trying to do the right thing.”

“That’s not the right thing, Barry.”

“It’s not?”

“No, it’s not. I don’t want to get back with Josh. I want to be with you.”

Barry lit up at that. “Really?”

“Yes, really. I just told him that. He figured out that you’re the guy. He thought you just liked me
because of the way you look at me, and thought that the way I look was for him.”

“Really?” Barry says again.

“Yes, really. I want to be with you and only you forever. My mother sent you to me, Barry.”

“My mother sent you to me too. We can’t disappoint them.”

“No, we can’t. They trump Wally.” Iris says.

“Do you know how happy you’ve made me?” He asks with his invisible tail wagging. He felt like
an idiot for even thinking that he and Iris were over. She was the woman he was supposed to
marry. He believed that wholeheartedly.

“I can kind of guess. I know you were hurt and I’m sorry for that. I really am. I’d be lying to you if
I said that seeing Josh didn’t bring back old feelings. But I’m not in love with him anymore. I’m in
love with you and want to be.”

“I really thought you hadn’t gotten over him and wanted to get back with him. It killed me to think
that. I was going to let you be happy with him even if it’s not with me.”

“I’m happy with you though, Bear.”

“I’m happy with you too.”

“Are you sure about that?”
“Of course.”

“Are you sure you don’t still want to give what’s her face another chance? Are you sure there aren’t any other girls out here you’d rather be with?”

Barry wondered how Iris knew about his momentary lapse in judgement. “What other girls?” He asks as he leans down to kiss her.

She pressed her body into his and felt him increase the kiss. He kissed her like he was afraid she’d fade away. She loved that huge dork more than was needed. He made her heart smile. She felt her heart soar from the passion of the kiss. She felt like her feet lifted off the ground.

Iris surrendered completely into the kiss and to him. She gave herself to him wholly even if she was hiding something that would change the way she and Barry felt about each other forever.

Chapter End Notes

For visual references, I'm picturing LeBron James as John, and Idris Elba as Big John.
Blame Tumblr lol.

Thank you for reading.
"That sounds ridiculously cute."

Chapter Summary

Christmas, New Year's, back to school, Wally finds out and a whole lot of stuff before, during, and after.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone. I apologize for the length of this chapter. It's really long and totally rushed and I know some people will hate that, but it is what it is. I did work really hard on this, so please respect that. It wouldn't have been this long, but read the notes at the end (after you've read it of course) and you'll understand why.

During text messages Iris is in Italics, Barry is bold, Linda is underlined, and Felicity is in parentheses.

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoy.

Merry Christmas!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Barry felt like he might be living in a faded dream. He really couldn’t believe that Iris chose him. She had many reasons not to. He did feel like she loved him, but figured that she’d choose the easier route with Josh. Wally and Joe approved, he had a mother that she loved and loved her as well, they had tons of past history, and they were the same race. They wouldn’t have to face the looks and the just all around bullshit that couples in interracial relationships face. Though he loved her decision, he couldn’t help feeling like he needed to really make sure that she was making the right decision and that she really wanted to be with him. He slowly broke the kiss when actually, all he wanted to do was take her up to her bedroom and connect with her on a deeper level. He smiled at her and she smiled back. He just loved looking into her face.

"Are you really sure about this, Iris? You won’t have regrets?" He asks tentatively.

"Yes, I’m really sure about this. Truly. Why wouldn’t I be?"

"Because I had a lot of time to mull over things. I thought about how it might be better for you to be with Josh since he has a mother that you love and you’d have a mother figure in her. Plus what Wally said about you never getting over your first. You have history with him. Your brother and your father approve of him. Plus you won’t get the looks we got when we went out. I thought about what you said when you brought up people preferring to see me with a white woman. I thought about that for you and Josh. It would be easier for both our sakes, even if that’s not what I want and don’t really care what other people think about us. I just wanted to make sure you’re happy. That’s all I’d ever want for you, Iris."

Iris felt her heart thump in her chest again. She really and truly loved this boy. Loved him with
everything in her. He complimented her extremely well. She wouldn’t say he completed her, but they were seriously like a pair of shoes or gloves: much better in a pair. He was willing to sacrifice his own happiness for hers. He loved her too. She felt that all the way down to her bones. Barry was awesome, even if he doubted that. He was perfect for her. “I have never been surer about anything in my life, Barry. I told you that my mother sent you to me. No one will tell me any differently. There’s so many reasons why I know you’re the one for me.”

Barry smiled at that. “I really can’t believe that you seriously chose me over him. It feels good being the chosen one.”

“I will always choose you, Barry. I know that you really love me-“ Iris starts but Barry cuts her off.

“I really do. I loved you before I even knew I was supposed to. The minute I laid eyes on you, I knew. Even when you were about to crack my skull, I knew. I hated Wally for telling me I couldn’t have you, but I can’t ignore that. You were always the choice for me.”

“You were always the choice for me too. At first I thought this was impossible. Us falling in love at first sight. I never believed in that. I thought that was foolish. I just felt drawn to you. Even though you had a rough childhood, you still rose above that. I think it’s a good thing though, Barry.” Iris saw the look on his face and decided to explain. “I think it’s a good thing because it makes you strive towards having what you lost. You want a family and a place to belong. You lost your parents so I know you’ll be an awesome parent one day. You will do everything in your power to make sure we stay connected. This might sound arrogant, but I deserve to have a man like you. I saw that with my parents. My father still wears his ring and is still in love with my mother and she’s been gone for over 10 years. You love me that much. My father wants me to get with a man that will love me like he loves my mother. You’re a loyal guy because you don’t want to go against your friend. Plus you’re selfless. You put my happiness above your own when you make me happy. I love you and it hurt me to see you unhappy and that I was the cause of it. I don’t ever want to hurt you, Bear.”

“I don’t ever want to hurt you either. I felt how you felt game night. I felt like the cause of your pain. I didn’t like seeing you with Josh. Not one bit. It wasn’t even just a jealousy thing, it physically hurt me to see you with him.”

“I know the feeling. Seeing you with Patty messed me up for a bit. But we’re back on track now.” Iris says.

“Yeah, we are.”

“Good. Now I’m going to say this once, and once only. If I have to give you another pep talk about how amazing you are, I’m going to have to hurt you. I like my men confident.” Iris says and smiles widely.

Barry returned her smile. “Confident?”

“Yes. I love that you’re an awkward nerd and huge dork, but you’re not always like that. I need you to own being self-assured.”

“I’m learning. I’ve never been in this position before.”

“You’re in an excellent position, Bear.”

“Speaking of positions…”

Iris giggled. “See, that’s the Bear I know and love.”
“Can we go inside now? I feel like I’m in the mood to ‘Netflix and chill’.” Barry jokes.

Iris let out a satisfied moan. “I like the way you think. Now we need to head in and get everything started.” Barry just walked over and opened the door without a word and let Iris walk in first. Iris instantly got an idea. “Change of plans.” She says and grabs Barry’s hand and walks back out the door. She made sure the door was locked and practically pulled Barry along with her to her car.

“Where are we going?”

“Just a little pit stop.” Iris says as she playfully winks at him. She happily hopped in her car and waited for Barry to catch up to her change in plans. She wanted to do something fun and a bit naughty.

Barry still wasn’t fully clear on what would transpire, but he was eager to go along with it. He got in her car and looked at the excited look on Iris’ face. He already knew her well enough to know that she was up to something. She just pulled off in silence with a mischievous grin on her face. He liked that look. It instantly stimulated him. He just hoped that he wasn’t wrong in reading Iris. He was still trying to learn all her emotions and quirks, so he didn’t know if he was correct in his assumptions. Iris drove in silence while Barry continued to get excited. His excitement was put on hold when he thought about Joe or even Wally discovering that they were gone. “Uh, Iris. Aren’t you worried about them wondering where we are?”

Iris quickly glanced over at him. “No. Not at all. I told you we’re just making a pit stop.” She says and winks and puts her eyes back on the road. They continued to ride along in silence until she stopped at this park. It was pretty secluded and a little dark. The decorated Christmas tree in the middle gave off the only light. Barry thought he liked this idea. “What are we doing here?”

Iris just gave him a look that made his penis twitch. “Get in the backseat.” She pretty much commanded. Barry said nothing as he quickly got out and back in in what seemed like seconds. Iris kicked off her heels and reached in her glove compartment. She hastily slid the condom into her bra. She climbed her petite body into the backseat and straddled Barry’s lap. She loved the look he had on his face. This boy and his face would always do something to her. The way he looked at her made her feel beautiful and incredibly loved. Barry looked at her like she placed each star in the sky. She loved him endlessly for that. She looked at him the same way. He wasn’t who she initially pictured as her dream guy, but Barry, her Bear was it. “I love the way you look at me.” Iris admitted as she grabbed his face and placed her lips against his.

“I love the way you look. I didn’t have a chance to tell you earlier, but you look sensational. It took my breath away when I saw you standing in front of the tree.” He says once he ended the kiss. He looked at her like he never wanted to take his eyes off her. He wished they could stay in that moment forever.

“I love the way you look too. Plus we match. I know you noticed that. We’re an adorable couple.”

“You still think I’m adorable?” Barry asks coyly.

“Of course I still think you’re adorable. You’re actually kinda hot. Especially with this stubble. Don’t shave for a while. I like you scruffy.”

“As you wish. I’ll grow it out some more. I’ll tickle you with it. I haven’t forgotten about that.”

“Ummm, Bear. You. Are. Amazing.” She says as she kisses him. She started to grind in his lap. He seemed to really perk up and come alive beneath her.
He slid his hands up her dress. He stopped at her panties and grazed his fingers along her mound. Her heat and wetness turned him on. He was getting cocky enough to believe that was just for him. He loved Iris inside and out. He slid his other hand up the other side of her dress and started to slide her panties down. Iris quickly shifted her body so that he could remove them freely. He tossed her panties aside as she reached for his pants. She undid the button and zipper before he slightly lifted his body from the seat. Iris had his pants and boxers down to his knees in the blink of an eye. She had his stiff penis in the palm of her hand in an instant. She stroked it for good measure before grabbing the condom and sliding it on. She hunkered down on him and gasped from him entering her. She rode him with sheer and swift determination. They didn’t have much time. She needed this quickie. They would have to sneak those in when they could. She knew she needed to stock up before they went back to school. In a perfect world, they had their own place and could fuck freely whenever they wanted. On the couch, against the fridge, even on the steps. But she had her meddling big brother plus her father to watch out for. Especially her father. She was already getting a little too bold even having sex in that house while he was home. She had never done that before. She knows for a fact that Wally has, but she never did until she met Barry. She snuck and had sex a few times with Josh while Wally was away at school and Joe was working. She knew it was disrespectful, but she couldn’t help herself. At least she wasn’t doing it out in the open or in Joe’s bed or something. She was also an adult and could seriously do as she pleased. She just didn’t want to go too far over the lines of Joe’s boundaries when it came to respecting him as her father.

She put that thought completely out of her mind as she rode Barry feverishly. He met her thrust for thrust and she wished they could have sex in that position always. Since he was so much taller than she is, him seated that way matched them up better. She loved the way his hands gripped her ass as he plowed into her. She couldn’t get enough of her huge dork. He started to massage her clit as they tongue kissed and grinded in the backseat of Iris’ car. The fact that they were outside and could get caught was fascinating. Plus they were outside of that house and they could make as much noise as they wanted without the fear of Joe or Wally hearing them.

Iris started to moan loudly at his ministrations. She told Barry he had magic fingers and he really did. They were so strong and he knew where to touch her to get the best out of it. It’s like he already knew her body like the back of his hand. That really just ascertained to her that they really were meant to be. It was an awesome feeling. Almost as good as it felt for her to start to orgasm from their little romp in her car in the park. Barry moved his hand and grabbed her ass tighter as he felt his own orgasm come on. He pumped into her forcefully and it made him feel like a superhero when she moaned his name loudly against him mouth and went still. He went stiff as he unloaded. He pressed his forehead to hers and kissed her deeply again.

“That was awesome, Bear.” Iris as she climbs off Barry’s lap. She easily helped Barry straighten up the mini mess in her car and climbed into the front seat.

“It was. You’re spoiling me. I don’t know what I’m going to do when we go back to school.”

“We’ll have to have phone sex. And Skype sex.” Iris suggests once Barry makes his way back to the front seat.

“How are we going to have phone and Skype sex when Wally is my roommate?” He asks as he looks over at her.

“Get you a decoy girlfriend or something.”

Barry looked at Iris strangely. “A decoy girlfriend? Are you serious?”

“Yes, I’m serious. Get someone to pretend to be your girlfriend. You don’t have a good female friend at school you can get to do that? As long as you don’t kiss her or anything. How about that
girl Felicity I’ve heard about?”

“How would that work though Iris?”

“Have her pretend to be your girlfriend to ward Wally off. As long as she understands it’s just for pretend. What kind of girl is Felicity? Is she single?”

“Yeah, she has a thing for this guy named Oliver. I wonder if she’d be up to it.” Barry thinks as the wheels start spinning in his head.

“Do you have a way to get in touch with her? I’ll talk to her. I have a way with words. That might get Oliver interested in her.”

“Yes. Ok, say this works. What am I supposed to do with her? I’m not going to kiss her or anything.”

“Just take her on a few play dates while we do our Skype thing.”

“So you want her there when we do that? That’s a little personal, don’t you think?”

“It is, but she doesn’t need to see that. That’ll just be your excuse to want alone time in your room.”

Barry started to laugh and really like Iris’ idea. “You’re an evil genius, you know that?”

“Evil genius? Really?” That sneaky grin formed on her face again.

“Yeah. First you come up with the idea to get us to pretend to hate each other to ward Wally off, now this. I like the lengths you’re going to to preserve our secret relationship. I’ll talk to Felicity though. I might have to buy her a dress or something. If she wasn’t smarter than I am, I’d offer to do her classwork or something for her.”

“She’s smarter than you?” Iris asks in awe.

“Yeah, I guess. She’s like the female version of me. Not as nerdy, but she’s a master of hacking. She can get into anything in seconds.”

“I think I already like Felicity. Wait, what does Felicity look like? She’s blonde haired, blue eyed, pretty and perky right?” Iris asks as the little green monster tries to make an appearance.

“Yeah, she is. But you have nothing to worry about Iris. Not only does she not like me that way, I don’t like her like that. I already have the most gorgeous girlfriend in the world. She’s not a factor or a threat. She’s not you.”

“Flattery gets you everywhere, Mr. Allen.”

“I’ll remember that.”

Iris started her car up and pulled off. She quickly drove back to the house. She parked and looked over at Barry. “If Wally or my Dad asks, I had to drive to find a store because I ran out of tampons and took you with me since it’s so late. Neither one of them will want me to elaborate on that.”

“You’re really using that for all it’s worth, aren’t you?” Barry asks and chuckles.

“Yes. Having a uterus is good thing sometimes. It immediately stops the topic of conversation with them. Anything involving my vagina, really. You see how quickly Wally told me to shut up when I was about to tell him things about Josh. I wasn’t even going to say anything, but I knew he’d stop
me. I wouldn’t do that to you. I want to apologize for even talking about that in front of you.”

“I’m glad you didn’t elaborate, but it’s ok. I knew you were with someone else before me. I don’t think you’re tainted or anything. I wasn’t a virgin either. Can I ask you something off topic?”

“You can ask me anything, Bear.”

“Earlier when you said you were going to tell Linda things, what did you mean? Do you have dirt on Wally?”

“This doesn’t leave this car. Yeah, but the main thing is Linda thinks she was Wally’s first. She wasn’t. She wasn’t even his second. I would never tell her that, I just wanted to make him stew. It’d be nice to get his smug ass back about his sex life when he’s so worried about mine.”

“He kind of told me that Linda wasn’t his first.”

“It’s not really that big of a deal, but he’s kind of ashamed he started having sex so young. The first girl was a little older and she actually had this thing going where she ‘deflowered’ guys. I don’t slut shame, but she was a grade A slut. No kidding. She actually burned a few of the guys. I honestly don’t know if Wally was one of them, but he thinks I know that he was. This all happened before Linda’s family moved here. Terrible story, isn’t it?” Iris asks as she looks over at the look of horror on Barry’s face.

“I’m sorry I asked.” He says and gulps. “I won’t say a word though. You and I have our own secrets to keep.”

“I know. I know you won’t say anything. It is kind of nice to have something on Wally though, isn’t it?”

“Yeah, it is. But you could use that to your advantage though. You do know that, right?”

“Yeah, I know that. Despite Wally not wanting me to date his friends, I know where it’s coming from. Blackmailing him about his past mistakes isn’t my forte. It’s not his either. He doesn’t want to hurt me and I don’t want to hurt him either. Plus I don’t ever want to hurt Linda. She’s my sister.”

“I get it. It’s not always good to do things to people, even when you can. I get where he’s coming from too. He already saw you get hurt. I’d probably be the same way if I had a sister.”

“I’m really not even trying to change the subject, but since you know mine, who was your first? I’m kind of curious.”

“Her name was Becky Cooper.”

Iris looked at Barry with an unreadable expression on her face. “Seriously?” She asks with that same look on her face.

“Yeah. Why?”

“Your first was someone named Beck-y Coo-per?”

“Why did you say it like that?”

Iris burst out laughing. “I just think it’s hilarious that you dated a girl named Becky. Beck-y and Barr-y.” She started to sing.
“Very funny, Petunia.”

“I should kill you for coming up with that god awful name. How dare you?”

“I’ll make it up to you.”

That made Iris happy. “How?”

“I’ll sneak into your room in the middle of the night and tickle you.”

“Ooooh, I’ll like that. I’ll leave my door open. Surprise me. Now we really need to get inside. I’ll see you in the morning.” She says as she looks over and smiles at him. “Remember, we have Christmas things to start doing.”

“Gotcha.”

“I love you.”

“I love you more.” Barry says as they head in the house and go their separate ways.

The next morning, Iris awoke with her Christmas agenda in mind. This was her favorite holiday and she couldn’t wait to really celebrate it. This holiday season was extra special to her because she had her Bear there. She wanted to make this Christmas memorable for him because he wasn’t used to that. She got up and went to shower because she had to go to the grocery store. She wondered if Wally and Barry would come with her. She really just wanted Barry to come, but Wally would find that suspicious. She wondered what he would do with his time and if he had any plans to spend it with Linda. She actually missed Linda herself so she knew that he did too. She was now in the same boat as them with wanting to spend all her time with her babe until they went back to school. She didn’t think she would have a boo to spend time with and now she does. It’s funny how things change.

She wondered where the guys, or Bert and Ernie as she called them that one time on game night. Today was going to be she guessed either ugly sweater day or Christmas music day. She could actually go for Christmas movie day. She just wanted to relax actually. She’d have a lot to do when it came to baking those cookies and cooking the dinner. She had an extra mouth to feed, plus they usually invited folks over. She had to make a shitload of Grandma Esther’s egg nog. She could send Wally out for more bourbon and have a little bit of time with Barry. Knowing him, he’d bring Barry with him. Plus she knew he probably wanted to work out too. She and Barry had to as well. There was just much to do that could all be done as a group and that made her antsy. She wanted to spend all her time under Barry. She felt like she should be entitled to that. Their relationship was so new. That’s what people do in new relationships. She groaned and headed for the bathroom. Thirty minutes later, she was getting dressed. She just threw on jeans and a sweater. She headed downstairs and found Barry and Wally sitting at the kitchen table, presumably waiting for her. She just looked at them sitting there like kids waiting for their mother to fix their breakfast. It was deeply amusing to see.

She stopped and looked at them. They really were two overgrown ass kids. She was neither of their parent. She didn’t mind cooking for them, but this was just ridiculous. “Good morning.” Iris says
though she wanted to just grab a banana and some yogurt and leave them there in silence.

“Good morning.” They both say.

“What’s with you two?” She asks as she looks from Bert to Ernie. She laughed at the visual of comparing them to those Muppets.

“We’re hungry.” Wally says.

“And you couldn’t take care of that yourselves? Neither of you is disabled.”

“We are when it comes to cooking. Neither one of us is as good as you are.” Wally says and flashes her a huge smile.

“Yeah, I don’t know how to cook at all. Sorry, nobody ever taught me.” Barry says.

“Well, you’re in luck. I’m giving cooking lessons today. After that, you both are on your own.” Iris says smartly and walks over to the fridge.

“What?” Wally asks.

“What, what?” Iris taunts as she stares inside.

“What about Christmas dinner?” He asks.

“Oh, I’m fixing Christmas dinner. You don’t have to worry about that. Dad will never let me get away with that one.”

“So, what are we doing today?” Barry wonders.

“Uh, I don’t know. What do you guys want to do?” Iris asks as she pulls things out.

“We were going to go to the gym again, then I guess movies? I don’t know.” Wally says.

“That sounds like a plan. I have to go to the grocery store, but we can do that.”

“So, what happened last night?” Wally asks.

“What do you mean?”

“What happened when we left you with Josh?”

“Oh, I spent the night with him.” Iris lies.

Wally looked at Barry then back at Iris. “Is that so?”

“Yeah. Is that a problem? Isn’t that why you told me to take my car?”

“Not really. Why did you text me that you were home then?” Wally asks.

“So that you could protect me until I got inside. I just came to get my toothbrush.” Iris again lies with a straight face.

“Can’t say I didn’t expect that. Dude looked at you like he wanted to eat you the entire time we were there.”

“He did and I let him.” Iris says surely and smiles. She loved fucking with Wally in this way. He
deserved everything he got.

“Iris…” Wally begins.

Barry just sat there and took it all in. He knew damn well that didn’t happen and if he hadn’t had that talk with Iris, he would be bitter and insecure at the moment. But Iris devoted and gave herself to him. He trusted and believed her to her word. He knew this was all about getting Wally.

“Wally…” Iris says.

“I didn’t need to hear that.”

“Then you shouldn’t have brought it up. I can tell you more. We can discuss it at the table as soon as I finish cooking.”

“You’re a real smart ass, you know that?”

“I learned from the best. My big brother Wallace Rudolph West.”

Wally then just looked at Barry. “Aren’t you glad you dodged that bullet?” He asks as he points at Iris.

“Uh…I don’t want to answer that while she’s cooking our food.” Barry says.

“You’re learning, Bartholomew. I might stop hating you after all.” Iris says and smiles.

“I kind of have to. You have an army boyfriend that could easily kick my ass. I’m not messing with that.” Barry says.

“Now you just need to rub off on that fool.”

“So you two are back together?” Wally asks.

“Yeah. He’s my boyfriend. Wasn’t expecting that at all, but we were meant to be together.” Iris says, actually referring to Barry instead of Josh. She loved the total irony of it all. That would forever be funny to her.

“Are you going to invite him over for the Christmas festivities?” Wally asks.

Shit, Iris thought. *I didn’t think this shit all the way through. I can’t ask Josh to do that. That’s just cruel.* “I don’t really know. Maybe? He has to spend time with his family. He hasn’t seen them in almost 2 years.”

“Well, it would be nice to really size this dude up. Invite him over.” Wally says and smiles.

“Will do.” Iris says.

Shit, she thought to herself again.

An hour later, Iris was in her car and headed to the grocery store. She had much shopping to do. She had a huge turkey and more to buy. Plus her Christmas cookie ingredients. She was glad to be away from Wally and his suggestions. She needed Linda. She needed her bad. She decided to text her before she went inside the store.

*Hey Lin.*
As usual, Linda responded moments later. Her phone was seriously glued to her hand.

Hey Ri, I was waiting for you to text me. How is everything going? Wally told me you guys went to dinner at Josh’s house.

Yeah, we did. That was interesting. I’ll call you to tell you what happened.

Iris dialed Linda seconds later. Linda picked right up. “Ok, so. That asshole brother of mine and boyfriend of yours got me to talk about Josh in front of Barry. I told him that he was my first. Wally said he approved of Josh. Started talking all this shit about he could tell I still had feelings for Josh because you never forget your first.”

“Oh, shit.” Linda says.

“Yeah. Barry looked like he was going to lose it. I could see how hurt he was. It hurt me that he was that hurt. He felt worse than I felt when that perky disaster Patty came to game night. They both heard Lorraine say that she still holds out hope that I’ll be her daughter in law. I had a mini breakdown with Dad over Josh telling me to move on and missing his mother because I missed my own and how I was tired of people making decisions for me. They went outside and did the decorations while I did the tree. Lorraine called and invited us to dinner. Barry again looked like he was going to lose it. He told Wally that he was going to give Patty a second chance and that maybe he shot her down too fast.”

“What?” Linda exclaims.

“Yeah. Wally talked him out of it because he knew Barry was just acting on seeing Josh and his little crush on me. Dad joked with Barry about Patty asking him to call her. He told me the same thing and I almost flipped out. He admitted he just made it up to get me to let my guard down. He said he can see that Barry and I have feelings for each other, but he was staying out of it since I said I was tired of being controlled. Then the dinner came. Wally suggested that I take my car so that I can stay behind with Josh. We got there and Barry saw our prom picture. Josh grabbed my hand and was making googly eyes at me and calling me his girl.”

“Damn.”

“Yup. I had a talk with Lorraine and told her that I met someone, but didn’t tell her it was Barry. I told her about him and then she asked Barry about himself. She figured out that he’s the guy. Dad, Wally, and Barry left and Josh and I went for a walk. I let him down easy and he figured out that the guy was Barry too because of how he looked at me. I came back home expecting Wally to meet me at my car, but Barry met me instead. He was going to break up with me. I told him what happened with Josh. We snuck off and had sex in the car. I came up with this idea for him to have a decoy girlfriend at school so that we could Skype sex and things just in case Wally caught him. This morning at breakfast, Wally asked about Josh and I lied and said we got back together. Now he wants Josh to come past the house. I can’t ask Josh to do that. That’s cruel. I guess I’m just going to tell him that we decided it really won’t work. I was trying to get your advice on the matter. You never lead me in the wrong direction.” Iris says and takes a deep breath after pouring her feelings out.

“Wow. Where do I begin? Well, I’m glad you cleared things up with Josh, but you’ve painted yourself into a corner. What the hell are you going to do?”

“I don’t know.”

“You and Barry both need to tell Wally to fuck off.”
“I would, I really would. You know how much Wally means to me. He’s my best friend besides you. I can’t go through another situation like we went through. That tore me apart, Lin.”

“I know it did. I remember. Well, just do what you said. Tell him you and Josh spent too much time apart and you aren’t right for each other anymore. I hate to say this, but blame it on his being in the army. Say it changed him. Or, just say you’ve changed and realize that you don’t want that kind of life. That’s an easy fix.”

“I knew you’d give me the advice I needed. I love you, Lin.”

“I love you, Ri. What are you guys doing today? I have something to do soon, and my family isn’t coming in until Wednesday. I know how much fun you guys have. I can be there to take some of the pressure off.”

“I think we’re just doing movies today. The guys went to the gym. Yeah, you should come over. I need some extra estrogen in the house.”

“Will do. See ya.” Linda says and hangs up.

Iris went into the store and did her shopping. She brought way more food than she usually does. She had to laugh at telling Wally and Barry she wasn’t cooking anymore. She loved cooking. She really wanted to do that for Barry since he really wasn’t used to it. She has always heard the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. She loved that even if she was already in Barry’s heart. He was definitely in hers. She loved that dork with all that she was. She really did think he looked at her like she placed every star in the sky, but she looked at him like he hung the moon. This fast and he was that deeply imbedded into her. He was an amazing guy. Her mother did good. She did damn good.

She drove home with that thought in her mind and her eagerness to just see Barry again. She wished she could’ve watched him work out, but she’d get better than that when they had the chance. She pulled up and was getting things from her trunk when they pulled up. She was relieved of that. She would let them handle the bags while she went inside. She just left her trunk open and headed for the steps.

“Really?” Wally says as he walks up.

“Yes, really. You know the deal Wallace. You have help. You both should be happy to do that since I make sure you eat.”

“But you’re not going to take anything? Not even a light bag that just has bread or something?”

“Nope. You have hands and extra help. Have fun.” She says and practically skips up the steps. She was going to have a little fun with them. She went and sat at the table just to supervise. She actually put her feet up. This would be fun.

They came into the kitchen and both just looked at her with her feet up in the chair. They left and returned with more bags. They made another two trips and came back and sat at the table with her. “Did you buy the whole store?” Wally asks.

“We have a houseguest and Christmas is coming. What did you expect?”

“That’s a lot of food. Have fun putting it away.”

“Negative, big brother. I went to the store. I do the cooking. That’s all on you. I shouldn’t have to explain that to you. Why do I have to when you know the deal? Stop showing off for Barry. He’s
not important.”

Barry looked at Iris and smirked. “Thanks, Petunia.”

“You know what I meant. Do not ever call me Petunia ever again.” Iris says smartly.

“Ok, Begonia.” Barry says.

Wally looked at both of them and started to laugh. “Begonia.”

“That’s worse than Petunia.”


“Two steps forward, three steps back. You’ll just never get out of the doghouse when it comes to me. I’ll be glad when you leave.” Iris says and just stands to leave the room.

“Where are you going?” Wally asks.

“I’m going over Josh’s house. I just might bring him back with me. Maybe that’ll shut this one up.” She says in a hostile tone as she points at Barry.

“How long will you be gone? Linda said she’s coming over.”

“Not long. I’ll be back in a few hours I guess. We can do Home Alone or something. That should be fun. I’ll bring Josh.”

“Wait, so I’ll be the fifth wheel?” Barry asks with a hint of annoyance. He had to play his part.

Iris smiled at him. “Call Patty.” She adds smartly before actually leaving the kitchen this time. She went out and got in her car. She figured she’d go to the mall or something to kill time. This would be her chance to create a farce about her and Josh. She wanted to hug Barry for playing along so effortlessly.

Wally was now just looking at Barry. He just shook his head and walked over to the food and started to put it away in silence.

“What?” Barry asks, though he knows.

“Just amazed at how stupid you are, that’s all.” Wally says.

Barry grinned internally at that. He felt like he and Iris won that round.

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Iris did drive to the mall and decided to go and get herself a mani and pedi. Then she decided against that because she could save that for when she hung out with Lorraine. She decided to catch a matinee and saw Legend. It was an easy distraction for her. She let her mind get lost in the movie that she actually enjoyed. She then went to window shop and bookmarked things she liked. She texted Barry hours later when she got back in her car.

You did good earlier.
Barry responded a few minutes later. **I know. Wally called me stupid when you left.**

**I figured he would. Glad he took the bait.**

**Where did you go?**

*To the movies. I saw Legend. It was pretty good. I then went window shopping and found several things I want.*

**How are you going to handle the Josh thing?**

*Oh I’m going to pretend we decided that things are too different and we really should go our separate ways.*

**Good. Then I won’t be the fifth wheel.**

*I told you to call Patty. ;)*

**Not funny.**

Iris laughed and drove home. Linda was already there in the living room with Wally and Barry when she got there. She stopped dead in her tracks when she saw her. “Linda?!”

“Surprise! Do you like it?” She asks referring to her now shorter hair.

“I love it! What brought that on?”

“Just wanted to do something different. I’m glad you like it.”

“I really do. You’d look great with any hair though.”

“Where’s Josh?” Wally asks.

“Oh, he couldn’t come today. Family thing.” Iris made subtle eye contact with Barry, then with Linda.

“Well, we’ll be right back. We need to girl talk for a moment.” Linda says and stands. She walked up the stairs behind Iris and went into her bedroom. Iris locked the door and looked at her.

“I really like your hair.” Iris says sincerely.

“Thanks. I was hoping you did. Wally said the same thing. So what’s going on with the Josh thing?”

“I’m going to do exactly what we talked about earlier. I need to hang out with his mother first, then do it. I’ll do something with her tomorrow. I figured it would look suspicious if we ‘break up’ then I go and hang out with his mom.”

“Good idea. You look like you’re glowing by the way. I can see that you’re in love. You might want to play that Josh thing a little longer to keep Wally at bay.”

“I’m glowing? Really? I am in love. So in love. I want to throw a parade and tell people how in love I am. I haven’t felt this way since Josh. More than I felt for Josh, honestly. Maybe because it’s so new. I don’t know. But I adore that dork downstairs.”

Linda giggled. “I can tell. I’m happy for you. I know how hurt you were about Josh leaving you
behind.”

“Yeah, that hurt a lot because I really loved him. Still do honestly. I’m just not in love with him anymore. I know what he did he did to protect me like Wally does, but it still hurt. I’m over it now though. I have my Bear and I’m happy. Truly happy.”

“You deserve to be happy. You go out of your way to make sure that others are. It’s your turn.”

“Thanks, Lin. Come on. We need to get back to our men.”

Iris, Barry, Linda, and Wally enjoyed their Christmas movie marathon and had Joe join in when he got home. The Park West Allen family enjoyed their time together. Barry and Iris managed not to bicker to the approval of Wally.

The next morning, Iris gave Lorraine a call like she promised she would. She really wanted to hang out with her. She needed more of that bond they shared. She didn’t get enough at their dinner. She was glad she got the Josh stuff out of the way so that they could get back to that. She was happy that Lorraine told her she’d always consider Iris to be her daughter. That made her feel warm inside and deeply loved. Her real mother was gone, but she still had a mother’s love. She showered and dressed and then texted Barry to give him a heads up. She didn’t want him to start thinking the worst again.

Good morning Bear.

Good morning Rosie. Barry replied moments later.

I’m about to fix breakfast and then I’m leaving to hang out with Lorraine. Just thought you should know.

Thanks for telling me.

You’re ok with that I hope.

Of course. I know what Lorraine means to you. You deserve to have a mother figure to hang out with. I wish you could hang out with my mother.

Awww, that’s why I love you so much.

You’re a lucky girl. I love you more.

Iris felt giddy at that. She was a lucky girl. Barry really did make her happy. So happy that the shit with Wally became a minor thing. It didn’t weigh as heavily on her anymore. She still hated that she had to hide it, but that’s the way it was going to go. They just had to keep it hidden until Wally graduated so that there wouldn’t be any tension between them back at school. They had to interact. Sure they could switch roommates, but Iris didn’t even want to put either of them through that. Just a mere six months. The time would fly once they were back at school.

She headed to the kitchen with a smile on her face. She was surprised that Wally and Barry weren’t
waiting for her again. She just started to cook and then was interrupted with Wally infringing on her thoughts about her and Barry.

“Why are you so dressed up so early?” He asks and sits down.

“Good morning to you too.”

“Good morning. Why are you so dressed up so early?” He asks again.

“I’m going to bond some more with Lorraine and hanging out with Josh. Why?”

“I was just asking. You sure are spending a lot of time over there.”

“What else should I be doing, Wally? I missed them.”

“What about spending time with your big brother?”

“I spend time with you. But tomorrow I’ll stay home. Just us, ok?” Iris asks and smiles.

“Ok. What about Barry?”

“He’s staying here. We can’t exactly ask him to leave so that we can hang out, can we?”

“No, you can’t.” Barry says once he enters the kitchen.

Iris felt her heart rate pick up at seeing him. She loved laying her eyes on him. She wanted to run and jump into his arms.

“You’re just as bad as him. Good morning.”

“Oh, sorry. Good morning.”

“I’m fixing waffles and bacon. I hope that’s ok. I needed to do something quick and easy.”

“That’s fine with me. I appreciate you cooking for us.”

“I’m not cooking for you. I have to eat too. But you’re welcome.”

“Hanging out with your boyfriend today?” Barry asks.

“Yeah, after I hang out with Lorraine. What are you two going to do?”

“Head for the gym again. Then wing it. Bring Josh back with you. I need to give him the big brother talk.” Wally says.

Iris rolled her eyes. “What talk could you possibly give him now? He already deflowered me.”

“Thanks for the visual.” Wally replies with much sarcasm. “I need to tell him face to face that if he hurts you, I’ll kill him. Don’t try to deny me that. It’s my right as your big brother to tell him that.”

“Ok, Wally. Damn.”

“Thanks. I’ve been looking forward to this.”

“I don’t know what Linda sees in you.”

Wally scoffed. “She’ll dispute that. I’m a great catch.”
Iris rolled her eyes again. “If you say so.” She says as she goes back to cooking.

Iris, Barry, and Wally had breakfast and Iris was out the door on her way to Josh’s house when she wondered if it would be awkward seeing Josh. She hoped that it wouldn’t be. She really wanted to keep him as a friend and have a relationship with his mother. She also hoped that when Josh did meet someone, she wouldn’t have a problem with her being close to his mother. That could be quite intimidating and she didn’t want someone to have to go through that. She wasn’t sticking around to sabotage things between him and another woman. That wasn’t her style. She didn’t even want to girl to be jealous of her. She didn’t want to step on anyone’s toes. She wondered if that would be a deal breaker for someone. She wondered how she’d feel if Barry’s mom was still alive and she loved Beck-y Coop-er like a daughter and still held out hope she would be her daughter in law. She realized that she wouldn’t like that. Then she had to take into consideration how Barry felt. Joe and Wally liked Josh. Though they liked him more than she did, it still had to hurt Barry to hear that from them. Especially Wally. He just simply didn’t want Barry with her. That had to sting a bit. She wanted to hug him just because. The poor thing had been through so much. And he still turned out awesome. That made her heart smile. That just showed her that no matter what, Barry was a good guy and just an all-around decent human being. He deserved to have good things happen to him. She smiled again thinking that she was a good thing in his life.

She pulled up to the Miller house and vowed to have a good response from being there. She wasn’t there to hurt anyone. Just here to have something she craved.

She rang the doorbell and was greeted by Big John.

“Iris. It’s good to see you again. Come on in.”

“Thanks. How are you?” Iris says before giving him a hug and taking a seat.

“I’m great. Happy to have my boys home. Lorraine is much happier when they’re here. Now she’s just a ball of sunshine because she gets to spend time with you again. She really missed you.”

Iris smiled widely. “I really missed her too. I’m happy to hear that she’s happy. She deserves it.”

“You deserve happiness too. You’re a wonderful girl, Iris. I hope Josh and John meet someone like you.”

“Thanks. I take it Josh told you.” Iris says.

“Yes. He’s good with it because he knows that you’re a good judge of character and that that Barry guy is a good one. He knows he messed up in telling you to move on. He just didn’t want this life for you. I didn’t have the maturity to do that when I was younger with Lorraine. But I know how much she worried about me. Not everyone is cut out for that kind of life. He knows how important family is to you. You’re a lot like Lorraine in that aspect. I just know he didn’t want to hurt you if something were to happen to him.”

“I know that. I will always love Josh for putting me before himself. I am like Lorraine. I take that as a huge compliment because she’s amazing and if I had to choose a woman to be like other than my own mother, it would be her. She gave me what I longed for with just a father.”

“Yeah, she always wanted a little girl. She got one with you. Don’t feel bad about you and Josh. Just stick around for her.”

“I promise I will. I love Lorraine.” Iris says honestly.

“Thanks. I’ll go get her.” Big John says and runs up the stairs.
Josh came into the house as soon as John went upstairs. He naturally smiled when he saw her sitting there. “Hey Iris.”

“Hey Josh. How are you?” She naturally smiled when seeing him too. He just didn’t make her heart do flips anymore like Barry did.

“I’m good. How are you?”

“Great. And again-“ Iris starts.

Josh put his hand up and smiled. “You have nothing to be sorry about, Iris. You had every right to move on. Let that go. I’m just happy to see you’re here for my mother. That means a lot to me.”

“You’re welcome.”

“I will say this though. If that Barry dude hurts you, I’ll kill him”

Iris laughed. “You sound just like Wally.”

"You told him?" Josh asks.

"No. I just meant in general. He says that about any guy I’ll get with. Barry's his friend and knows how he is."

“Then I know he’ll never make that mistake. I’ll see you later. Have fun.” He says and jogs up the steps.

Iris had to laugh some more at that. Josh was right. Barry wouldn’t ever hurt her. Not only just because of Wally, but he just wouldn’t do that to her. She got lost in thought until Lorraine came downstairs. She had a smile on her face that matched Iris’.

“Hello, Iris. I’m so happy to see you!” She says and gives Iris a hug before she even stands.

“I’m happy to see you too!”

“So, what do you want to do today? We can do anything you want. My treat.”

“Well, how about manis and pedis? We can talk while we’re in the chairs. I can do something festive For Christmas and New Year’s.” Iris says.

“That sounds great. It’s so good to do this with you again. I hate to keep saying it, but I really did miss you.”

“It’s ok. I really did miss you too. This is different than hanging out with my friends.”

“It is. You know how much I wanted a little girl.”

“Well, now you have one. I’m just not so little anymore.”

“Are you kidding? You’re tiny! I would kill for that small waist.”

“I only stay this small because of the cheerleading. Don’t want to give someone a hernia.” Iris says and laughs.

Lorraine laughed as well. “Let’s go, missy. I’ll drive.”
Lorraine and Iris headed out to have their manis and pedis. It was great to sit in that massaging chair. This place even served them sparkling cider. Iris felt so contented. She really did love and miss Lorraine.

“This is great.”

“It really is. I’m so glad we decided to get together. So, catch me up. How’s everything? How’s the family and Barry?”

“Everyone is great. Barry’s great. It’s not weird to talk about him, is it?”

“No. I told you that. I see the way your face lights up at his name. All Josh and I want is for you to be happy. He’ll meet someone else.”

“He will. Josh is amazing and I want to see him happy too.”

“So, tell me more about Barry. He seems great.”

“He is.”

“So, he’s Wally’s friend right? How did that happen?”

Iris giggled. “Well, I went to Wally’s room and snuck in. I jumped on him in the bed to scare him and it was Barry. I almost cracked his skull open with Wally’s lamp. I wondered who this strange white guy was in Wally’s bed.”

“You didn’t know he was there?”

“No, Wally just brought him home and they got there late. He hadn’t told us he was bringing a guest. Imagine my surprise. I know it sounds so cheesy and cliché, but I felt a jolt when I shook his hand for the first time. It’s so ridiculous but it really was love at first sight. Wally told him I was off limits before he even brought him home. Wally got wind of us liking each other and shot that down. So I came up with this plan to act like we hate each other to calm Wally down. We pretty much pick fights with each other just because. I think it’s working because Wally has calmed down a lot about it.”

“I would honestly love to see that. Especially since you’re so outgoing and get along with everyone.”

“It’s so funny. I told Barry to act like he insulted me about my head wrap. You know that a rite of passage for us.”

Lorraine laughed at that. “It is. That boy probably has never seen that before.”

“He hasn’t. Wally knows how we are about that. I told him to keep insulting me, so now Wally thinks I hate Barry’s guts.”

“That’s kind of hilarious, if I do say so myself. But I have to wonder why he came home with Wally instead of going to his own family.”

“Well, he lost his parents when he was 11. He said he never felt welcomed living with his extended relatives. He was dreading going home because it reminded him of losing his parents. Wally brought him home because you know our house is like the safe haven for people.”

“That’s sad and great at the same time. I’m glad he has Wally as a friend that he could come home
with. But how will this all work out for you two?"

“We’re just going to keep it a secret until Wally graduates. We don’t want to create tension between them since they’re roommates and on the track team together. Hopefully, their friendship can survive it. I don’t want to come between that because of him losing people close to him.”

“I get that. I really do. It would be so much easier if Wally was ok with you dating his friends.”

Iris took a sip of her sparkling cider. “I know.”

Barry decided to get the ball rolling on that whole him fake dating Felicity thing. He put on his sweats and went downstairs to wait for Wally to finish since he cleaned up the kitchen. He went through his contacts and found Felicity’s number. He hoped she would be alright with doing that. He didn’t want to feel like he was using her, but he was being upfront. She was just a friend and hoped she would help him out. He had a feeling she would tell him he was crazy and tell him to get lost. He had to try.

He texted her a short and sweet greeting. **Hey Felicity. It’s Barry.**

The tech savvy girl responded minutes later. (Hey Barry. Happy Hanukkah.)

**Thanks. Happy Hanukkah. Felicity, I need a huge favor.**

(It’ll cost you.)

**How much?**

(Depends on what it is.)

Well, I need you to pretend to be my girlfriend when we get back to school.

(Come again?)

I said. I need you to pretend to be my girlfriend when we get back to school.

(Are you trying to make some girl jealous?)

No. You have to keep this a secret.

(Cross my heart. I'm really good at keeping secrets.)

I’m dating Wally’s sister. I came home with him for Christmas and it just happened. He doesn’t want his friends to date her so we’re pretending we’re respecting his wishes. But we’ll be in a LDR and I need to have an excuse to always be on my phone talking to and texting a girl.

(Then just do that.)

I know but I want him to see me with you so he won’t question it. I’ll give you anything you want.
(Don’t make deals like that Barry Allen.)

**I’m desperate.**

(Ok. I’ll help you. Maybe Oliver will notice me if he sees I’m with someone.)

**Oliver will not get jealous of me.**

(He will if we do this right. I’m not sleeping with you.)

**I don’t want you to. So what do I have to give you? Remember I’m a broke college student.**

(You’d better start saving up. I’ll cash in when we get back to school.)

**Thanks a bunch.**

Barry laughed and put his phone away while he laughed. Wally came rushing down the stairs and saw Barry laughing and putting his phone away.

“What’s so funny?”

“Oh. I just talked with Felicity. We decided to go on a date when we get back to school.” Barry easily lied, but figured it wasn’t really a lie.

“Really? That’s great. I knew something was going on with you two.”

“Well, I was trying but not really trying to get my hopes up. It’s all working out now.”

“Good. She’s hot. Don’t tell Linda I said that.” Wally jokes.

“Your secret is safe with me. Felicity is hot.” He almost cringed at saying that. He did think Felicity was pretty, but she wasn’t iris in any way.

“You ready to go?”

“Yup.”

Barry and Wally made their way to the gym. They warmed up then ran on the treadmills as usual. They spotted each other at a weight bench when they saw Patty. Barry almost groaned.

She walked up to them with a huge smile on her face. Barry kind of stood there awkwardly and then Wally sat up.

“Hey, guys. Great to see you again.” Patty exclaims in a chipper tone.

“Hey, Patty. Great to see you too.” Wally says.

“Hey, Patty.” Is all Barry says. He looked at her and really realized that he wasn’t interested. He just didn’t want to give her or Wally the wrong idea.

Patty seemed to smile wider and stared at Barry for a moment. He wondered why she kept looking at him. He told her he wasn’t interested. He hoped that Wally didn’t set this shit up behind his back like he did before. He also hoped that maybe Joe didn’t say something to her. He didn’t want to have this conversation with her a second time.

She then briefly looked at Wally, but kept the smile on her face. She looked back at Barry. He
could see the want in her eyes. This wasn’t good.

“Is Iris here?” She asks innocently.

“Nope. She’s with her boyfriend.” Wally says.

“Boyfriend? She told me she wasn’t seeing anyone when I was over the other night.”

“Well, her boyfriend from high school went into the army and he came home on leave. They got back together.” Wally says.

_Fuck fuck FUCK!_ Barry thought to himself.

She smiled even harder. “Well, that’s great. Tell her I’m happy for her.” She looked at Barry like he was water and she was in the desert. “Can you two excuse me for a minute?” She asks with a smile.

“Sure thing.” Wally says and they watch her walk away.

Patty came back moments later with a slip of paper. “Here. I wanted to give you my number. You wanted this, right?” She asks as she hands it to him.

__FUCK NO!__ Barry thought. “Sure.” He says as he takes the paper. He had to remind himself not to grit his teeth. He wished they had never even come to the gym. They wouldn’t have ran into her.

“Great. Give me a call. I don’t want to wait anymore.” Patty says and smiles at him so hard it looked like her face might crack. She stepped forward and pressed her body against his and kissed Barry on his cheek. “I like you better when you’re clean shaven but you’re still adorable.” She winked at him and walked away.

__That did not just fucking happen__, Barry thought to himself. _Now Iris will surely hear about it and cause more shit between us. This is just fucking fantastic._ Patty had become a thorn in his damn side. She was just always around it seemed. She annoyed him with her presence. She was like a creepy, borderline stalkerish fangirl and it wasn’t at all amusing to Barry. He thought he was done with her. Now she gives him her number when he didn’t want that shit. Why couldn’t she tell he wasn’t interested? It wasn’t just because of Iris, but that was the main reason. He didn’t like her like that and was causing drama between the girl he did want. This shit was beyond aggravating.

Wally watched the exchange like he was watching a movie. If he wasn’t sure before, he was now. Barry was not interested in Patty. He could tell from his body language. Why Patty couldn’t tell really made him scratch his head. “Wow.” Wally says as he looks at Barry.

“That’s not what I’m thinking.” Barry says.

“She’s….a little thirsty. I kind of want to call her pathetic, but that’s harsh. It’s a little sad. Maybe she’s lonely and really wants someone. I’ve never seen a girl come that strongly on to a guy that wasn’t interested.”

“So you can tell I’m not interested?” Barry asks with much impatience.

“Yeah, I can tell. I don’t know why she can’t. Then she kissed you. Yikes.” Wally then burst out laughing.

“It’s not funny, Rudy.”
Wally abruptly stopped laughing. “My father isn’t around now. I told you I would kick your ass if you called me Rudy. Let me get Patty back here.” He says and then gets up to walk off.

“Oh my god, please don’t. She might come home with us.”

“She’s probably already hiding in the backseat of my car.” Wally says and laughs again.

Barry started to laugh too. “Not. Funny.”

“It’s not, but it is. I mean, she’s pretty. What’s the problem? Did you sleep with her when you walked her to her car or something?” Wally asks

_Yeah, I did._ He thought, but he was thinking about Iris. “Hell no. I’m never sleeping with her.”

“You said your old girlfriend got clingy after sex. I think you did. Who knew you had this kind of effect on women? All of them except for Iris and Linda that is.”

“Yeah.” Is all Barry says.

Iris finished her bonding moment with Lorraine and drove home. Lorraine went crazy and got a head start on her baking and sent two pies back with her. That was one less thing she had to do and was thankful for it because she was on the verge of buying some that were already baked from the store. She was mulling about finishing with last touches of the Christmas decorations. Plus she did something incredibly cheesy and bought mistletoe. She would put that to good use when she and Bear got alone. She needed a Bear fix because she hadn’t had so much as a kiss since that night in her car. She was getting a little antsy about it. She liked Barry’s kissing. She liked a little more and wanted more than a kiss. She needed him inside her again. She was walking back into the living room when Wally and Barry came in. She sized them up and was taken aback by Barry’s appearance. She couldn’t believe he left out the house like that. She was a little embarrassed that that’s the first thing she thought when she saw him. She also found it hilarious that of course Wally didn’t notice. She wondered what the hell Barry was thinking and wondered how often he did that. He was now her boyfriend and she just couldn’t allow that.

“Hey, Iris.”

“Hey, Begonia.” Barry says.

Iris rolled her eyes so hard they almost got stuck. “Hello, Wally.” She looked Barry up and down and gave him a “Bartholomew” in the same tone Diane from Blackish uses when greeting Charles.

“Is Josh here?” Wally asks.

“Nope. Not yet.”

“How was your little outing with his mother and him?”

“Awesome. I got a manicure and pedicure. Then we had a good time talking. I missed her. It was nice. I can’t tell you the rest of what I did. How was the gym?”

“The usual. That is until we ran into Patty.” Wally says and looks over at Barry and smiles.
Iris looked at him as well. “Really?”

“Yeah.” Barry answers shortly.

“You should have seen it Iris. You were so right about her being thirsty. She told me to tell you hello. Then she nearly jumped Barry’s bones.”

Iris had the force of a bull keep her face from contorting to show how she was really feeling. This chick told him to tell her hello? Then she nearly jumped Barry’s bones? Iris knew that the sound of a cat might fly out of her mouth if she opened it. She was ready to pounce on Patty.

“She did not.” Barry says to his defense.

“Yes, she did. She looked at Barry like he was on the menu. Then she gave him her number and pressed up on him and kissed him.”

“Oh. She kissed you?”

“Only on the cheek.” Barry explains.

“Yeah. Then she said that she preferred him clean shaven but he was still adorable.”

“Wally is exaggerating.” Barry says.

“I’m not. Irey, I wish you could have seen it. Funniest shit ever.” Wally says and heads towards the stairs. “I’m taking a shower and then I’ll be back down. I’ll use my father’s so you can use the main one.” He says and runs up the steps. She listened for his footsteps to fade and heard the door almost slam shut.

Iris whipped around to look at Barry with so much vigor that she almost felt a snap in her neck. She looked Barry up and down. “Am I going to have to kill your little girlfriend?” She asks.

“She is not my girlfriend.”

"Well, Thirstarella keeps doing things to make you decide to make her your girlfriend. It's kind of pissing me off."

"Thirstarella?" Barry asks as he looks at Iris weirdly.

"Yeah. I've never seen someone come on that strongly to someone that isn't interested. You're taken and that makes me mad."

"Please don’t be mad at me. We just got back on track.” He says as he fidgets a little nervously. Iris found his little ticks to be endearing.

“I’m a little mad. Well, not at you. I thought you let her down and she realized that you liked me?”

“I did and she did. But she asked about you and Wally told her that you were with your boyfriend. I guess she figured that was her green light to nearly attack me.”

“That fucking Wally. God he makes me sick. But, I can see why she looked at you like that.”

“Why?”

“Those fucking sweatpants, Barry. I can see your dick through them.”
Barry self-consciously looked down at himself and back up at Iris. “Oh…”

“Yeah, oh. You can’t walk around like that. You didn’t know you were on display like that?”

“No, I didn’t.” He says in an embarrassed tone.

“How often do you wear those things?”

“All the time.”

“Not anymore. I’m going to burn them.”

“It’s not that big of a deal, Iris.”

“Yes, it is. You have my goods on display. No wonder she’s so fucking thirsty. She’s probably shocked your dick isn’t what she’s used to.”

“What is that supposed to mean?” He asks incredulously.

Iris looked him up and down again. “What do you think I mean?”

Barry searched her face and finally put two and two together. “Oh.” Then he thought about it some more. “I think I should resent that.”

Iris ignored him. “Ridiculous. Now she knows your dick isn’t small. She’s never gonna leave you alone.”

“Is that why you like me?”

“Yup. That’s the only reason why.”

“I guess I’ll take it. We need to find a way for me to give it to you later.” He says as he steps forward and pressed his body to hers.

“Gross. You’re all sweaty.” Iris says as she feigns disgust.

“Come get in the shower with me then.”

“Are you out of your mind? I wish I could. I need to mark my territory better. Can’t have Patty Cakes constantly hitting on you.”

“Iris, you don’t need to do a thing. Patty doesn’t stand a chance.”

She pressed her body fully into his and wrapped her arms around him. She didn’t care that he had just worked out. She felt him start to stiffen. “I want to. You haven’t given me any in two days.”

“It has been that long, hasn’t it?” He completely pulled her into his arms and rubbed her back.

“Yes. And we need to do something about it today because tomorrow will be a day fully spent with Wally. Linda’s family is coming tomorrow so she can’t occupy him.”

“Damn.” Barry says.

“I know. We’ll get through it. Don’t fret. I might just decide to do laundry late tonight. You can always get stricken with diarrhea or something. Perfect plan.”

“That’s not sexy at all, Iris.”
“No, but what we do will be. I won’t even wear panties under my long, fleece, granny nightgown.”

“I like the way you think.” He pecked her lips and broke their hug. He looked out the huge window in the living room. "Hey. Look. Snow." Barry says. Iris turned to look out the window. "Maybe it'll be a white Christmas."

"That'd be nice." Iris replies as she leaned into Barry.

They briefly stood and watched the snow fall before they broke apart. They didn't need to get caught hugged up watching the snow fall.

“I’m heading up. I’ll see you later.” He turned and walked towards the stairs.

“Ok. I’ll be in my room touching myself.”

Barry stopped dead in his tracks. “You just made it worse.”

Iris giggled as she watched him go up the steps. She went upstairs to her room to just play around on the internet. She didn’t really have anything else to do. She was getting anxious waiting to be with Barry. She wanted him all the time. She was satisfied but still craved more. It was maddening.

She never really thought that she’d be the type to get addicted to a guy. There was just something about Barry. The way he looked at her. The way she knew he loved her. The way he made sure that she was happy and felt good. Also the way he made sure that she was satisfied when they had sex. That’s why she wanted him all the time. She couldn’t help herself.

She finished playing around on the internet and then took off the gray sweater dress she was wearing. She didn’t care how cold it was outside, she loved wearing dresses. They made her feel dainty.

She was in the mood to feel sexy and felt like fucking with Barry just for the sake of it. Two could play that game with wearing sweat pants that had their assets on display. She found her tighter than necessary pair of red ones that she sometimes practiced in at school. She was wearing those the day that David approached her. They made her ass look a little bigger than it actually was. She would wear the shortest damn shirt too. Maybe she’d jog around the neighborhood in them. That would surely fix him because there’s no way in the world he didn’t know you could see the print of his dick through those pants. No way he didn’t know. Somebody had to notice. And while she really didn’t think another straight guy would notice, somebody did if he wore them all the time like he said. It sure made Patty’s thirsty ass push up on him. She’s now glad she didn’t go work out with them. She would have had to claw her damn eyes out and that wouldn’t look good if she assaulted a cop. Joe would get her out of it, but she just didn’t need the hassle. All Iris knew was that she needed to keep her damn paws off her boyfriend. She needed to go get her thirst quenched somewhere else. If she didn’t think that it would be in bad taste, plus he’d hate how persistent and perky she was, she’d introduce her to Josh. He’s a great guy. But then she started feeling petty and thought that Patty didn’t deserve him. It was an awful thing to think, but she didn’t give a shit. Since she left him out on a limb, she truly wanted him to find someone amazing and Patty was not it.

She finished up and went downstairs. She put on some Christmas music to liven up the house. Wally came downstairs looking at her crazy. “What?”

“I thought we’d watch movies again. I’d rather you put on music another time.” He sat down on the couch and got settled like he'd be there for the night.
“Fine. What movies are we watching? We already did Home Alone.” She leaned over the back of the couch in a position that would be uncomfortable for most people, but was perfect for her. Joe had always gotten on her for lounging on the back of the chair in cat-like fashion.

“Not exactly a movie, but we have to watch Charlie Brown Christmas. And Thanksgiving.”

“You know what I want to see? National Lampoons Christmas Vacation and Elf.”

“I love National Lampoons.”

Iris smiled. “I know you do. Is Linda coming today?”

"Naw. Her family came a day early."

"Awww. I was hoping to have another girl here. Oh well."

Barry came running down the stairs and Iris was happy that he changed his pants because she was extremely horny. She felt like she hadn’t had sex in a while. She would probably be ok if her boyfriend wasn’t living in the house.

“So, what are we doing?” He asks as he subtly checked out Iris in those damn pants. He couldn't help staring at her the way she was draped over the couch. He wanted to take them off her. Now he had to completely avoid looking at her before Wally caught him. He felt like Iris was playing hard ball. And he would have those if he kept looking at her in those pants. He resented her getting on him about his sweatpants, when she was doing much worse in the ones she had on. The only thing that would make it worse is if Josh was there to ogle her.

“We’re watching Christmas movies again.”

“Cool. I have a request.”

“Shoot. It has to be a Christmas movie though. Everybody gets to watch at least one of their faves.” Iris says.

“I want to see Elf. Will Farrell is hilarious in that movie.”

Iris giggled. "I just suggested that to Wally before you came down."

“Are you two gonna get along for the movie?” Wally asks as he looks between them.

“Yup. It’s Christmas.” Iris says.

“Yes. We can go back to hating each other after the holidays are over. Agreed?”

“Agreed.” Iris says and sticks her hand out for Barry to shake it.

He took her hand in his and they both felt that jolt they felt the first time they met and shook hands.

Iris knows he felt what she felt. She just took her hand away and smiled awkwardly at Barry for Wally’s sake. She really wanted to keep his hand linked to hers and walk Barry up to her bedroom. But she had her ball and chain disguised as her older brother. She felt like making Grandma Esther’s egg nog and slipping him a mickey. She wanted to do that with everything in her. She wished Wally had a damn job or something. He was always around.

Barry felt that surge through him the first time he laid eyes on Iris. He knew that without a doubt she was the love of his life. Nothing and no one would change that. Not even his bull headed ass
friend and surrogate big brother. He loved Wally like a big brother, he did. But he’d forget all about that for Iris. Next to his father, she was the most important person in the world to him. She came first. He wanted to take her up to her bedroom and make sure she came first. Where in the hell was Linda?

“See? That’s the Christmas spirit. And speaking of Christmas, when are you making the cookies?”

“I’ll make them tomorrow since I’ll be home all day. Is that good enough Wallace?”

“I’ll take you calling me Wallace if you make those cracker cookies.”

“Cracker cookies? That better not be some white people joke.” Barry jokes, knowing they would never do such a thing.

Iris and Wally looked at him like he had lost it. “Of course not, Bartholomew. I make these cookies out of saltine crackers. Do you really think we’d make a joke like that?” Iris asks as she makes a disgusted face.

“I was kidding. Lighten up.”

“Sorry. But you asked for that.”

“I was joking.”

"Ok.” Iris says smartly.

Wally shook his head. “That lasted all of 2 minutes. You two are fucking with my vibe.”

“I can always leave and go see my boyfriend and leave you alone with him and your vibe. I think that’s what I’ll do.” Iris says as she heads for the steps.

“Iris. That’s not necessary. I’m sorry. I was just joking.” Barry says as he calls after her.

“You have one more damn time, Barry. I swear to god you do.” Iris says as she stops and turns around.

“Ok, ok. I won’t say anything else.”

“Good. But the next step is duct taping your mouth shut. Or should I get Josh over here?”

“Nope. I don’t want any trouble.”

“Ok. Now that that’s squared away, you can at least make some nog. I’ll make popcorn.” Wally says and walks toward the kitchen.

Iris looked at Barry and gave him a thumbs up.

“Don’t give me that. You have on those pants just to mess with me.” He whispered.

Iris just winked at him and walked away. Barry watched her walk away and wondered how he got so damn lucky. Good shit didn’t just happen to him. He was the king of bad things. He had enough bad shit happen to him that he should also be sitting in a jail cell along with his father. He wanted better for himself. He wanted to make his parents proud. He wanted to rise about the dire circumstances that happened to his family. Now he had dreams of building his own family with Iris. When the time was finally right, he would thank Wally for bringing Iris into his life. Even if he hated him when he found out the truth, he’d still thank him for that.
He just followed them into the kitchen and saw Iris looking through the cabinet and Wally standing at the counter. He was just hit with the realization that they were his family and he loved them both. In totally different ways, but he did. He felt so welcomed at that house and never wanted to leave. He knew that was impossible, but that’s how he felt.

“So, what movie are we watching first?” Barry asks to seemingly ease up the tension between him and Iris. It was tension, but it was the kind where he just wanted to be alone with her. They didn’t even have to have sex. He just wanted to be with her.

“We’re starting with Charlie Brown Thanksgiving. I know this is Christmas, but we always watch that and the Christmas one together.”

“Yeah, we do.” Iris says. “I can’t wait to see Snoopy ice skate and dance. Remember that time we found that dog and brought him home and tried to hide him?” She says as she looks at Wally.

He started to laugh. “Yeah. You hid him in your stuffed animals and told Dad that he wasn’t real. Then Dad found out just how real that dog was.”

“I still remember the look on his face when he picked the dog up and he peed all over him.” Iris says as she cracks up laughing more.

“Me too. I think smoke actually came out of his ears. But he wasn’t as mad at that as he was about that record you broke. You got me in trouble and I had nothing to do with it.”

“Sorry, Wally. Do you forgive me?”

“Yeah, I guess so.” Wally says.

“So you two got into a lot of trouble together?” Barry asks.

“Not a lot. It’s just when we did get in trouble, it was usually for something bad. We usually didn’t do anything because he had cops check up on us.” Wally replies.

“That’s why I wish I had a sibling. It sounds like you two had a lot of fun.”

“Well, you have an honorary big brother now.” Iris says and smiles. “You’re lucky. He’s kind of an awesome big brother. I know there’s nothing he wouldn’t do for me.”

Wally smiled at that. “Thanks, Irey. You’re an awesome little sister. You’re right. There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for you. And speaking of being an awesome big brother, where is Josh? Is he avoiding me?”

Iris looked scared. “You got us. Yeah, he is. He knows how you are Wally.”

“I’m not going to kill the dude. I’m only going to do that if he hurts you. I need to look him in the eye and tell him that.”

“Fine. I’ll go call him.” Iris lies.

“Yeah, go call him. Invite him over. Barry can help me put some fear into him.”

“What is Barry going to do? He has a brother, that’s also in the army as well. You two don’t stand a chance.”

“Just let us have this Iris, damn. This guy has to do right by you. He would do the same thing if he had a sister. Wouldn’t you, Barry?” Wally asks.
“Yeah, I would. Wally’s just doing his job.”

“Does Felicity have a brother?” Wally asks to put Barry on the spot.

“Nope. She’s an only child.”

“Lucky you.” Wally says.

“Felicity? Why does that name sound familiar?” Iris asks.

“She’s Barry’s new boo. I feel sorry for her.”

“Why?” Barry asks. “And she’s not my new boo. We’re just going on a date.” He adds to let Iris know he talked to her.

“Because once Patty gets wind of it, she might shoot her.”

“Wow. I’m starting to think something really happened between you two. If I recall correctly, didn’t you say that your old girlfriend got clingy after sex? Plus you said she looks like her. Patty is extremely clingy. I think you slept with her.”

“I told him the same thing. I think he gave her a quickie when he walked her to her car that night.”

Barry turned red and looked from Iris to Wally. “I did not sleep with Patty. I can’t help that she’s interested in me.”

“I think he’s lying to us, big brother.” Iris says and folds her arms and gives Barry a look.

“I think he’s lying to us too, little sister.” Wally matched Iris’ stance. Now was the perfect time for them to gang up on Barry, West family style.

Barry just looked at them and had to admit that he thought it was funny even if they were clowning him. “I am not lying to either of you. I didn’t sleep with Patty.”

“Do you want to?” Wally asks.

“What? No!” Barry says, blush and embarrassment filling him and turning his face red.

“Liar.” Iris says.

“I am not lying. I will swear on a stack of bibles in court. I do not want to sleep with Patty. Why would I?” Barry asks, though he really means it. He’s sleeping with Iris. That was it for him, He had no reason to want to sleep with anyone else. He definitely couldn’t tell Wally that, but that’s the truth. No amount of forcing or teasing from Wally and Iris would change that.

“You believe him, big brother?”

“Nope.”

“Me neither.”

“I don’t appreciate you two ganging up on me.” Barry says.

“Hey. If you want to be a part of this family, you’d better grow some thicker skin or some balls.” Iris says.
“Don’t talk about Barry’s balls, Iris.”

“I guess you’re right. I’ll bet wherever Patty is, she heard it. You’ve got yourself a stalker in training.” Iris says and laughs.

“You sound jealous.” Barry says.

“Jealous? Why would I be jealous? I have an amazing boyfriend that loves me and I love him. I know he thinks I’m irreplaceable and the best thing to ever happen to him. I don’t care a thing about Patty. She’s got nothing on me.”

Barry wanted to smile at Iris’ statement. He loved how she talked about them right in front of Wally and he had no idea. Iris was 100% right in everything she said. “Fine.”

“I say take her out. You might at least get a b.j. from her.” Wally says.

Iris looked at him in disgust. “That is gross, foul, disgusting and distasteful. Even for you.” She says and looks at Wally like she seriously might throw up. It really wasn’t that it was a bad thing, but she got a visual of that and didn’t like it at all. She didn’t want Patty to touch Barry at all. That was her man and her job to touch him. How dare she? And how dare Wally even suggest that mess?

“What? How is that gross, foul, disgusting and distasteful? You pretty much told us that’s what you were going to do with that Mike dude. Why can’t Barry do the same thing you were going to do?”

“Because I was just messing with you, you big dope.”

“So you weren’t planning on doing disgusting things with Mike?”

“There is no Mike, Wally.”

“So, it’s been Josh this whole time? Then why did you look so surprised to see him?” Wally questions.

“No, it wasn’t Josh this whole time. I was genuinely surprised to see him. I haven’t talked to him since before he went into basic training after we graduated.”

“Cool. Back to this one.” He says as he looks at Barry.

“Can we just start the movies? I’d rather not talk about Patty anymore.” Barry states and hopes that it will be enough of the roughhousing. Usually he wouldn’t care and he knows where Iris stands when it comes to her, but he didn’t want to go there about it any longer. He was going to call her and tell her that it’s really not going to happen with them. He knows she did that because Wally said that Iris has a boyfriend. Too bad Wally and Patty don’t know that he’s her boyfriend and Josh is just a cover. He really didn’t know how to feel about her thinking that just because Iris is off the market, that means something will happen between them. It really wasn’t that simple. Maybe in another life, he could have met Patty and been attracted to her as much as she’s attracted to him and they could get together and have fun. But he was forcing himself to feel something for her. His heart already belonged to Iris. He couldn’t help that and wouldn’t change it for the world. The only thing he would change is Wally having a problem with it. He hated sneaking behind his back. He hated having to arrange times to kiss Iris. He hated having to hold back while others were around. Linda was the only person they didn’t have to hold back with. He wanted to kiss her out in the open. He hated thinking that they both were some dirty little secret they had to keep. He considered himself very forthcoming except for when he talked about his parents. He just grew accustomed to
telling people he lost them when he was 11. It was the truth. He did lose them both, even if his father was still alive. He didn’t want to tell people that his mother was murdered and his father was sitting in jail as her murderer. It was a terrible thought, but he wished that if he had to lose his mother, that she had gotten sick and not have her life snatched away from her so violently. She didn’t deserve what happened to her. Neither did Henry. And certainly not Barry. It was just an extremely tragic story that he didn’t want to relive. He just wanted to move on and live his life. And hopefully, he’d find a way to prove his father’s innocence. So that he could actually hug his father.

"I guess we should leave you alone now. It's movie time." Iris says and goes back to making the egg nog while Wally finished with the popcorn. They finished with that and headed into the living room. Iris put on A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving and went to sit down and saw Wally and Barry on opposite ends. "Why do I have to sit in the middle?"

"Because you're a girl and dudes really don't like sitting closely. Especially when we're watching a movie." Wally replies.

"That's a shame, really. Nobody is asking you two to sit with your legs touching or embraced in a hug or even holding hands. I get it. You're both straight."

"Iris, just sit down and shut up. You can survive sitting next to Barry for a few hours. It won't kill either of you."

Iris just sad down with a huff. They finished that and then Wally put on Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown. They were engrossed in watching it like little kids when Joe walked in. He smiled at seeing his kids spending time together quietly. "Hey, kids."

"Hey, Dad." They all say in unison.

'Barry realized what he said. "Sorry. I mean, Hey, Joe."

"It's ok, Barry. I see you guys are watching movies again. Are you planning on playing in the snow?":

"It didn't snow enough for us to play in it." Iris says, never taking her eyes off the tv.

"It started snowing again and it's really coming down. Look." Joe says.

They all turned to look out the window, and sure enough it was snowing. Iris got excited like a little kid. She loved playing in the snow. She looked at Wally with that look on her face. "Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

"Yeah. Snowball fight."

"I don't like the sound of that." Barry says.

"Oh, this will be fun. We really will have a white Christmas. I hope it snows all night. We'll have a lot to work with tomorrow."

"Again, I don't like the sound of that."

"You shouldn't." Iris says and laughs.

Wally and Joe laughed at that. Joe settled down in the adjoining chair and started to watch movies with them. He really enjoyed spending time with his kids. He hoped to be able to enjoy Christmas
They really just settled and enjoyed their Christmas movie marathon until both Iris and Barry started to get antsy again. Iris decided to distract herself and whip up a meal. She needed something to do besides sit next to Barry when all she wanted to do was haul herself into his lap. She couldn't do that with her father and Wally there. She planned on making the two West men full enough to go right to sleep. She had plans with her Bear.

As if he was reading her mind, Wally suddenly spoke. "I'm starving. What's for dinner?"

"How about tacos?" Iris suggests.

"Perfect."

She got up and walked towards the kitchen. Barry had to force his eyes and neck not to move to follow her. He couldn't wait until later. Iris was really giving him that feeling.

Iris started making the tacos. She was happy to be out of that living room. She could feel the sexual tension and wondered if Wally and Joe could feel it too. She hoped like hell that they didn't. She started texting her friend while she was cooking to keep herself occupied. She had too much nervous energy and needed to do something about it.

She finished making the fixings for tacos and called her guys. It was funny how she cared so deeply for the three of them for very different reasons. Wally was her best friend, Joe was her superhero, and Barry was her soul mate. She intended to have all three of them in her life and ridiculously close to her forever.

She smiled when they walked into the room. It made her feel good knowing that she could look out for them this way. She was the woman of the house. She really did feel like a mini Lorraine. She admired and loved that woman. She aspired to be like her and have the kind of family she has. A husband that loved and respected her and two great sons. Iris always felt like she had that maternal instinct even at a young age. Even though Grandma Esther was there, Iris took over. She was extremely young then but Iris has always been mature for her age. She just made sure to take care of her dad and brother because her mother couldn't anymore. And now she had another one to look out for. A human puppy that she loved dearly. She wanted to crack up laughing at that. But knowing how abandoned and disconnected Barry felt by his family made her heart beat fiercely in her chest. He was such a great person and didn't deserve what happened to him. The good thing was he rose above it and didn't let it define him.

She watched her guys eat like a proud mama bear. She was happy when Joe announced he was going up to his room and Wally did the same after he cleaned the kitchen. He claimed he missed Linda and wanted to talk to her alone. That was fine by both of them. She and Barry were finally alone. She wondered where they would do the do. She didn't want to chance her room and she damn sure couldn't leave out with him though she'd love to have a repeat of that night in her car. Plus it was snowing. That would make it more romantic.

"We finally get to be alone." Iris says and smiles at her adorable bear.

"I know. It seemed like it took forever. Plus, look what I found." Barry says as he holds up a mistletoe he just had to put to good use.

"Is that what I think it is?"

"Yes. You know the tradition of kissing under it right?"
"No. Never heard of it. Can you show me what you mean?" Iris playfully batted her eyelashes at him. This was just too cute for words.

"I think I can do that." Barry leaned down and crashed his lips to hers. He kissed her with a force and intensity that made her slightly lose her footing. She seriously almost went weak in the knees. She wanted more of that. She tugged on his shirt and pulled him into the guest bathroom. Neither Wally nor her father had any reason to come into it. "Good. We really are alone." He broke the kiss and stared at her intently. He looked like he had an idea.

"Yup. We still have to be quiet though."

"Do you think you can? You're kind of a screamer."

"That's your fault."

"Well, you really need to try and keep it down. Remember what I said about kissing under this?" He asks as he dangles the mistletoe in front of her again.

"A little." Iris replies sheepishly.

He crouched down in front of her then dangled it at her waist. Iris smiled down at him and her pants were down around her ankles in seconds. She felt the first of many licks and kisses to her vagina. She had to bite her lip to stifle a moan as he connected with her clit. She gripped the sink as he sent her over the edge. The orgasm hit her abruptly and made her want him inside of her. She pulled him to a standing position and reached for his dick. He was hard and ready.

"Shit." Iris said out loud.

"Is something wrong?" He asks.

"We have no condoms, Barry."

"We don't need any." He says and returns to his previous position and kneeled down in front of her.

Iris awoke early the next morning giddy and refreshed. Her little rendezvous with Barry made her sleep like a baby. She felt like she was either walking on clouds or sunshine. That's the way he made her feel and she loved it. She hummed on her way to the bathroom. They were going to combine ugly sweater day and Christmas cookie and music day all in one. Plus it snowed like crazy and they could play in the snow like huge kids for a while. She had a lot of baking to do. Plus she really wanted to make Barry fall more in love with her after he tasted her cookies. She knew he had lowered expectations when it came to her cracker cookies. Everybody did. She loved the complete 180 people did after tasting one. It was like her little secret weapon.

She finished up her shower and got dressed. She hummed on her way to the kitchen. She ran into her father whom was making coffee. "Good morning, Dad."

"Good morning, baby girl. I see you're in a good mood."

"I am. I'm baking cookies today. I'm about to cook and fill this house with holiday cheer. Then we have the ugly sweater challenge coming. Did you see the snow? It's a good day." Iris says.
"It is. Don't forget what you and I have to finish."

"I haven't forgotten. I can't wait until Christmas morning. This will be great."

"I hope so."

"It will be. Don't worry," Iris says.

"I'm going to be optimistic and say that you're right."

"I am." Iris says and laughs. "Do you have anything in mind for breakfast?"

"Not really. I'll take whatever you're cooking."

"I guess I need to give you guys something for fuel to shovel all that snow."

"Not me. I have 2 grown and healthy sons to do that for me. Wally has help this year that won't be me."

Iris laughed loudly at that. "They're going to love that. So I'll fix grits, eggs, and bacon. The grits will stick to them. Then the minute they're done, I'm going outside to start a snowball fight."

"You aren't worried about them ganging up on you?"

"Nope. Not at all." Iris says and starts cooking. She figures the minute they smelled bacon, they'd come running. Sure enough they did. "You two are worse than dogs."

"We like you too, Iris." Wally says and sits down. Barry did the same.

"Good morning." Barry says.

"At least this one has manners." Iris says in a sarcastic tone.

"I know, and I raised you both better than that." Joe says as he eyes his son.

"Sorry, Dad and Iris. Good morning."

"That's better." Iris says and smiles.

"So, what are we doing today?" Wally asks.

"Did you see the snow? It really came down last night. I say snowball fight and we build a snowman. Then it's ugly sweater day. Don't worry, I already washed them and put in a ton of fabric softener so you can't claim they're itchy and take it off. Plus, I'm backing cookies. Fun day ahead."

"We're really doing that ugly sweater thing then, huh?" Barry asks.

"Yes. It's tradition. I changed my mind about the sweater I want you to have too. Rudolph here will get his light up nose sweater."

Wally huffed then looked at Joe. "Thanks for giving me the middle name Rudolph. I love it." He adds with much sarcasm.

Joe started to laugh heartily. "Rudolph is a nice, distinguished name. We should have made that your first name."

"Thank god you didn't."
"It's not as bad as Bartholomew." Barry adds.

"It's worse than Bartholomew. At least you got a nice nickname out of it." Wally says.

"Stop being such a scrooge, Rudy." Iris says.

"I am not being a scrooge, What's for breakfast?" He asks to change the subject.

"Grits, eggs, and bacon. I figured you and Barry needed a hearty meal before you went out and started to shovel the snow. You need the fuel. I'll even have hot chocolate, complete with mini marshmallows waiting for you when you finish."

"I don't know why you can't help. You're just a girl. You can help."

"That's never going to happen, Wally. Why should I when I have my big strong brother to do it? I do all the cooking. I even wash your clothes. You have no reason to complain."

"Just for once I'd like to sit back and watch you do the grunt work for once, that's all." Wally says.

"Just for once I'd like to sit back and watch you cook a meal I'll eat."

"You know I can't cook."

"That's why you need to hush and stop trying to mess with the status quo. Barry isn't complaining, and he's a guest."

"He can't complain because he is a guest."

"I'm right here." Barry says.

"Well, Barry, how do you feel about doing the grunt work while I keep you fed?" Iris asks.

"I have no complaints."

"Thank you, Barry."

"Sell out." Wally says as he looks at Barry.

"Hey. I'll be a sell out. She keeps me fed. Well fed and she doesn't even like me."

"I'd like you a lot better if you didn't say jerky things and insult me. We started off on a great foot."

"For the millionth time, I apologize. Ok? Can we just move past it?"

"Fine. We can. It's all water under the bridge."

Joe just watched the exchange and said nothing. He knew for a fact that Iris liked Barry just fine. But their bickering would make someone think they didn't like each other. He just wondered just how long they would keep up that act. He was still staying out of it no matter what. They were all adults and didn't need his input. He would only step in and intervene if things got really out of hand.

Iris just finished cooking in silence. Things seemed to be going nicely. Even if she and Barry did act like they weren't sworn enemies, she still had the lucky charm of Wally thinking that she was back with Josh. He knew his sister and knew that she was loyal and wasn't a cheater. So it was perfectly ok for her and Barry to get along. They just had to keep that up for 3 more weeks until
they all went back to school. Then she wouldn't have to pretend anymore. It wasn't as big a headache as she originally thought it would be. The worst part was refraining from touching him or kissing him in front of Wally or her father. Plus the sneaking around they did to hook up, but she found that part exciting. Just the fear of getting caught turned her on. It wouldn't be pretty if they go caught, but it was still exciting.

"Are you baking any pies?" Wally asks out of nowhere.

"Nope. Lorraine did. She sent us 2 sweet potato. Do you like sweet potato pie, Barry?"

"I've never had it."

"Have you had pumpkin?"

"Yes."

"Well, sweet potato is better. You'll love it." Iris says and finishes cooking. They all sat down to have the meal that Iris prepared.

"Duty calls. I guess I should get ready for work." Joe says and then he's off.

"Come on, Barry. We have snow to shovel."

"I'll just clean up even though I cooked. I'll get started on your hot chocolate when I finish." Iris says. The guys just leave without a word and geared up to shovel the few feet of snow. They really had to dig Joe's car out because the snow plow came along and buried his car even more. Wally groaned at that. He had to dig out his car as well as Iris'. He was just glad that he did have help from Barry. He'd be out there all day if it wasn't for him. Joe did help him, but Barry was younger and more fit than his father was.

Joe left and Iris let the guys get good and comfortable with finishing up their shoveling. She went upstairs and got dressed in some good snow gear. It was time to play in the snow and she had a plan. One that one of the guys would not like.

They both looked up when they saw her step outside. "You decided to help out?"

"Of course not. I just came to watch. Maybe make a snow angel. Gotta get at least one of those in."

"As long as you don't mess up our progress, you can make all the snow angels you want." Wally says.

"Thanks." Iris replies and gives Barry a look. She hoped like hell that he understood what she was trying to convey to him. She started making snowballs. She was glad that Wally wasn't paying attention. "Hey, Wally!" She called. Wally looked up at her and she hurled a snowball towards him. It landed right on the side of his head.

"That was so uncalled for."

"Really? How's this?" She asks and threw two more at him. By this time, Barry had made some.

"Rudy!" Barry called and pelted him with two snowballs.

"Get him!" Iris says. She and Barry worked together to start and end the snowball war.

"You guys aren't playing fair!"
"All's fair in love and snowball fights." Iris says. She watched Wally attempt to make snowballs, but he was outnumbered. He was getting hit from two different sides.

"Alright! I quit!" Wally says as he laughs.

"Should we quit, Iris?" Barry asks.

"Nope." Iris then made a running leap into Wally and knocked him into the huge snow pile. She and Barry worked together again to almost bury him under it.

"I'm going to kill you two!" Wally screamed at they piled more snow on him.

"You're not going to do anything." Barry made more snowballs as Iris continued to bury him in the snow.

"He sure isn't."

"This is so unfair! You caught me off guard and then you gang up on me."

"You deserve it, Rudolph. Look, Barry. His nose is red!"

"Ha!"

Wally finally climbed his way out of the snow pile. As soon as he dusted the snow off himself, he was bombed with snowballs. "Alright! Alright! You guys win! I quit!"

Iris walked over to Barry and they high fived each other. "Good work, partner." She says.

"Excellent work, partner."

"You two planned this, didn't you?"

"Doesn't matter if we did or we didn't. You got what you deserve." Iris says and walks back towards the front door.

"I'm going to get my revenge!" Wally called after her.

"Sure you will!" Iris says dismissively and walks into the house.

Wally turned to Barry. "Well played."

"Thanks. You had it coming."

"Just remember. I'm going to get my revenge." Wally says.

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Iris went back inside the house and removed her snow gear. She was happy that she and Barry worked together to really give it to Wally. He deserved it for being such a pain in the ass. She got dressed in just some jeans and a tee because she was cooking and had to put her ugly Christmas
sweater on. Plus she had pictures to take. She needed evidence to post on her Instagram page to embarrass Wally and Barry.

She had their hot chocolate waiting as she promised when they finally came in. They both looked like human popsicles. She found it funny. "Leave those wet boots by the front door!" She called.

They came into the kitchen and found her prepping for the amount of cooking she had to do. They headed straight for the hot chocolate. They sat down and just watched Iris. Barry sat there in awe watching her work her magic. He saw her rinsing something that looked like huge leaves and he wondered what the hell it was.

"What's that?" He asks as he takes a sip.

Iris looked at him and smiled at his innocence. "They're collard greens."

"What's that?"

"Black people food." Iris replies and Barry and Wally laughed.

"Don't worry, Barry. They're good."

"I don't doubt they are. I've just never seen them before."

"That doesn't surprise me. My friend Laurel didn't know what they were either."

They sat there and continued to warm up and drink their hot chocolate. Barry then watched Iris make the macaroni and cheese. He had never seen that made other than from the box. He realized just how different his life was from theirs. He saw her put a ton of cheese in it and had to question it. "That's a lot of cheese."

"Oh, you poor thing! You've never had homemade mac and cheese before?"

"Nope."

"Tragic."

"It really is." Wally says.

"Well, you'll like this. I promise it's not too much cheese."

"If you say so."

Wally stood. "I'm going to take these wet clothes off."

"Me too."

"Hurry back. Your sweaters are waiting for you."

They both groaned and left while Iris went back to cooking. When they came back down later, they were greeted with a Santa hat and their sweater. Wally just put his Rudolph one with the light up nose on without a word. Barry looked at his that was a snowman with actual buttons and a carrot nose that stuck out. Iris had on hers that was Santa and Mrs. Claus. Mrs. Claus had on an actual apron that stuck out.

"This is a form of torture." Barry says as he puts it on.
Iris laughed. "I know." She says and started taking pictures.

"Pictures? You didn't say anything about pictures." Barry says.

"Oh, these are going all over her Instagram page."

"He's right you know." She says and snaps more pictures. She set the timer so that they could do a group photo. "I'll do another one when Dad gets home." She went back into the kitchen and came out with a plate of her cracker cookies.

Barry had to admit they looked better than they sounded. "Are these the infamous cracker cookies?"

"Yes. Eat the cookie, Barry. Eat the cookie."

"That's gross, Iris."

"What? I'm telling him to eat the cookie."

"I know what eat the cookie means, Iris."

"What does it mean?" Barry asks.

Iris just looked away. Wally took that one. "It means to go down on a girl."

Barry almost choked on that and he hadn't even taken a bite. "I'm afraid to eat that now."

"Oh, just eat the damn cookie, Barry."

He bit into the cookie that was absolutely delicious. He was surprised it tasted that good made out of saltine crackers.

Iris giggled. "He ate the cookie."

He smiled to himself when he thought that he was going to eat the cookie the first chance he got.

Iris awoke Christmas morning giddy, happy, and excited like a little kid. She had always been like that about Christmas so it couldn’t be helped. She had to get a head start on fixing their dinner because they were heading to church. She had to put the turkey in because of how long it took to cook. Then they had presents to open. She was excited for Barry to open his gift. She wondered what he got her.

She ran to the bathroom and then headed downstairs. She’d get the jump on cooking and then wake her guys. It was still dark out but she wanted to wake them. She wanted to put on more Christmas music loud enough to wake them. She decided against doing that. She could wait a few hours. She went on Instagram and looked at the comments from the shitload of pictures she uploaded from the day before. She had to put on record those ugly Christmas sweaters and the snowball fight they had. She giggled to herself when she saw her friend Tracy ask who Barry was and if he was single. She absently played around on there until she couldn’t take it anymore. She had to wake them up.

She ran to Wally’s room first. She burst the door open and ran in like she did the morning she and
Barry met. They were both sprawled out and snoring, Wally on his bed and Barry on the air mattress. She looked at her adorable Bear and again thought he looked cute when he was sleep. She knew they would both be mad as hell that she woke them but she didn’t care. It was Christmas. They could sleep in the next day or take a nap after church.

“Rise and shine! It’s Christmas morning! Santa came!” Iris nearly screamed with childlike enthusiasm.

Wally groaned. “I knew you would do this.”

Barry groaned as well. “Really?” He asks without opening his eyes.

“Yes, really. Get up! Come on! I’ll give you guys a few minutes or I’m coming back with my bullhorn.”

“I think we should get up, Barry. She really has one and isn’t kidding about using it.”

“He’s right, Bartholomew. I suggest you get up.” Iris says and leaves the room and runs to Joe’s. She had to knock on his door because she knew better than to just run into his room without knocking. Wally didn’t matter though she wouldn’t go anywhere near his door if Linda was there. “Dad! Wake up! It’s Christmas morning.”

“You’re lucky I love you.” Joe says from behind the door.

“I love you too, Dad. Now come on!”

“I’ll be down in 5 minutes.”

“I’ll be waiting.” Iris replied and ran back downstairs. She did put on Christmas music this time. She needed them to get more excited about it. She really thinks she’s more excited because of Barry. She was happy to be home with her father and Wally but he really made it better.

Minutes later Wally and Joe came downstairs. Barry rushed down a minute later. They all looked like they had just been woken up out of their sleep after a night of partying. She needed them to liven up. They were seriously looking like the Walking Dead.

“Ok, we’re here. Let’s get this started.” Wally says in a less than eager tone.

“Ok, you need to cheer up. It’s Christmas morning. Act better than that.”

“You sound like Mom.” He says and she really does.

“Thanks. I try. Now, we need to eat first because I think sending you to church on an empty stomach would be cruel, so we have to do that then it’s gift opening time.”

They all just followed Iris to the kitchen in silence.

“I think it should be ladies first when it comes to opening gifts.” She says as she smiles, claps her hands and bounced up and down. She was really in the Christmas spirit.

“Sure. We have no problem with that. After that, I think the man of the house should go first. That’s only fair.”

“Then Barry because he’s a guest.”

“Just make me go last.” Wally says.

“That’s right. Hush Wallace.” Barry says.

“You’re still on my list for siding with the enemy yesterday.”

“You deserved that.” Iris says.

“That’s ok. You’ve both just left yourselves open to payback. Just remember that.”

“Shut up, Wallace.” Iris sat down on the floor and started looking for names. She easily found gifts with all their names and handed them out. She opened hers first and found the purse she wanted that Wally got her. He always got her what she wanted thanks to Linda. “Thanks, Wally.”

“You’re welcome, Irey. I’m still going to get you.”

Iris rolled her eyes. “Ok. Dad you’re next.”

Joe opened his gift from Iris and found a Duke Ellington album to add to his collection. “Thanks, Baby girl. This makes up for the one you broke when you were younger.”

“That was my mission.” She says and smiles. “You’re next Barry.”

“You guys really didn’t have to get me anything.”

“Just shut up and open your gift.” Iris says.

Barry said nothing and unwrapped his gift from Iris. He laughed when he found a pair of boxing gloves. “This is cute.”

Wally burst out laughing when he saw them. “That's funny.”

“I figured I’d get you a pair so that you can practice before our rematch. I won’t go easy on you then.”

“Great.” He says and smiles.

Wally opened his gift from Iris as well and found the beats headphones he wanted. “Thanks, Irey. I really wanted these. Thanks for telling her, Barry.”

“No problem.”

“Ok, it’s my turn again.” She opened her gift from Joe and found two tickets to Janet Jackson’s next concert. “Oh. My. God. Dad! Janet Jackson tickets!” She leapt up and hugged him. “You’re the best father in the world.”

“I know. You’re welcome, baby girl. You and Linda have fun.”

“I can’t wait to tell her.” Iris sat back down on the floor like a little girl and handed out more gifts. Wally got gift cards from Barry and Joe, Joe got cigars and liquor from Barry and Wally. Iris opened up her gift from Barry that was a pair of Wonder Woman Converse’s. She thought that was the cutest thing in the world. “Are you trying to get me to dress like you?” She asks casually.

He just shrugged. “Wally told me you like Wonder Woman.”

“I do. Thanks, Barry. Well, that’s it for the gifts under the tree.”
“Right. Let’s go.” Joe says and stands and so do Iris and Wally.

Barry just looked up and stood too. They all followed Joe without a word through the kitchen and he led them to the basement door. “Where are we going?” Barry asks.

“Oh, we have to give you your other gift. It’s downstairs.” Joe says.

Barry was actively confused. He wondered what the hell kind of gift they gave him that could be downstairs in the basement. It had a laundry room that was separate from the other part. They passed through the basement that seriously didn’t look like a basement. It was full of boxes and old toys, but it was still finished and looked like a living room. Barry felt like scratching his head. He hoped this wasn’t some weird prank where someone in a hockey mask jumped out and scared the shit out of him. Even worse would be Patty.

He saw a huge red bow on the door. He looked at them and the stoic looks on their faces. He didn’t know what to expect or how to react. “What’s going on?” He asks as he looks at each West family member.

“It’s your gift, Barry. We hope it’s not too much.” Joe says and pats Barry on the shoulder.

He looked at them again in confusion. “What?”

“Just open the door.” Wally says.

Barry stepped forward and opened the door and saw a bedroom. Not a huge bedroom, but a nice sized one with a full sized bed, dresser, and a table. “I don’t get it.” He says.

“It’s your room, Barry.” Joe says.

“What?”

“It’s your room. I told you that you can stay here anytime you want, so you need your own room if you decide to. We’re not trying to keep you from your family or force you into ours, but it kind of broke my heart when Wally told me how you felt going to stay with your relatives. You’re an official part of this family and always welcomed here.” Joe says.

Barry felt an overwhelming sense of emotion overcome him and knew that he’d probably lose it and cry his ass off. He’s felt more welcomed in that house than he ever did with people he shared DNA with. He was an emotional guy, and didn’t think that whole “men shouldn’t cry” was even necessary.

Wally, Joe, and Iris looked at Barry try to keep it together. Wally needed to tease him. “You’re not going to cry, are you?” Wally asks.

“I think it’s too late for that.” Barry says as he wiped his eyes. “This is the nicest thing anyone has ever done for me.”

“We’re nice people.” Iris says.

“Yeah, and I need you to get out my room. I share a room with you enough.” Wally jokes.

“I agree. I was tired of you too. I just couldn’t say anything.” Barry jokes as well.

“Enjoy your room, son. Now I need to go back to bed.” Joe says and he’s off.

“Me too. I won’t put your stuff in the hallway, but you need to pack ASAP.” Wally says and makes
a face at Barry. He’s off as well and left Barry and Iris alone.

Barry went and sat on the bed. He looked up at Iris. He wondered if she’d think less of him if he broke down and cried. That’s what he wanted to do.

Iris looked at Barry and noticed he looked on the edge. He really looked like he was about to lose it. He had the right to. She thinks they may have done too much. “It’s too much, isn’t it?” She asks fearfully.

“God, no. This is amazing and it really is the nicest thing anyone has ever done for me.” He smiled up at her.

“Good. I’m glad. We didn’t want to overwhelm you or creep you out.”

“I’m not creeped out at all. I am overwhelmed, but not in a bad way. I just can’t believe you guys would do this for me.”

Iris walked over and sat on the bed next to him. Even if Wally or Joe came downstairs, it would only look like they were talking. “Why can’t you? You’re an amazing person that had some not so amazing things happen to you. My father said that if you and Wally had been friends when that happened, he would have taken you in. He hates that you had to live in that house and feel that way. Everybody can come to this house and feel safe. That includes you.”

Barry got up and closed the door though he thought that would be risky. “Won’t it be weird if we break up or something? What about when Wally finds out? There will be tension in the house. I don’t want to break up your good family dynamic. You guys get along so great and I don’t want to ruin that.”

“First of all, we’re not breaking up.”

“You know what I meant.”

‘Yeah, I do. I get what you mean. I’m worried about that too. I’m not going to lie to you. We’ll cross that bridge when we get to it.” Iris says.

“Ok. I still can’t believe this. I have to talk to my family about it, but I’ll be 21 in 2 weeks and they can’t do anything. I have to find a way to get my stuff.”

“We’ll drive there in a few days. You can even visit your father.”

“What did I do to deserve you?”

“You hit the lottery.” Iris says and pecks him on the lips. “And the best part of this is, we have another place to sneak and fool around. They barely come down here. I can just do a lot of laundry.” Iris says and smiles. She stood up. “Don’t forget we go to church in a few hours. You have a suit or some dress pants or something, right?”

“Yeah, I do. We have to wear that when we go to track meets.”

“Good. I can’t wait to see you in it. ” Iris winks at him and leaves him in his room.

He looked around and just couldn’t believe he finally had a place to belong since he lost his parents.
Iris left the basement and went to check on the turkey and went up to her room. She’d wind down before getting ready for church. She laid down to rest for a bit then remembered Barry’s other gift. She reached for her phone when it went off.

**Look under your pillow. That’s your real Christmas gift. I almost forgot to tell you.**

Iris giggled to herself. *You’re kidding.*

**No. Look under your pillow.**

*Look under yours.*

Iris reached under her pillow and pulled out a red box. She got excited.

*Don’t open yours yet. I’m coming down so we can open them together.*

Barry smiled at that. He was glad she wanted to do that. He wanted to see the look on her face.

Ok. Waiting for you.

Iris jumped up and grabbed her hamper. She’d make it look like she was just doing laundry. She was going to be putting things that were already clean in her basket just to be with him. She practically ran downstairs and went to the basement. She crept to Barry’s room and shut the door. “Alright. We have to do this quickly because we definitely don’t need to get caught down here.”

“How will you explain being down here in the first place?”

“Laundry.” She says and smiles.

“Right. Well, you go first.” Barry says.

Iris got giddy again and opened her box. She lit up like the Christmas tree upstairs when she saw her gift. He got her a bear holding a flower necklace. It was so cheesy and adorable and she loved him and it. “I love it. How did you find this?”

“It wasn’t hard at all. The jewelry store already had it. I’m glad you like it.”

“I love it. It’s you and me.” Iris says and kisses him on the lips.

“I know you really can’t wear it, but I thought it was cute since you call me Bear and I call you Rosie.”

“I get it and I love it. We are the cheesiest couple on the planet, you know that right?”

“I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“Open yours.”

Barry got excited like Iris just was and opened his box. Iris got him a watch. He loved that she knew he was a watch kind of guy. “I love it. You know me well enough to know I like watches.”

“Yeah, I do. I’m glad you love it.”
“I do. I really loved the boxing gloves.” Barry says and smiles.

“I figured you would. I’ll beat you up again and kiss all your bruises to make them better. Deal?”

“Deal.”

Iris took out the turkey and made a mad dash for her room. She settled down a bit before she got ready for church. She rummaged through her dresses to find the perfect one. She wanted to look presentable for church. She decided on a red dress since it was Christmas. She managed to look stunning without even trying. She hurried downstairs and found Joe just sitting, staring at the tree. He seemed to be really lost in thought.

“Are you ok, Dad?” Iris asks as she approaches him.

“Yes. Just thinking about your mother, is all. Today is a good day for thinking about her.”

“It is. Her love of Christmas rubbed off on me.”

“All of her rubbed off on you. She died when you were 8, but you still turned out like her. It’s amazing to see.”

“Thanks, Dad. So…opening gifts was great.” She says as she goes to sit down next to him.

“It was. The best part was Barry’s reaction to his gift.”

“That was pretty great. He never saw that coming.”

“No, he didn’t. I’m glad we could do that for him. Nobody should feel how he felt. I just think of him being a little kid and feeling that way. I hurt thinking of you and Wally feeling out of place like that.”

“Yeah, that sucks. But we’re all moving forward. The past was bad for all of us, but we have to move on.” Iris says.

“You’re right. How did you get wiser than I am?”

“Because I learned from the best. But Dad, I hope church isn’t awkward or weird for us.”

“Why?”

“You know why.”

“You’re worrying for nothing.”

“Am I?”

“Yes, you are. Changing the subject, but I can’t wait for dinner.”

“I can’t wait for that concert!” Iris exclaims in excitement. “I can’t wait. Linda and I are going to have so much fun.”

“I’d like to go too.”
“For what? That’s not your kind of music.”

“I know, but it’s Janet Jackson. One of the hottest women on the planet. Your dear old Dad still has eyes.”

Iris giggled. “I’m going to set you up on a date. A nice woman from the church. I’ll ask Lorraine who’d be good for you.”

“You know, Iris. I thought about what you said, I think I do need to go on a date or something. But how do I explain this?” He asks as he holds up his left hand revealing his wedding band. “It might scare a woman off.”

“It could. But I think it’s endearing that you still wear it. That really shows love and respect for Mom. How do you feel about taking it off?”

“I haven’t had this ring off my finger in about 25 years, Iris. It might not come off. I don’t know how I feel about that, honestly. What would I do with it? Just keep it in a box?”

“Give it to Wally. I have Mom’s.”

Joe was about to respond when Barry walked in the living room. “Hey. If I’m interrupting, I can come back.” He says and kind of stands there awkwardly. He didn’t mean to intrude.

Iris turned towards him and his appearance almost made her do a double take. He looked good. Really good. Her Bear looked good in a suit. And he had on a red tie.

And glasses.

Barry had on glasses.

She almost fainted. She knew he would look hot in glasses, and he does.

“No, it’s ok. We were just talking.” Joe says.

Iris continued to look at him. “I didn’t know you wore glasses.” She says casually.

“Only for reading really small things. I figured I’d need them to read the small print in a bible.”

“You’ve really got that whole nerd thing down to a science, don’t you?” Iris asks. She knows he gets that she’s teasing him. She told him he’s an adorable nerd, and he believes that

Barry hunched his shoulders. “Kind of hard to get away from, I guess.”

Joe watched the exchange and felt like he was the one interrupting.

Iris stood. “I’ll be right back.” She walked towards the guest bathroom. She needed a moment.

Barry tried and failed not to watch Iris walk away. She looked amazing in that red dress. He followed her with his eyes. He saw Joe watching him. He started to fidget nervously. He didn’t mean to watch her the way he did. He really didn’t mean to watch her like that in front of Joe. She looked too good in that dress though.

Joe just looked at him with a resigned look on his face. He thought it was funny, but he didn’t want Barry to know that.

Wally came jogging down the stairs moments later and saw Barry standing there looking like a
deer caught in headlights, and Joe just looking at him. “What’s with you?” He asks as he walks into the living room.

“Nothing. Just a little tired. Iris did wake us up early.”

“Where’s Iris?”

“In the bathroom. We need to get ready to go.” Joe says and stands.

Iris came out a moment later and just walked to get her coat. Barry forced himself not to watch her since Wally was looking at him funny. He really liked how she looked in that dress. He needed to get that thought off his mind and pull himself together.

“Wally, I need you to let me get on your back.” Iris says once the belt on her coat is tied.

“Nobody told you to wear those shoes and there’s snow on the ground.”

“Do you expect me to wear boots or something? Because I can’t. Just hush and let me get on your back.”

“Call Josh. I’m sure he’ll carry you in his arms.” Wally replies flatly.

“What sense does that make when you’re right here?”

“You’re not getting on my back.”

“Iris, I’ll hold your hand and make sure you don’t slide. Ok?” Joe says as he opens the door to let his kids out.

“Thanks, Dad.” She made a face at Wally before stepping outside.

He turned to Barry. “She’s only dressed like that because her boyfriend will be there. We’re going to church and she’s dressed like she’s going on a date.”

Barry hesitated. “Well, I’m sure he’ll appreciate how pretty she looks.” Then he thinks about it. “He’ll be there?”

“Yeah.”

“Then you’ll finally get the chance to tell him you’ll kill him if he hurts her.”

“I can’t tell him that in church, but after, he’ll be shaking in his boots.” Wally says and walks off.

Barry just followed Wally out the door without a word. Joe locked up and led Iris by the hand to the car like he promised. Once they were settled in the car, Iris did think of Josh. She thought Wally would really try some slick stuff and say something to him, and Josh would give her away. She had to play defense. She needed to get to Josh before Wally did. Then she thought that was a cruel thing to do even if he understood. She had the right to mind to finally tell Wally to fuck all the way off, but Barry just got his room. She didn’t want to snatch his home away from him. She hoped like hell Wally moved out after he graduated and got a job.

They just rode along in Joe’s car in a comfortable silence. Iris was beyond tense but she did her best to keep it under wraps. She had to put it out of her mind until she saw him. She was happy when they finally got there. She started searching for Lorraine’s car and was happy to see it. She figured Josh and the rest of the family was already there. She wanted to make a mad dash for it and run in there, but she couldn’t with those damn heels on.
They all got out the car and Wally turned to Barry. “Just so you know, black people church lasts a long time.”

“How long?”

“Almost an entire work day.”

“Are you serious?” Barry asks Wally in an incredulous tone.

Joe laughed. “It’s not that long, but yes, we’re looking at about 3 hours give or take.”

“It’s Christmas though, Dad.” Iris says.

“Right. 6 hours then.” Joe says.

Barry didn’t know how to receive that. This is what he signed up for. He couldn’t back out now. He didn’t want to. He could handle sitting in church for a few, several hours.

They all walked inside the huge church together. Iris felt like someone was really looking out for her when she saw the Miller family chatting with Pastor Johnson and his wife. She wouldn’t be rude and interrupt them talking, but at least she had Josh in her eyesight. She admired all the military men in their dress blues. It was great to see. Lorraine looked awesome in a red suit. Iris truly adored that woman. Lorraine lit up and threw them a wave when she saw them. She finished up the conversation and pulled her guys away.

Thank god for small miracles. She could pull him aside. Lorraine was a lifesaver. She pulled her family over to the West’s and immediately gave Iris a hug. “Hi, Iris. Merry Christmas!”

“Hi, Lorraine. Merry Christmas.”

“Merry Christmas, everyone.” Lorraine says once they break apart. The men all uttered the same things to each other. It was kind of daunting to see the men stand around and kind of just eye each other. Wally was looking at Josh, Josh was looking at Barry, Barry was looking at Iris and Josh, Joe was looking at everybody, hoping nothing happened. Barry already knew he had gotten the girl, but he still felt a little inadequate with this guy standing in front of him in his military suit. He still had to wonder what made Iris choose him. But Josh had Wally’s fucking approval; something he would never have. That made him bitter. He had to brush it aside because Iris has shown him her heart and whom she is. She got him a permanent place in that house. He had no reason to doubt her or them. It still hurt that his friend liked the other guy for his sister more than him. He would never hurt Iris, and it killed him to think that Wally thought he would or that he wasn’t good enough for her.

Iris saw all the stare downs and decided to do something about it. “Josh, can I talk to you alone for a moment?”

“Sure. Excuse us.” He says and puts his hand on her back. Barry felt a small tinge of jealousy at that. He couldn’t help it. They walked over to a secluded corner. “What’s up, Iris?”

Iris looked at him and prayed that he didn’t have his hopes up that she changed her mind. “You’re going to think I’m a terrible person.”

“I could never think you’re a terrible person, Iris.”

“You haven’t heard what I’m about to tell you.”
"You can tell me anything, Iris. I'd never think you were a terrible person."

“Well, Wally is under the impression that you and I got back together.”

He raised his eyebrow at her that was his signature move. “Really? How is that?”

“Because I told him that we were to get him off my back. He’s like a dog with a bone.”

“So what do you want me to do Iris? Pretend that we’re together to make your brother happy?”

Iris made a face to let him know that’s exactly what she wanted. “No, not really. I don’t know. I guess. He wants you to come over the house so he can have a talk with you.”

Josh started to laugh. “Have a talk with me about what?”

“That whole if you hurt me, he’ll kill you bit he’s so intent on. He told me he approves of you for me, but still wants to tell you that. I guess he really does because he didn’t lose it when I told him that you were my first.”

Josh looked shocked. “You told him that?”

“Yeah. Why shouldn’t I? It’s true. I did it to shut him up after he drilled me about you screwing me with your eyes at the tree lot.”

“I did not screw you with my eyes. And I really don’t think we should talk about this in church.”

“Josh? Please. We both know you did. There’s no reason to deny it.”

“Alright, you got me. But still this is so messed up. So messed up, Iris.”

“I know it is. Just play along today. I will make up a reason for our break up. Please?”

“Only because it’s you. I hope this Barry guy is worth all this.”

“He is.”

“It should hurt me to hear that, but it doesn’t because I actually believe it too. Let’s go.” He says and walks her back to their families. They were all standing right where they left them. Iris felt like all eyes were on her. She couldn’t wait to be comfortably in her seat so that she could put this out of her mind.

“Is everything alright?” Lorraine asks.

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Good. We can all go to our seats.”

They all made their way in and Iris firmly planted herself between Joe and Wally just because. Barry wondered what Iris and Josh talked about. He was sick of the situation at hand. He’d talk to her about it later. He just hated seeing Iris with her ex that even he could see was a good catch. He didn’t want to feel how he felt days ago so he let it go. He had to for his own sake.

They all got into the sermon. He soon realized that they weren’t joking about how long they’d be there. He enjoyed it though. He felt spiritual and moved. He really felt that way when the choir sang and he heard Lorraine’s voice. She truly sounded like an angel when she sang. He just remembered all the good things he knew about the woman and the ability she had to make him feel
loved. He thought of how Iris said how close they are and how she let that go because of her breakup with Josh. Now she had the opportunity to have that back. She had the opportunity to have this woman be her mother in law and she chose him instead. He felt awesome after that realization. He glanced over at Iris and fell in love with her all over again.

They finished up with church and made their way back home Iris was relieved Wally didn’t get the chance to run his mouth. She started thinking that maybe having her and Josh break up wasn’t such a good idea. She had a light bulb go off on the way back to the house. But really all she wanted to do was finish cooking, have dinner and go to bed. She was exhausted mentally and physically. The holiday had worn her out.

They returned home and everyone pretty much had the same idea that Iris had. “How long until dinner?” Wally asks as they walk through the door.

“2 hours, I guess. Good thing I did most of the prep work yesterday. I just need to put things in the oven.”

“You need help?” Barry decided to ask.

“Sure. I could always use an extra set of hands. Thanks.”

“Play nice.” Wally says and heads upstairs.

“You should be helping too!” Iris yells after him.

“You know Wally can barely boil water.” Joe says.

“I know. I was just messing with that big lug. I don’t need his kind of help.”

“I’d offer to help, but I know you’ll just yell at me.” Joe says.

“I don’t yell.”

“You do. Good luck Barry.” Joe says and heads upstairs as well.

“Thanks for offering, Barry.” She then walked towards the kitchen with Barry following.

“No problem. I have to eat too.”

Suddenly, Iris hits Barry on the arm. “What was that for?”

“Those.” She says, pointing to his glasses. “You look great in glasses. I thought that when we first met. You’ve really got that whole Clark Kent thing going on and I like it.”

“Really? I think I really look like a huge geek in them.”

“You do, but in the best way. I love the nerd thing, Bear. You’re an adorable nerd.” Iris went to put her apron on and wash her hands. She kicked off her heels and walked to the fridge. Barry just watched her. Sort of like how he did his first morning there. He felt like they had come so far since
then. It wasn’t a long time at all, but it was more about quality than quantity to him. Nobody was going to tell him that he didn’t or couldn’t really love Iris because of the time frame. He would refute and dismiss all claims of that. He knew what he felt and knew that it wasn’t just lust or whatever else someone wanted to call it. He loved her. And she loved him. He was sure of that.

“I love you, Iris.” He says out of nowhere. He meant it all the way deep down to his bones.

Iris turned to look at him. “I love you, Barry.” She says and means it with everything in her.

“I have an idea.” Barry says.

“An idea?”

“Yes. But we’ll talk about it when we’re alone and not afraid to be interrupted. Fair enough?”

“Yes. Now take off your Jacket, roll up your sleeves, and help me.”

“Yes, Begonia.”

“I hate that damn name. And I hate you for coming up with it. I’m gonna start calling you Manilow.”

“That’s just wrong.”

“And Begonia isn’t?”

“No, Begonia is awful. But I only call you that because you’re great enough to pull it off.”

“You are laying it on thick, and I love it.” Iris put everything that needed to go in the oven in there and walked to the stove. She had that feeling. “So have you called Patty yet?”

“What?”

“I asked if you called Patty yet.”

“Why would I call Patty?”

“Because she’s trying to bust your balls.” Wally says as he walks into the kitchen.

Iris had to pat herself on the back for that one. She heard someone walking down the hallway and steps. She knew every creak in that house from living in it for 20 years. Nobody knew that fact.

“I am not. I was genuinely curious.”

“Maybe you guys can go on a double date. You and Josh and him and Patty. Better yet, a triple date. I can bring Linda.”

“There will be no triple date. I’m not going out with Patty.” Barry says in a stern voice. He was glad Iris was clever enough to change the topic of conversation before Wally caught them talking, but he never wanted to talk about Patty again.

“I think he means it, Irey.”

“I think so too.”

“What about Felicity then? You are going out with her. What brought that on?”
“I texted her and wished her a Happy Hanukkah and we started talking and I decided to just go for it. I’m just lucky she said yes.”

“Well, that’s great Barry. I’m happy for you. Truly. I won’t bring up Thirstarella anymore.”

“’Thirstarella?’” Wally asks.

“Yeah.”

“That is the perfect name for her.” Wally says and laughs. Iris and Barry joined in. “it’s good to see you two getting along.”

Iris looked at Barry and shrugged. “Might as well make the best of it. We’re kind of stuck with each other.”

Iris finished cooking and actually had good help from Barry and Wally. After it all was said and done, she was beat. She felt like she was too tired to eat. The good thing was she didn’t have to clean up after. As soon as dinner was done, she was out of there.

Joe joined them and said grace as the man of the house. He of course carved the turkey and they all enjoyed the dinner Iris felt like she slaved over. She was glad she wouldn’t have to prepare a meal like that for months to come. Not until Easter and she was glad of that. Barry literally fell in love with Iris’ cooking. He hadn’t had a Christmas dinner that good ever. Her mac and cheese was award worthy and the best he ever had. There were just so many things he liked about Iris. Everything, actually. Even the fact that despite all she did for the house, cleaning was not her forte. He got the feeling that she cooked just to get out of it. He thought that was cute. He wondered if he’d be doing all the cleaning in their house when they grew old together. That was ok with him.

They finished their meal and sure enough, Iris bolted. She practically ran upstairs and got in the tub. She soaked so long she dozed off. Wally had to actually wake her. Minutes later she was in her nightgown and in her bed. She literally closed her eyes for a second when her phone went off.

Remember when I told you that pizza was my favorite food?

Iris giggled. She was tired, but not too tired for her Bear.

Yes.

Well I lied.

Is that so?

Yes. My new favorite food is your mac and cheese. I’m going to eat the whole pan.

And to think you questioned the amount of cheese I put in it.

I was wrong.
I’m glad you liked it. I’ll make you some more.

When we get married, I expect a pan of that every Sunday.

Iris laughed.

Lol.

What do I get for making that every Sunday?

I’ll keep my beard and tickle you every Sunday morning.

You’ve got yourself a deal, Mr. Allen.

Love you. Sleep tight.

Love you.

Two days later, Barry made the call to his relatives to let them know he was moving out and coming to get his things. It really didn’t go as he thought it would. His second cousin and her husband seemed genuinely sad to see him leave. He didn’t understand that being as though he never felt like he belonged there and that nobody really wanted him there. He was putting that all behind him and moving forward. He had a new family though he appreciated them taking him in. He would have wound up in foster care had it not been for them. But he was now an adult and it was time for him to leave the nest so to say. Now he just had to figure out how to broach that subject with Wally and Iris. He didn’t want him to think anything was up. He and Iris had done a good job of laying the groundwork of them not liking each other romantically anymore, but willing to get along for the sake of the house. He hoped that was enough.

He also wondered if that was too soon to officially move in. Should he really give it some time and see if things would change? He decided to do just that. Just spend the remainder of his winter break there and once the monotony wore off, if he and the West family, especially Iris, felt the same way. He did however want to visit his father. He missed him and wanted his input on the matter. He really needed to talk to him face to face. Let his father see that he’s happy. His father deserved that because he knows how miserable Barry has been since his mother died and he wrongfully ended up in prison.

After they had breakfast and he and Wally cleaned up the kitchen since Iris cooked as usual, he brought it up.

“So, Wally. I was thinking of going to see my dad.” Barry says.

“That’s a good thing. I know you probably miss him.”

“Yeah, I do. Since it’s the holidays and everything…”

“You need to have that with your father. I know my dad has took you on as another son, but you still need yours. Do you want me to go with you?” Wally asks.
“No offense, but no. I kind of like to do that on my own. It takes a lot out of me seeing him in there when he shouldn’t be.”

“No offense taken. I understand even if I really don’t. Were you planning on catching the train or what?”

“Actually, I was wondering if I could use your car.”

“You got it.”

“Thanks, Wally.”

“What are brothers for?”

Twenty minutes later, he was filling Iris is. He was so thankful for his own room so that he could actually talk to her on the phone. The good thing was Wally couldn’t be in two places at once and figure out that they were talking to each other. They still talked vaguely and quietly just in case.

It was actually kind of cute to both of them that he was in his room and Iris in hers and they were talking on the phone. He called her and loved hearing her little sing song voice answer the phone.

“Hello?”

“I’m going to visit my father tomorrow and Wally is letting me use his car.”

“Really?”

“Yup. I’d like to see you too.”

“You want me to come with you?” Iris whispered.

“Yes”

“How? And are you sure?”

“Yes. I’m sure. We’ll figure something out.”

“I know. We’re going to the movies tomorrow. He wants to see Star Wars. Maybe go out to eat or something. It’ll be fun.”

“I think that will work.”

“I think so too.” Iris says and hangs up. She then sent him a finishing text.

So I’ll leave and park my car somewhere and then you just come and pick me up and we’ll go.

Another two days later, Iris awoke excited and a bit nervous. She was going to meet Barry’s father. She didn’t know how that would go. She had never been inside a prison before. She wished that it would be under different circumstances. She was happy to meet him, but wondered what she should or would say. She was just happy that Barry wanted her to meet him. She knows how much
his father means to him and in turn he wanting her to meet him meant a lot to her.

She wondered what to wear. Then she remembered Barry telling her not to wear anything too revealing. She was just a nervous ball of energy. The last parent she met was Josh’s parents and that was a long time ago. She just hoped he liked her.

She decided to not get dressed just yet and went downstairs to play her part. They didn’t need to leave the house at the same time. She needed to keep Wally from thinking they planned something. The good thing was he would have Wally’s car and he couldn’t follow either of them. She couldn’t believe he actually offered Barry his car freely. No, yes she could. Wally was a stickler for family. He might be an asshole when it comes to her dating life, but he was an awesome friend and big brother. It was totally something that Wally would do. She could hug the big dope for that.

She got lost in thought while making pancakes when Wally came in and started making coffee.

“Morning, Irey.”

“Morning, Wally. As you can see, I’m fixing pancakes. I hope that’s ok.”

“That’s fine. Wanna do a movie marathon today? Just me and you?” He asks hopefully.

Iris felt a little tug in her chest at how hopeful he sounded. She hated to let him down, but she already promised Barry, and he really needed her. She would love to do that with Wally, but today just wasn’t the day. “I’m sorry. I can’t. I’m hanging out with Lorraine and Josh again. I already promised. You see I haven’t been over there in a few days.”

“It’s ok.” He says a little sadly.

"Why can’t you just watch movies with Barry? Or Linda?’”

“Barry’s going away and Linda is out in Keystone.”

“Barry’s going away where?”

“He’s going to visit his father.”

“Oh. That’s nice. Good for him. You’re not going with him?”

“He said he wanted to do it on his own. I told him he could borrow my car. I guess I’ll be stuck inside by myself.” Wally says and practically pouts.

“Oh, fix your face. You’ll be fine by yourself for a day. You can binge watch on Netflix. Check out Jessica Jones. We watched that and it’s awesome.”

“I will. Are you sure you can’t cancel your plans?”

“I really can’t. Lorraine made me promise.”

“And you keep your promises, I know.”

“I’ll try to come back early and hang out with you. Ok? Cheer up.” Iris says and felt a little bad about lying to him. It was a little white lie, but still. She was doing enough lying to him. But right now, Wally needed to take a backseat. Barry needed her and she wanted to be there for him. She knew that he would do the same for her give the opportunity.

“Ok. I just honestly can’t remember the last time I’ve been home totally by myself.”
“It has been some time. I can’t relate because I’m here by myself all the time.”

“That’s because you go to school here. We’re hours away.”

“You only have to deal with it for what, six more months? It’ll be like old times after that.”

“I hope it’s not hard for me to find a job.”

“You’re still thinking of being a cop, right? You’ll be a shoe in.”

“Yeah. I haven’t told Dad yet. That’s my gift to him.”

“Then you have to go to school again.”

“Just the Police Academy. The good thing is, I’m already used to running. That will be a piece of cake.”

“What will be a piece of cake?” Barry asks as he comes from the basement into the kitchen.

“The Police Academy.”

“So you really are going to follow in your father’s footsteps? That’s great. I think you’ll make a good cop.”

“Thanks, Barry.”

“So, I heard you’re going to visit your father.”

“Yup.”

“Good luck. I’m making pancakes. That should fill you up for your drive there.”

“Pancakes sound great. Thanks.”

Barry, Iris, and Wally made small talk while they ate their breakfast. Barry left and drove to the meet up spot to wait for Iris. Wally went to his room to binge watch tv and nap, while Iris went to hers and got ready. She even packed snacks and drinks for them. She left and drove to where she was meeting Barry. She parked her car and got into Wally’s.

They talked like they knew each other forever and found out things they didn’t already know about each other. They were both thankful for that alone time to really and truly get to know each other. There was literally nothing they didn’t know about each other. They took that trip for what it was and didn’t fool around once. Barry seemed to really need to get himself in the right mindset to visit his father in prison. He asked Iris to drive and pretty much zoned out. Iris let him be because she figured it would be hard for her to visit Joe in prison for murdering her mother. She couldn’t even imagine it, truth be told. She admired Barry for being able to handle that. She just thought of how messed up Barry could have turned out because of that. She knows that lesser things have ruined people.

Thanks to GPS, Iris pulled up to Iron Heights. She parked and looked over at Barry. “Are you doing ok, Bear?”

“Yes. It’s just hard coming here. I hate it.”

“I know babe. I hate it for you. Are you sure you still want me to come in with you? I won’t be offended.” Iris offers sincerely.
“No, I want you to come in. I want you and my father to meet. You’re the two most important people in the world to me, so I need for you two to like each other.’

“Of course I’ll like your father.”

“And he’ll love you.” He kissed her and stared into her eyes. “Thanks for doing this with me. It really means a lot to me.

“You’re welcome. You really mean a lot to me. Let’s go.”

They walked into the entrance of the prison with their hands joined. It was almost surreal for both of them. Going through so much security, handing over their things, it was a bit much. Barry hated that his father was caged like an animal. He’d hate it until the day he died. His father didn’t belong there.

Their names were finally called and Iris got a bit nervous. That all went away when Barry grabbed her hand and walked her up to the glass. She honestly felt a lot better when she saw his father. Barry didn’t look a thing like him, but they had the same look in their eyes. The look that said they were both good people down to their souls.

Barry was instantly happy at seeing his father. It made Iris’ heart ache at him getting to see his father.

“Hey, Slugger.”

“Hey, Dad.”

“I’m really happy to see you.”

“I’m really happy to see you too. Dad, I want to introduce you to someone. This is Iris.”

“Let me guess, your future wife.” Henry says.

Barry smiled at that. “Yes. You can tell.”

“You’re my son. You don’t think I know how you love her?”

Iris could only hear Barry’s side of the conversation, but it seemed to be going well. Henry’s face seemed to light up at talking to Barry. She was glad she got to witness that.

“I just wanted to let you two meet since you both mean so much to me.”

“Let me talk to her.”

Iris smiled when she took the phone. “Hello, Mr. Allen. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Henry. It’s nice to meet you too. You make my son happy. I haven’t seen Barry be happy in years.”

“I try. He makes me happy too. You have an amazing son.”

“Barry is the greatest thing I’ve done in life.”

“I think he had a great example.”

“I can see why he loves you.”
“You’re about to make me cry. Thank you.” Iris says.

“Thank you for making my son happy. He deserves it.”

“He does. I’ll let you have him back.” Iris says as she hands the receiver back to Barry. She had to hold back tears. It was such a tragedy that his father, as wonderful as he is, was locked away in prison. She hated that Barry had to grow up without his father. His mother too, but he could have still had his father around like she did after her mother died.

“So, how was your Christmas?” Henry asks.

“Awesome. You know that I went home with Wally and that Iris is his sister. They gave me one of the best gifts ever.”

“What’s that?”

“A room in their house. I finally have a place I feel like I belong.”

“That’s wonderful. I’m sorry I wasn’t able to be there for you like I was supposed to.”

“It’s not your fault, Dad.” Barry says.

"I know. I still feel like I should apologize. Wally’s family seem like awesome people.”

“They are.”

Barry finished up his visit with his father that seemed like it wasn’t long enough. It never felt long enough. He hated sharing such small increments of time with him. He and Iris left the prison hand in hand. Barry didn’t feel drained like he normally does. Iris was the main reason for that.

“I’m happy you got to see your dad. He’s great.”

“Thanks. I’m glad too. I feel like a weight has been lifted off me. I really needed him to see that I’m happy. Even though he’s in there, I know that my being happy is important to him and in turn makes him happy too.”

“I could see that. I’m glad I got to.”

“Thank you so much for coming with me. I know I already said that, but I really do appreciate it.”

“Again, you’re welcome.”

“I say we get back on the road. One of is going to have to find something to do when we get back so that we won’t arrive at the same time.”

“You do it. Go see a movie by yourself while I go home. I kind of promised Wally I’d get back and spend some sibling time with him. Poor thing was pouting about being home alone.”

“Cool. I can go see the new Star Wars film”

“That sounds like a plan. It’s good that I already have my car parked at the movie theatre.”

They get into Wally’s car and make the drive back to Central City. The ride back was different because Barry really was happier. Iris figured he just needed to see this father for a moment to liven his spirit. She understood that just with the time she spent with Lorraine. Sometimes you just miss that bond that you share with someone.
They arrived to the spot where Iris parked her car. They kissed deeply and passionately before she got out. “Enjoy your movie.” She says and then she’s off.

Barry really nerded out while seeing the move that was beyond awesome. Iris went home as planned and found Wally on the sofa watching Jessica Jones, but also looking like he lost his best friend. “You’re back.”

“I’m back. I told you I’d come back early to hang out with you. So, how are you enjoying the show?” She asks as she sits down with him.

“It’s awesome. I have one episode left, and then I’m watching Orange is the New Black.”

“Do you think it’s wise to put a prison show on?”

Wally thought about it for a moment. “You’re right. That might make Barry uncomfortable. Daredevil then. All the good shows are on Netflix.”

“I agree. I heard great things about Daredevil.”

“Plus Rosario Dawson is in it.”

“I’m telling Linda.” Iris jokes.

“I’m only looking.” He adds.

“I’m still telling.”

“I’m still waiting for you to bring your boyfriend over here so that I can have a talk with him. He can’t avoid me forever.

“Yes, he can. He can get sent to Japan or something.”

“You know what I meant.”

“Yeah, I do.”

Wally looked at her. “He does treat you right, though?”

“Yes. More than right. He loves me.”

“Then that’s all I ask.”

Wally and Iris settled comfortably and really got into Daredevil. Barry came in and just sat down with them. “Hey guys.”

Wally turned off the tv and he and Iris both aimed their attention towards him. “How did it go?”

“As good as it can, I guess. I needed to see him and finally let him see that I’m happy. He said you guys seem like awesome people.”

“That’s great.” Iris says.

“It really is. Glad you got some sort of payoff, even though you hate going there to see him.”

“Thanks. Yeah, I do. But it’s the hand we were dealt.”

“You didn’t mess up my car or anything did you?” Wally asks.
“Of course not. I even put gas in it. Thanks again for letting me borrow it.” Barry says as he tosses the keys to him.

Wally turned the tv back on and they all just continued to watch it.

Barry and Iris really played having Wally think that she was with Josh when she left the house. When that got tiring, she came up with another perfect plan to have Barry claim he didn’t feel well and would stay in bed all day. After breakfast, she of course made her plans of spending the day outside of the house known. This time she used her friend Laurel. She said they were spending the day together doing girly things. The good thing was Laurel lived close enough to walk to their house, but still drivable. Iris drove to her house and parked her car there. Then she actually put on what she thought was a disguise, complete with a blonde wig, sunglasses, and big baggy clothes she would not normally wear. She thought it was ridiculous that she had to go that far just to spend time with Barry, but it was also kind of fun to do those things behind Wally’s back. She quietly crept the back way to their house. She made sure to unlock the basement door before she left. She quietly slipped in the door and hurried to Barry’s room.

He got a kick out of her getup. “Did you really just put on a disguise to walk back here?”

“Yes. I couldn’t chance Wally recognizing me.”

“A blonde wig though?”

“Yes. Why? You like me with blonde hair? Do I look like Patty?”

“You just had to ruin it, didn’t you?”

“Does that make me a bad girl?”

“It does.” Barry says as he steps closer to her. He then pressed her against the wall and kissed her. “I think that makes you a very bad girl.”

“What’s my punishment for being a bad girl?”

“Are you going to keep the wig on?”

“I wasn’t planning on it. I don’t want to ruin it. Laurel uses it for her Black Canary thing.”

“Black Canary?”

“Yes. It’s this Cosplay thing she does. But that’s not important.”

“No, it’s not. Back to your punishment. Take off your clothes and get in the bed.”

Iris followed orders and slowly took her clothes off. Barry kept his eyes on her the whole time. He was going to make the best of this. He hated that they still had to somehow be quiet, just in case. He just wished they could totally let go like they did in her car that time. Nobody was around to hear her moan. That shit was music to his ears.

Once she was fully undressed, she got in the bed. She laid there and he just watched her for a
moment. Iris was undoubtedly the most beautiful woman in the world to him. He couldn’t believe she was his. “You are coming, right?” Iris asks after a few minutes. She was getting anxious.

Barry took his clothes off as well. “Sorry, I started daydreaming. I was thinking of what I was going to do to you.”

“Really?”

“Yup.” Barry got in the bed and kissed her over her entire body. He turned her over and took painstakingly long to completely cover every area of skin. He turned her back over, grabbed her thighs, and spread her legs apart. “Iris?”

“Yes?”

“Grab that pillow. You’re going to need it.” He says as he dives in.

After their many rounds and many orgasms, they just lounged in Barry’s bed. Iris liked being naked under one of his tee shirts. She hated when the time came for her to get dressed and leave. She just wanted to go up to her room, but she had to walk to get her car. She then just kissed Barry goodbye and made the short trek to get her car. She was thankful for friends like Laurel.

“Did you have fun?” She asks when she opens the door for Iris.

“I had a blast. Thanks for doing this. I owe you one. Now I really need to use your shower so that I can change my clothes. Oh, here’s your wig back.” She says and takes it off.

“You didn’t get anything on it, did you?”

“Nope. I don’t let him finish on my face like you do.” Iris jokes.

“I do no such thing!”

“I’m kidding. I’m glad you don’t because that’s just gross.”

“Well, it’s not like you need it to clear up your skin or anything. You look radiant.”

“Being in love with do that to you.” She says and smiles just thinking about Barry.

Iris finished with her shower, dressed, and got in her car and drove home. Wally was walking down the steps when she walked in. “Hey. Have fun with Laurel?”

“The best time. I love hanging with her. She’s so much fun.”

“What’s for dinner?” He asks.

“I have no idea. I don’t really feel like cooking, honestly.”

“We can order in.” He says as he walks toward the kitchen and gets the take out menus.

Iris went to the fridge and got a bottle of water. She started to drink it when Barry walked into the kitchen.

“Feeling better?” Iris asks.

“Yes. I guess I just needed to stay in bed all day.” Barry replies.
Iris let out a sly smirk that Barry saw when she took another sip of her water.

The next day, Iris woke up excited like it was Christmas again. She was giddy because it was the day of that Janet Jackson concert. She started early thinking of what she was going to wear. Janet might see her! She seriously couldn’t wait. She bugged Linda about it since she got the tickets. Linda was excited, but not as ecstatic as Iris was. It was great that her spirits were that high for it.

She looked through her closet countless times. She then finally decided on a silver dress. She was a nervous ball of energy the entire day. Wally had to tell her to calm down a few times. By the time Linda arrived, Iris was climbing the walls. Barry thought it was hilarious. He and Wally just exchanged many glances. Barry was awestruck when she came downstairs in that silver dress. She always took his breath away. No matter what, he’d always be reminded of how much of an affect she has on him.

“We’re going to see the Queen.” Iris says and hugs Linda.

“Yes, we are.”

“Tonight is going to be awesome!”

“Get her out of here before she self-destructs.” Wally says.

Barry and Linda laughed at that. “Ok.” Linda gave Wally a kiss before walking back over to the door. Barry wished that he and Iris could do the same.

“Have fun.” Wally and Barry both say and the girls were off. They settled into watching some games on tv. Iris was too excited to drive so Linda had to. They sent Wally a usie when they were in their seats. Iris was hoarse from screaming by the time she got home.

The next day was New Year’s Eve and the West family usually made a mini affair out of it. They usually just invited close family and friends. Joe always liked to make a big deal out of them each having New Year's resolutions that they had to announce to everyone with every intention of actually following.

Iris went a little crazy with getting the little affair together. She was still on her high from seeing Janet Jackson in the flesh. She got a little on edge when Patty came in. She and Linda exchanged glances. Iris sized her up. The chick came in grinning ear to ear. Iris was not pleased with that at all. She actually pulled Joe aside and almost bit his head off.

“Why on earth did you invite Thirstarella?”

“Thirstarella?” Joe asks in confusion.
“Patty. Why did you invite her here?”

“Why do you call her Thirstarella, Iris?”

“Because she is. Why did you invite her?”

Joe chuckled and Iris wasn’t in the mood for it. “It was totally by accident, baby girl. She overheard me telling Wells about it. I couldn’t not invite her.”

“Yes, you could have.”

“It’ll be fine. She should know the deal by now.” Joe says.

“But she doesn’t. She hit on Barry again last week. Even gave him her number.”

“Why is that a problem, Iris? Barry’s single, plus you have Wally to worry about.”

“I thought you were staying out of this.” Iris retorts.

“I am.” Joe says and walks away.

Barry wanted to run and hide when he saw Patty approaching him. “You never called me.”

Barry opened his mouth to respond when Iris waked up to them. “Patty! It’s so good to see you again! I had no idea you were coming! Just like last time!” She says and smiles.

“It was a last minute thing. I didn’t have plans. Plus, I wanted to see this guy again.” She says and smiles at Barry.

“Are you cheating on Felicity, Barry?” Iris asks as she looks at him and takes a sip of her champagne.

“Thanks, Iris.” He says sarcastically, but he loved that she ruined that.

“Felicity?” Patty asks.

“Yeah. That’s my girlfriend, well soon to be girlfriend from school.”

Wally and Linda watched the exchange. Wally almost lost it at that. It was the funniest thing to see.

“When did that happen?”

“I ran into her when I went to visit my father for Christmas. Things just happened. That’s why I didn’t call you.”

“Where did you visit your father?”

“He’s in prison.” Barry says.

“Prison? You’re kidding.”

“Not at all. He’s an inmate in Iron Heights. You can check for yourself. His name is Henry Allen.”

“So, how did the Felicity thing happen then?” Patty asks.

“Well, she and I are from the same town. I ran into her at Big Belly Burger and we just started
talking more from there. We counted that as our first date, but we’re going on an official date when we get back to school. I’m sorry to break it to you, but I’m off the market.”

“Well, that sucks.”

“Not for me. I’m with my dream girl. I’m sorry to let you down again. I’m pretty sure there’s guys out here dying to get with you.”

Patty was beyond embarrassed, but tried not to let it show. She turned to Iris. “I hear your old high school boyfriend came home from the army?” She asks casually.

“Yeah. And I couldn’t be happier. He’s the one. I’ll send you an invitation to the wedding.”

“Wow. That’s great. I’d love that.” Patty says, still embarrassed. She gave an awkward smile. “Could you guys excuse me for a moment?”

“Sure. Help yourself to some of the food. There’s plenty.” Iris says and smiles.

“Will do.” She says and walks off.

Once Patty was out of earshot, Wally said, “That was brutal.” He then laughed and took a sip of his drink.

Patty quietly slipped out the front door minutes later.

A few hours later everyone recited their New Year’s resolutions. They got ready for the countdown and for the ball to drop. At midnight, everyone cheered “Happy New Year!”

Barry and Iris both vowed to share a kiss later when they were alone and to share one in front of Wally the following year. No matter what.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Almost a week and a half later, Iris and Barry celebrated his birthday because he’d be leaving before then to go back to school. That Friday the 8th, they planned to have a day together. They used that to celebrate and say goodbye. The good thing was Wally was off doing the same thing with Linda for the same reason. They were both thankful for that. They holed up in Iris’ room at first even though Wally was gone and Joe was at work. Iris called herself being cute again with his birthday gift. He of course made a fuss over it, but she had to get him something for his 21st birthday. She got him a Clippers jersey since that’s his favorite team. But she got it personalized to say “Flash” on the back and the number 14. He lit up like a kid when he took it out the bag.

“Thanks, Iris. I love it.”

“I was tempted to get it to say ‘Bear’ but I think Wally would have been suspicious about that since I’m the only person that calls you that.”

“I really would have loved that, but you’re right. Later. After he knows we can do things like that.”

“I can’t wait until then. Six more months. It’ll fly by.”
“I’m really going to miss seeing your face every day.” Barry says with sincerity.

“I’m really going to miss seeing your face every day.”

“It won’t be that bad, I don’t think. At least I don’t hope. We’ll spend Valentine’s Day apart, but we’ll see each other in about 3 months for Spring Break.”

“Valentine’s Day is going to suck big time though, Barry.”

“Don’t say that.”

“Oh. I almost forgot! Give me your phone.”

He handed it over without any hesitation. He didn’t have anything to hide from her. Just Wally, and he was banking on that not being a factor after Wally graduated. If he really did have a problem with them, then they wouldn’t have to deal with each other. He just wouldn’t move into that room permanently when school ended. “What are you going to do? Hide a message for me or something?”

“No. I found this app called Couple. It’s great and allows us to share photos, voice notes and videos privately. It also allows us to sketch together, let us know we’re thinking about each other. We can even share a Thumbkiss.” Iris says as she goes to the app store and downloads it for him. “I already put it on my phone.”

“That sounds ridiculously cute.”

“It does.” She put his phone on her nightstand. “Speaking of ridiculously cute.” She leaned forward and grabbed his face. They were immediately on her bed kissing like their lives depended on it. They made love tenderly and passionately that was almost like their first time. This wasn’t a beginning for them or an ending, but merely a pause in how things were. It was everything they both could have wanted in saying goodbye to each other. She actually broke down and cried afterwards when she was tying up her robe.

Barry cradled her face and kissed her through the sobbing. “It’s going to be ok, Iris. We’re only hours away, ok? We’ll talk every day. I promise.”

“Ok.”

They both got dressed and headed out. They walked hand in hand through the aquarium, went ice skating, which was so much fun it made them both forget that would be their last time together until the spring. Then they found a restaurant that was a little far away and had dinner. They got home and were relieved no one was there. They didn’t want to chance being caught so they just watched The Avengers until Joe came home. He sat down with them. He could feel that something was different in the air, he just didn’t know exactly what it was.

Barry felt like it was a little too much for him and excused himself to go pack. He couldn’t stand seeing Iris that upset, though she tried to hide it. But he could feel it and it put an ache in his chest that he wasn’t prepared for.
The next morning, Iris got up and cooked the last breakfast she’d fix for the guys. It was so bittersweet. That time she spent with Barry changed her forever and she wouldn’t trade it for the world.

“I’m going to miss your cooking.” Wally says when he comes and sits at the table.

“Me too, it’s back to campus food.” Barry says and makes a face.

“You guys will survive.”

“You spoiled us though.”

“I’ll take that as a compliment.” She says and finished cooking. Their breakfast seemed not as upbeat as they normally are and they all knew why. A few hours later, Wally and Barry were finally ready to leave. Iris prayed that she’d keep it together, but if she cried again, she could just blame it on Wally.

Once Wally’s car was packed up, they came back into the house. Joe was sad to see his sons leave too, but was glad that Iris was still at home. He’d really be depressed without her.

Wally opened his arms to Iris and pulled her into a bear hug. He lifted her off the ground. “I’m going to miss you, Irey.”

“I’m going to miss you too, Wally.”

He gave Joe a hug as well.

“Hey, we might as well hug.” Iris says and holds her arms out to Barry. He gave her a hug and she forced herself not to collapse in his arms.

“It was nice meeting you, Iris.”

“It was nice meeting you too, Barry.”

Joe gave Barry a hug. “Goodbye, son.”

“Goodbye, Dad.” Barry says.

The guys left and headed for their dorm while Iris went to her room and lost it. She figured they were gone about an hour when she texted Barry:

*I miss you already.*

He took a little longer than normal to reply:

*Me too.*

Wally and Barry made their way back to school. They both got back into the swing of things being back in school. Wally was just glad that this was his last semester and he would be done. Barry was sad to be away from Iris but handled that with talking to or texting her every chance he got. He then had to work on that farce of pretending to date Felicity so that Wally wouldn’t be suspicious. He
already was when he noticed how much Barry was on his phone texting, even when he was studying.

“So when’s the date?” Wally asked when he saw Barry texting away.

“This Saturday.”

“Good. Because we’re taking you out Friday.”

“My birthday is Thursday.”

“I know that. We can’t go out and party on a weeknight.”

“Right.”

Thursday came and Iris called Barry singing Happy Birthday to him. It made his day. She sent him a print of her lips with that Couple app and he almost had a heart attack. It was only a week, but he missed her and her lips like crazy.

He was grinning like a fool when he walked to class and ran into Felicity. “What are you grinning so hard for?” She asks.

“My girlfriend just wished me a Happy Birthday.”

“Today’s your birthday?”

“Yes. I’m 21 today.”

“Happy Birthday!”

“Thanks.”

“We’re still doing the pretend thing right?”

“Yes.”

Barry just took her hand to make it look real. He felt a little odd holding someone’s hand that wasn’t Iris, but it was just that. He was happy as hell when they ran into Wally.

“Don’t you two look cute together.” Wally says when he sees them holding hands.

“Thanks. I think so too.” Felicity says.

“I’m just happy she agreed to go out with me.”

“Are you two doing anything for Barry’s birthday?”

“Not really, since it’s a school night.” Barry says.

“if you want to use the room, just say so.” Wally says.

Barry squeezed Felicity’s hand to get her to play along. “That would be nice.”

“No problem.”

“I’ve gotta go, Barry.” Felicity says.
Barry didn’t know what to do. He planted an awkward kiss where he purposely missed her mouth and kissed her cheek, but it looked like an accident. He just couldn’t bring himself to really kiss her.

“See you later.” Felicity says and hurries off.

“Yeah, you really need the room to work that out.” Wally says and walks off.

Barry was a little proud of himself for that.

Iris drove to school and called Barry. She just stared singing Happy Birthday to him as soon as he answered. She missed that big dork. She too walked to class grinning from ear to ear. She was smiling harder than she usually does. She ran into Laurel on her way to class.

“That huge grin must be for Barry.” She says.

“It is. Today is his birthday.” She says and smiles while absently playing with the necklace he got her. She put it on the minute Wally and Barry left.

“That’s a cute necklace.” Laurel says.

“Christmas present from Barry. It’s us.”

“What?”

“It’s a bear holding a flower. I call him Bear and I have a flower name.”

“That is so cheesy and cute. I can’t stand it.”

“He took me to Build A Bear on our first date.”

“Completely cheesy and cute. You guys are gross and I haven’t even seen you two together.”

“Yeah, we’ve gotten a little gross before he went back to school.”

“Wow. So I’m guessing you’ll have phone sex or something tonight since it’s his birthday.”

“You’re absolutely right.” Iris says as she texted Barry:

_We’re having phone sex tonight._

She looked back at Laurel as they laugh and continue walking to class.

Barry was on the brink of losing his shit when Iris sent him that text. He had never had phone sex before. He wondered how that would. He was eager to try it. The good thing was he and Iris
already had regular sex, so that would make it a lot less awkward.

He texted Felicity to know to go to her room and stay there so that she wouldn’t inadvertently run into Wally. He texted Wally as well to let him know he still needed their room. Wally laughed when he saw the text. He’d just hang out in the room of one of the guys on the team.

He barely got through his classes. He quickly studied and did what he had to do before he settled down and waited for iris to call him.

It was like she had some sixth sense about him being ready because she called him when he was at the point of really losing it.

“Hello?”

“Happy Birthday, baby.”

Barry smiled at her calling him baby. “You already wished me a Happy Birthday.”

“But I didn’t call you baby.”

“You’re right. How was your day?” Barry asks.

“Great. How was yours?”

“Great. What are you wearing?”

“Nothing.”

“Oh, shit. For real?”

“Yes. I’m completely naked.”

“I wish I was there.”

“I wish you were here too.”

“What would you do?”

“Suck you off until you came.”

“Really?”

“Mmmmm….”

“What else?”

“Touch myself in front of you like I’m touching myself now. I wish you could see me.”

“I wish I could see you too. I’d suck on your fingers after you came. Then I’d let you sit on my face.”

“Would you tickle me?”

“I’d do more than tickle you.”

“Are you touching yourself?”
“Yes.”
“Are you hard?”
“Yes.”
“Pretend it’s my tongue and stroke yourself.”
“Your tongue feels good.”
“Now stroke the tip. Does that feel good?”
“Yes. I want to put it inside you.”
“You do?”
“Yes.”
“You have to taste it first.”
“I’d taste you anytime you want.”
“I’m imagining your tongue is on my clit. It feels good, Bear.”
“I love it when you call me Bear.”
“I love it when you eat me, Bear.”
“I love the way you taste. Stick your fingers inside yourself.”

She stuck two fingers inside her wet folds slowly. She pushed deeper with a moan that somehow made Barry’s dick harder. She went further and used her thumb to make deliberate and forceful circles on her clitoris. She moaned again and heard Barry whimper in her ear.

“Mmmm…..Bear…..”

“God, I wish I was there to see this.”
“I wish…you were…here…too.” She panted out.

“Come for me, Iris. I want to hear it.”

Iris gave him what he wanted and moaned his name even more as the ripples of pleasure coursed through her body. She wanted Barry, and she wanted him now. Just the thought of him sent her further over the edge.

“Bear…..”

Barry stroked himself past the point of eruption as he listened to Iris get herself off. He wanted nothing more than to be inside of her.

“That was beyond hot, Iris.”

“Mmmmm. It was. We should do that again sometime soon.”

“We should. Do you know how bad I want you right now?”
“Almost as bad as I want you.”

The next night, the guys took Barry out for his birthday. He could officially drink and made sure he did. They took him to a strip club for crying out loud. Wally came through on his promise. Barry started drinking to lower his inhibitions to make his night out better. He was out trying to enjoy his birthday as an official grown man. He was beyond buzzed, but still coherent when they pulled him on stage since it was his birthday. He seriously didn’t know what to expect. He almost lost his shit when the stripper came out and he couldn’t help but notice that she looked like Iris. She wasn’t as beautiful as Iris, but she reminded him of her. He had to force himself not to touch her as she gave him a lap dance. He enjoyed it, but he would have much rather preferred having that from her. He hoped that wasn’t considered cheating, even though he didn’t touch the girl. All she was doing was her job. He felt a little better about it when he heard the guys cheering him on. He got even drunker after that. So drunk that they had to carry him back to their dorm. Wally just looked at Barry and really couldn’t believe his eyes. He was glad he had fun, but that was just ridiculous. Then he realized that he was probably being a hypocrite, because he got drunk and passed out for his 21st birthday too. He just made sure Barry was on his stomach in case he threw up and wouldn’t choke to death in his sleep.

Barry awoke the next morning with a hangover out of this world. He honestly didn’t even remember coming home. He woke up to Wally sitting on his bed with his earphones in looking on his laptop.

“I see Sleeping Beauty finally decided to wake up.”

“What day is it?” Barry asks.

“It’s Saturday.”

“I feel like shit.”

“You look like shit.”

“I had fun though, right?”

‘Oh, you had a good time. You stood on the table and danced. I got that on video. Then you got so drunk we had to carry you back here.’

“I danced on the table?”

Wally grabbed his phone and found the video. He played it for Barry. Sure enough, he danced on the table. “You don’t remember?”

“Nope. I remember a stripper. Did that happen?”

“Yes. I have that on video too.”

Barry got nervous as fuck at that. “I’m never drinking again.”
Wally laughed. “I said that too.”

“What time is it?”

“Almost 1.”

“Damn. I don’t think I’m going on that date with Felicity tonight. I feel awful.”

“I’m sure she’ll understand. I’m glad you got to live a little. I didn’t know you had it in you. I
would suggest you not drink that much anymore.”

“I’m never drinking again.” Barry says again.

Wally just laughed.

Barry got up, showered, and headed back for his bed. He was serious about never drinking again.
He felt like a truck ran over him. He stood in the hallway to make his call. He texted Felicity to let
her know the date was off because he was hungover. She honestly didn’t care. He called iris to tell
her about his night out before Wally spilled the beans and she thought the worst.

“Hello?”

“Hey.”

“You sound weird.”

“I’m hungover as fuck.”

“Wow.”

“Yeah. The guys took me out last night. I drank way too much. They got me a stripper, and I
danced on the table. Wally recorded it.”

“They got you a stripper?”

“You’re not mad are you? Please don’t be mad.”

“As long as you didn’t touch her. I’d have to kill you then.”

“I promise I didn’t. She kind of looked like you.”

“What?”

“Are you mad?”

“No. Are you sure you didn’t touch her if she looked like me?”

“I swear to you I didn’t. I would never cheat on you.”

“I know that.”

“I think Wally did that shit to get to me.’
“He’s an asshole like that.”

“No comment.”

“You can say that he’s an asshole, Bear.”

“Alright. He’s an asshole.”

“There’s still time to run. I gave Linda that option. She decided not to take it.”

“I’m with her. You’re worth dealing with him. Even if he was worse.”

“Yeah, you’re a keeper.”

“I would more than anything love to talk to you and hear your voice. I’d even like a repeat of the other night. But I honestly feel like shit and want to go back to bed.”

“Did you eat?”

“No since yesterday.”

“You need to eat. But I’ll let you go. You need to feel better.”

“I do. I promise I’ll eat.”

“That’s all I ask. Take care. Call me when you’re feeling better. I love you.”

“I will. I love you more.” Barry says and hangs up. He went back into the room Wally was still on his laptop using the earphones Iris brought him for Christmas.

“I’m going back to bed.” Barry announced.

“Hold off until I get us some food. You need to eat. You’ll feel a lot better.”

“Alright.”

“You’re lucky I like you or else I’d let you fend for yourself.” Wally says when he gets up.

“I owe you one.”

Several days later, Iris started to not feel so well. She thought she had caught a bug at school. It was still flu season and she figured she had that. She felt bad enough to not even go to school. Joe was afraid to leave her alone. She looked pale to him. She assured him that she was fine and just needed to rest it off. He reluctantly went to work only because she insisted. He decided to come past the house to check on her.

He found her on the kitchen floor.

Visions of finding Kristina like that flashed through his mind and he thought the absolute worse. He was scared to check on her. Luckily her body was still warm and she still had a pulse. He then went into hero mode and called an ambulance. He was scared as hell that Iris somehow suffered the same fate as her mother, he just found her in time. Or at least he hoped he did.
He rode to the hospital in the ambulance with her. Once they got there did he call Wally. He didn’t want to worry him, but he knew that Wally would be furious with him if something happened to Iris and he didn’t tell him. He dreaded making that call.

Wally was sitting in class when his phone went off. He felt it vibrate and saw that it was his father. He figured he’d call him back when he got the chance. Then Joe called him 3 times in a row and texted him 911. Wally politely got his stuff and walked out of class.

“Dad. What’s up?”

“It’s Iris. I found her laying in the kitchen floor. She was unconscious. We’re at the hospital now.”

“What?!”

“Exactly what I said.”

“What’s wrong with her?”

“I don’t know.”

“I’m on my way.”

“I know I can’t stop you, but please drive safe.”

Wally then started to run through the building and out of it. He ran to the science building to where Barry was in class. He banged on the door frantically until the professor came and opened it.

“Can I help you?”

“I need Barry Allen. It’s an emergency. Tell him to bring his things.”

Barry looked up when he heard his name. He wondered what the hell Wally was doing at his class. He stood and looked confused as hell. He just got his stuff and wondered what the hell was going on.

“We have to go.” Wally says once Barry is in the hallway.

“Go? Where?”

“Back to Central City. My father found Iris unconscious in the floor”

“What?” Barry asks in confusion. He was afraid to think the worst.

“We have to go now, Barry. You know that’s a long drive.”

“But why do I need to go? I guess I can for moral support…”

“Barry, we don’t have time for that. We can both cut the act now.”

“What act?”

“Me pretending I don’t know about you and Iris.”

“What?”

“Barry, I know. Ok? I know. I was just pretending I didn’t know and pretending to be an asshole about you two being together.”
Barry finally understood that he needed to let that shit go and go with Wally. “Wally…”

“I’ll kill you later. You do love my sister, right?”

“Of course I do.”

“Then we need to go.”

They both took off running. Barry of course moved a lot faster than Wally. They got to his car and Wally pretty much sped off. He didn’t think he’d make that drive back home that soon, but something was wrong with his sister. He really wondered what. He was scared as hell. That how his father found his mother and she died. He couldn’t even wrap his mind around Iris dying. He just didn’t want to even face that.

Barry was thinking the worst in the seat beside him. He wondered what in the world was wrong with Iris that she collapsed. How did she get that sick that quickly? She said she didn’t feel all that great the day before and that she had cramps but that’s it. Then Joe finds her unconscious. He was scared as hell. He couldn’t lose her. She was the best thing to ever happen to him.

Then he had to deal with the reality that Wally knew about them. He wondered when he found out he said he’s been pretending. How long? He figures he and Iris weren’t as careful as they thought they were. Maybe they weren’t as convincing that they hated each other. Barry really needed to know. Wally said he’d kill him later. What in the hell did that even mean since he knew? Barry wanted to ask, but he was afraid to. He figured it couldn’t be but so bad. Wally let him come with him to see her.

“Wally…”

“Yeah.” He answers, still speeding and never taking his eyes off the road.

“What do you think is wrong with Iris?”

“I don’t know. I’m afraid to think about it.”

“Me too.”

They rode in silence a little more.

“Wally…”

“Yeah.” He answered in the same fashion.

“When you said you were pretending, what exactly did you mean?”

“Do we have to talk about this now?”

“Yes. Before we get back there at least. It might make this drive less stressful.”

“I meant I knew about you and Iris since the first time we went out on that double date.”

“Really?”

“Yes, really.”

“How?”
“That was a real date for you two. I don’t know if Iris ever told you, but I wasn’t sleep when you went to the kitchen with her. I waited for her in her room for her to come back. I take it she told you about Eddie?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, I told her I didn’t want a repeat of that. That really didn’t have anything to do with you. I just didn’t want to see her get hurt again. I told her to stop flirting with you and leading you on. I saw how hurt she was about that because she genuinely liked you. That’s why she said she wasn’t coming.”

“She never told me that.”

“Well, I saw how you two were on that date and I knew I couldn’t mess with that. I honestly felt like me and Linda were intruding on your date. So I just put on a show. The same show you two put on with trying to make me think you hated each other.”

“You knew we were pretending that whole time?”

“Yes, Barry. So I pretended to be an asshole. I’m not as smart as you are, but I’m not an idiot either.”

“So you’re still going to kill me then, right?”

“Yup.” Wally says and continues to drive to the hospital.

Wally and Barry got to Central City in record breaking time. They were both glad that he didn’t get pulled over. The good thing was it was mostly highway and he could get away with it. They both ran into the hospital. They found Joe who was surprised, but not shocked to see Barry with Wally.

“How is she?” Wally asks when they get to him.

“She’s alive and conscious. I still don’t know what was wrong with her. They’re running tests.”

“I guess that’s good news then, right? It’s not like Mom?”

Joe started to cry then. “That’s all I thought of when I found her. I thought the same thing happened to Iris. I was scared to touch her for fear that she was cold like your mother was. I don’t ever want to feel like that again.” Joe says.

Wally started to cry too and he and Joe embraced in a hug. Barry wanted to cry, but he wouldn’t. Even though he loved Iris with everything in him and was scared to death, he’d let the West men have their moment.

They sat there for over an hour when a doctor finally came out and found Joe. He still didn’t tell him anything, but that he could see her. He brought Wally and Barry with him. It fucked them all up to see Iris laying in a hospital bed. But at least she was alive. She was shocked to see Barry. Even more shocked when he walked up to her and kissed her right in front of Joe and Wally.

“Why are you kissing me in front of them?” She whispered to him and looked at him like he was crazy.
“Wally knows Iris.”

“Knows what?” She asks as she feigns confusion.

“He knows about us.”

“There’s nothing to know about us.” She says and still looked at Barry like he had lost it.

“Iris, you’re in the hospital. That’s more important than this secret you and Barry were trying to keep. I know, ok?” Wally says.

She turned to look at Wally and searched his face. She wanted to cry. “I don’t believe you if you’re this calm about what you think you know.”

Wally rubbed his face in frustration. His sister was headstrong. He could never deny that. “Iris, I’ve known about you and Barry since that night we went bowling. And I’ve been pretending that I didn’t know this whole time. I sat back and watched you two pretend to hate each other and wondered just how long you’d keep it up. I was waiting for one of you to tell me to fuck off. Sorry, Dad.” He says as he paused briefly and looked in Joe's direction. "I even invited Patty to game night to get one of you to crack. Neither of you would. Then Josh came back and I just knew that would do it. I sat there and talked him up and said how I approved of him in front of Barry. I thought he would give it up then. That information I forced out of you while you were decorating the tree was meant to get you to crack then too. I just knew you wouldn't talk about something like that in front of Barry. You still tried to hide it from me. Then I just thought it was hilarious when you pretended to be back with Josh. I told you about what Patty did at the gym to get you to flip out. You’re stubborn as a mule, Iris. The cherry on top was Barry pretending to date Felicity. So, Iris. I know. I’ve always known. I’m not mad. Not at all. I just don’t understand why you two cared what I thought that much that you would go that far to keep your relationship a secret.” But he knew why. Because he told Barry she was off limits and because he told Iris not to date his friends.

Iris and Barry took that all in and then Iris started to cry. She let the water show begin. She was tired of holding that shit in. It was eating away at her. Barry then gave no fucks and got in the hospital bed with her and pulled her into his arms.

Joe and Wally watched what could only be considered as horror. Seeing Iris cry that hysterically did something to them. Plus she was in the hospital. It didn’t even seem weird to them that Barry was comforting her. It seemed natural.

“Sssshhhh, Iris. Stop crying. Please. It’s really not that bad. You’re ok.” He says as he pulled her closer to him and she buried her face in his chest.

“But I’m not ok, Bear. I’m not.” She cried as she clung to him for dear life.

“What did they say was wrong? Did they find out yet?” He asks.

Iris started to cry harder. Each man was horrified and thought the worst. None of them understood why she was in the hospital.

Once her crying subsided a little, she finally told them why she was in the hospital. “I lost our baby, Bear.” She says and cries some more.

Barry looked from Iris to Wally to Joe then back to Iris. He looked at Wally and Joe again and felt incredibly small and knew that for certain that the looks on their faces matched his perfectly.
Again, I'd like to apologize for the length of this chapter. I had a lot of ground to cover because I had a lot to reveal. I know I sound bitter and psycho, but again, it is what it is. I was going to do other things with this story before it got to this point, but I feel like my hand was forced. I truly feel like this story has been ruined because it got away from me. I must be losing my touch and normally, I would change a story when people guess what's going to happen in their reviews. I couldn't do that this time because I've come this far. I know some of you will not get that, but yet again, it is what it is.

And I'd also like to give a shout out to all of you that hated Wally for his asshole tendencies. You hated him for nothing, but I get it. I didn't change that aspect of the story at all. I wrote him that way for the reason you've read. That's even for the person that completely disrespected and insulted me by saying that Wally's obsession with Iris was "incestuous". That will forever hurt me. I'm whining and venting but I needed to get that out.

Btw, if you haven't figured it out by now, the person they inadvertently invited to the party was the baby.

Again, thanks for reading and letting me vent.
"You really didn't give me any other choice."

Chapter Summary

Barry and Iris deal with the loss of their baby.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone! Sorry for the delay. This was a hard chapter to write.

Lots of tears, angst, heartache, and heartbreak in this chapter. I don't take pleasure in hurting my babies. I really don't. I apologize profusely for what this is.

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Baby? Lost our baby? What baby? How could there have been a baby? We had a baby? These kinds of questions ran through Barry’s mind as Iris continued to cry while he comforted her. He was having a hard time trying to get ahold of his emotions at the moment. The fact that Iris told him that she lost their baby and was now a complete wreck made him want to fall apart as well. We wanted to cry as well but knew that’s not at all what Iris needed from him at the moment. He felt her pain, but knew that he really couldn’t because it was her body and she’s the one that went through the miscarriage. It was his baby as well and that thought alone made him want to do exactly what Iris was doing. But he had to put his pride and his broken heart aside for the woman he loved.

It killed him to see her like this. It hurt like hell. In the short time he’s known Iris he has seen her cry a few times, but never nothing like this. She was devastated; destroyed. It seemed so unfair for her to have to go through this. He wished he could make it better for her, for them. She lost their baby. Something that he had no idea about that was still a part of him and her and it was now gone. Yeah, he wanted to come apart at the seams. He wanted to leave his body and the moment altogether. Plus the fact that Wally and Joe were standing there watching them made it ten times worse. They knew that without a doubt he and Iris were intimate. There’s no way in the world either of them could hide that any longer. He wanted to ask them to leave so that they could go through that alone. He seriously wondered if he had the right to ask them that. They were her father and brother, and he was just her boyfriend, but it was his baby too.

“Ssshhhh, Iris. It’s ok.” He says as he rubs her head.

“It’s not ok, Bear. It’s not. I lost our baby.” Iris cried more.

“Why didn’t you tell me there was a baby, Iris?”

“I didn’t know there was a baby.”

“What happened? How did you get so sick so fast? I talked to you last night and you were fine. Joe
found you on the floor.”

“I thought I was just sick and had cramps. I thought I was just having a period from Hell. I was in the kitchen and in a lot of pain and I guess I blacked out from it.”

“So you’re sure you just weren’t sick? They told you there was a baby?” Barry knows he’s rambling with his questions but it’s really hard for him to understand what’s going on.

“Yes, they told me. I was pregnant. But I’m not anymore.” Iris answers gravely.

“How did you get pregnant?” Barry knew that was a stupid question, but he really wasn’t thinking clearly. He felt like he had been whammied. He was completely knocked off kilter with this discovery.

“What?” Iris asks as she looks up at him with red, tear filled eyes.

“I know I don’t make sense. I know how you got pregnant. I just don’t understand how. We were always careful.” He says. He didn’t want to say too much with Joe and Wally standing there. It’s painfully obvious that they slept together, but he wasn’t that comfortable with discussing something that personal with them standing there. He needed them to leave.

As if by some chance, they heard his plea. Joe tugged on Wally’s arm and pulled him from the room.

Barry really went into hero mode as soon as they were gone. He knew he didn’t have to hide anything anymore, but he needed to share this with her without witnesses.

“I guess we weren’t as careful as we thought we were, Bear. I still can’t believe I was pregnant and didn’t know it. And now our baby is gone.” Iris says and cries harder.

Barry felt the tears stinging his eyes. No use in trying to hide it anymore. He was hurt and had every right to be. Just seeing Iris hurt, hurt him. Iris was pregnant with his baby and lost it. That shit hurt him. It really did. Hurt him like his mother dying and his father going to jail for her murder. This hurt him more than he thought he could hurt again. He couldn’t dwell on his pain. Iris’ pain was greater than his. That had to be acknowledged. “I’m sorry, Iris. I’m sorry our baby is gone.” He admits truthfully. He thought of having babies with Iris since they already discussed it. He wondered if she was already pregnant then. He just wondered when it happened. He searched his mind to think back to all of their encounters. They were being careful. Except for that time in and after the shower. That really didn’t matter to him though. It happened. Miracles and the unexpected happened every day. Women get pregnant every day without intention. And while it wasn’t his intention to get her pregnant, the thought that they made a life together made him feel emotions he didn’t know he had. He knew that without a doubt, his love for Iris was never going anywhere. She had a part of him growing inside her. He hated that the life they created died before he even had a chance to know about it. Just taken away from them without either of their consent. It was hard to put into words what he felt. All he knew was that he didn’t want to feel it. Not at all.

“Why did I have to lose our baby?”

“I don’t know. But I’m sorry, Iris. I really am.” Barry says.

“I’m sorry too. I think it was my fault, Bear.”

“It’s not your fault, Iris. These kinds of things just happen.”

“It is my fault. Maybe if I knew I would have been more careful. I was at school jumping around
and doing things I shouldn’t have been doing while I was pregnant.”

“It’s not your fault that you didn’t know. Don’t blame yourself for something you had no control over Iris.” Barry says as he continues to rub her head.

“But it is my fault, Bear. It is.”

This was really starting to be too much for Barry. The fact that the baby he knew nothing about but would have loved and cherished was now gone was killing him. Then to see Iris so hurt and distraught was not something he thought he’d be able to handle. Her thinking it was her fault when it was just a freak thing that happens was killing him with a pain that was worse than a hundred stab wounds. He was hurting and didn’t want to go through this. But he had to be strong for Iris. He had to keep reminding himself of that. The last thing she needed was for him to make this completely about him when it wasn’t. Iris was hurting more and always would. “Iris, please stop thinking it’s your fault. It’s not. Women lose babies every day. Women still are active and do things before they know they’re pregnant. It’s not your fault. It just wasn’t meant to be.”

“I was drinking during the holidays and everything. Maybe I killed our baby that way. It’s my fault. I couldn’t even keep my own baby safe. Maybe this is my punishment for lying and keeping things from Wally and my dad. Maybe me losing the baby was a way to force the truth out. Why else would I lose the baby, Bear?”

“You didn’t lose our baby as punishment, iris. You didn’t kill our baby. Stop thinking that way. We’re not being punished for falling in love and keeping our relationship a secret. We didn’t do anything wrong. This just happened. Don’t beat yourself up over something you had no control over. This hurts like crazy, but we’ll get through this. It’s not the end of the world. You’re alive and safe. That’s all that matters.”

“It feels like the end of the world though, Barry. I know we aren’t anywhere near ready for a baby, but having it taken away from us hurts like hell. Something we created died and I feel like a part of me died too.” Iris cried harder as she pressed her face deeper into Barry’s chest.

“I’m sorry, Iris. I love you and I’m sorry.” Barry says as he pulled her closer and cried right along with her.

Joe and Wally just pretty much watched Iris fall completely apart and Barry doing the same but trying to hide it for Iris’ sake. There wasn’t a dry eye in the room. It was giving them both thoughts they didn’t want to have. Watching that transpire between Barry and Iris literally kicked them both in the gut. Just seeing Iris in the hospital was too much. Joe finding Iris laying on the floor when he though she was no longer alive was the second worse thing to ever happen to him. He was glad that his daughter was physically ok, maybe not fully since she lost a baby. He couldn’t even wrap his mind around that. A baby. His daughter lost a baby. He couldn’t imagine how she felt. The way she clung to Barry for dear life and her crying broke his heart. He never ever want to see Iris in that kind of pain. She was mentally a wreck and so was he. He just thought back to all those years ago finding his wife dead on their bedroom floor. Touching and feeling the coldness in her body. All the life being gone from her. He thought the same thing happened to Iris and he died a little inside seeing her on the floor like that. Scared to touch her for fear that she was cold like her mother. He knew he couldn’t handle burying his daughter like he buried his wife but knew he couldn’t leave Wally alone in the world.

Wally felt just as bad. It hurt him to see his sister hurt. He spent so much time and energy trying to
protect her to make sure she never got hurt, and he wasn’t able to protect her from this. Watching her
be hurt and for that reason was horrifying to him. He had never seen Iris cry like that. Not even
when their mother died. Sure she grieved and cried like he and his father did, but it wasn’t like this.
This kind of pain was on a deeper level. A pain he knew he could never feel so he couldn’t relate.
Truth be told, he was glad his father pulled him from the room because seeing Iris that hurt was
definitely hurting him.

Wally and Joe just looked at each other when they got into the hallway. Joe still looked like he had
seen a ghost. Wally slunk against the wall and sighed heavily. “Wow.” Is all he says.

“I don’t even know if ‘wow’ is the right word to describe all this.” Joe says.

“When you come up with one, let me know.”

Joe just wiped his eyes and looked at Wally. He stared at him for a few seconds. “So you knew
about them?”

Wally looked his father directly in the eyes. “Yeah, I knew.”

“I knew they were both pretending to hate each other, but I didn’t know things went that far.”

“I knew they were pretending too. Just for my benefit. It was funny at the time, but there isn’t
anything funny about this. Iris is a wreck and we can’t do anything about it. It’s hard watching
Barry try. I would not want to be in his shoes if that was Linda.”

“No, nothing is funny about this. Nothing at all.”

“I’m just glad she’s ok. Well, as ok as she can be under these circumstances.” Wally says.

Joe and Wally settled into a silence. They both were at a loss for words. Something started to nag
him.

Joe looked directly at Wally. “So you knew they were sleeping together, in my house, all this
time?” Joe asks. It sounded stern, but also sounded painful.

“I didn’t know that part. I just knew they were pretending to hate each other and that they were
together. I honestly didn’t think Barry had it in him to do…that.” Wally lies. He didn’t know with
absolute certainty that they slept together until she said she lost their baby. But it was pretty
obvious that something physical happened between them. He couldn’t explain that to his father. He
just couldn’t even if it was staring them all in the face. The way the sexual tension between them
seemed to leave and then return and then leave again. The way they looked at each other. Yeah,
Wally wasn’t as smart as Barry, but he wasn’t an idiot either. He knew what the deal was. He just
couldn’t completely blow his cover. Wally had the feeling that his Dad was looking for someone to
blame, and he didn’t really want to be in the doghouse. Being on the receiving end of Joe’s anger
was never a good thing. He had a feeling he wouldn’t be angry at Iris because of what she’s going
through. Maybe he needed to stick his neck out. Who knows how he feels about Barry. Wally
didn’t want that for him either. There was no winning in this situation.

“Well, obviously you were wrong, and he did.”

“Dad, I tried. I tried to keep them apart. It was no use.”

“I moved him into my house and that was going on.” Joe says as he looks directly at Wally.

“Dad, I don’t know what to say. I really don’t.”
“I thought your sister was dead, Wally. Dead. I thought I was going to have to put her in the ground next to your mother. Do you have any idea how that makes me feel?”

Wally felt his heart sink when he heard his father’s voice crack and he started to cry. “I can only imagine. I know how you found Mom. I wouldn’t wish that on my worst enemy. I’m sorry you had to go through that, Dad.”

Joe seemed to stare off into the distance. “I thought she was dead.” He says again. “I thought she was dead and my baby was losing a baby.” He got a little choked up at that realization.

Wally put his hand on Joe’s shoulder “It’s ok, Dad. She’s alright.”

Joe turned to look at Wally. Wally didn’t like the grave expression on his father’s face. “Just...just let me sit with it.” He says and then walks down the hallway.

Wally was hit with a heavy heart at watching his father try unsuccessfully to hold it together. He felt horrible, but he knew it couldn’t compare to how his father was feeling. He found his wife and his daughter in situations no one would ever want to be in. He was relieved that Iris didn’t turn out like his mother did. He honestly didn’t know what he would do without her. He still had his father and Iris after their mother died. He found a way to deal with it thanks to them. He didn’t know how he would deal with losing Iris. He knew he couldn’t.

Barry cried with Iris and held her until she exhausted herself and went to sleep. He felt like he had aged 20 years just from the experience. He was as hurt as Iris was, but he knew it was impossible for him to feel exactly how she felt. Sure the baby was a part of him, but it was growing inside her. He had an ache in his chest that he wanted to cut out.

He carefully and slowly released Iris from his arms so that she could get some rest. He needed air. He also needed to scream and knew he couldn’t do it in that hospital room. He got out of the bed and walked over to the door. He was afraid to open it. He didn’t know what he’d be walking into once he was in the hallway. But he had to face the music like the man he was. He knew that the relationship he had with Wally and Joe would change forever. He got a little sad in thinking about that. Wally seemed to be more ok with them than they thought he would be, but he had no idea how Joe was feeling. He knew that Joe would probably want him out of his house. How could he be there for Iris when that happened? She couldn’t stay in the hospital forever. He had to go back to school eventually. What would happen then?

Barry took a deep breath and opened the door. He saw Wally leaning against the wall looking defeated. He too seemed to age. He wondered where Joe was.

Wally stood up straight when he saw Barry. “How is she?”

“She cried herself to sleep.” Barry replies sullenly.

Wally exhaled. “That doesn’t make me feel good at all.”

“Me neither. I hate seeing her this hurt. It hurts me too.”
“I’ll bet.”

They both kind of stood there in silence. Neither knew what to say.

“Where’s Joe?” He asks just for something to say.

“He needed to be by himself for a while. He kept referring to how he found our mother and what he thought happened to Iris.”

“I guess I’m to blame for that.”

“It’s not your fault that happened to Iris.” Wally says.

“But it’s my fault that she got pregnant. Then she lost our baby. A baby I knew nothing about and won’t ever get to know.” Barry lost all his cool at that moment and started to cry. There wasn’t anything he could do about any of it so the best thing to do was for him to let his emotions play out the way they wanted to.

Wally looked at Barry with wide eyes. He did the only thing he could think of and pulled Barry into a brotherly hug. From the look and sound of things, Barry was hurting just as much as his father. Wally knew that without a doubt, Barry loved Iris. He didn’t doubt it before, but there was no mistaking it. “You can’t blame yourself for that though, Barry. Things like this happen. It’ll be ok.”

“I just feel like I destroyed everything. I’m sorry I couldn’t listen to you about Iris being off limits. This never would have happened if I did. Iris wouldn’t be lying in a hospital bed right now if it wasn’t for me. It’s all my fault. She’s hurt because of me.” Barry says and the thought really haunts him. Wally told him that Iris was off limits because he didn’t want her to get hurt. And what does he do? Fall in love with her and got her pregnant and had to be put in the hospital. He felt like the worst person in the world because the last thing he ever wanted to do was hurt Iris. She was too precious for that. He failed her miserably. He knew that he was thinking irrationally, but that’s how he felt. He just wondered how something that awful could happen to Iris. His light at the end of the tunnel and the best thing to ever happen to him. He felt an overwhelming sense of guilt and felt like he deserved it since Iris was going through her own personal horror. Life seemed so unfair.

“Barry, this isn’t your fault. I know you would never do anything to hurt Iris. We both know that. This is just some more bad shit that happened to you that you’ll get through and so will Iris.”

Barry pulled away from Wally. He needed that brotherly love at the moment. Even if Wally would still hate his guts over the whole going against him thing, he was glad he got that at the moment. “Thanks for this. It means a lot. And thanks for waiting to kill me. Just let me make sure Iris is ok before you do.”

“You’re welcome. And I was just yanking your chain earlier. I’m not going to kill you, Barry. If I was, I could have done it a long time ago. I could’ve offed you in your sleep. But I didn’t. My sister could do a lot worse than you. Even when you don’t think you are, you’re in love with Iris. She deserves that.”

“What do you mean?”

“You talk in your sleep, Barry. If I didn’t already know, I would have found out that way.”

“Oh, God. What did I say?” Barry asks.
“Just ‘I love you, Iris’. You said that a few times. You really said it the night of your birthday celebration, I guess the stripper I got you really reminded of you of her.”

Barry laughed despite the gravity of the situation they were in. “So that wasn’t by accident?”

“Not at all. I wanted to get you to lose your cool when you saw her. I figured that along with the alcohol would make you do it. You did, just in the middle of the night.”

“I told Iris that the stripper you guys got me looked like her.”

“You told her that?” Wally asks incredulously.

“Yeah. I tell her everything.” Barry admits.

“Tell me this. How long were you two planning on keeping this a secret? Obviously you would still be if this hadn’t happened. I’m just curious.”

“Just until you graduated. We were both sure you’d hate me and we didn’t want to create any tension between us. Iris really didn’t want a repeat of you and Eddie. She knew how serious you were about that. She thought it would turn out just like her dream and she was afraid of having that happen between all of us again.”

“What dream?”

“Do you remember that day you and Linda went to Atlantic City?”

“Yeah.”

“Do you remember how strangely Iris acted when she first came in the kitchen?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, she dreamt that you caught us and we fought and you told me weren’t friends anymore and your father asked me to leave the house.” Barry explains.

“Wow. Well, I’m glad I didn’t catch you two. It might’ve turned out just like that.

“I’m glad you didn’t either.”

“So, I guess I was totally wrong about you still being a virgin, huh?”

Barry just deadpanned Wally. “I know you don’t really want to have this discussion with me about that, do you?

“No. I’ll pass. I don’t ever need to hear the details of you sleeping with my sister.”

“You’re right, you don’t. But I’m not just sleeping with your sister, Wally. I love her and plan on marrying her one day.”

“I already knew you loved her and kind of figured that. It’s not like I can object or stop you, now can I?”

Barry shrugged. “No, not really.”

“Good. And the best part is you can never fuck up with her because I will forget that you’re my friend and my brother and kill you.” Wally says surely as he looked Barry right in the eyes.
Barry let out a nervous laugh. “I know. I don’t ever plan on fucking up with her. She’s the best thing to ever happen to me. If I do fuck up and hurt her, you have my permission to kill me if I do.”

Joe just walked down the hallway and out of the hospital to get some air. He felt like he needed a stiff drink. His day was horrible. He couldn’t shake that feeling of thinking he found Iris and she wasn’t alive any more. It was the worst feeling in the world and hoped he never had to go through that again. He couldn’t imagine his life without his baby girl in it. He had to force himself to deal with losing his wife and the mother of his children, but he knew that losing either Iris or Wally would surely kill him.

Moreover, while he was still glad that she was ok, he was incredibly mad at her. Iris looked him directly in his face and lied to him. He knew that she and Barry fell in love and that they were pretending, but he didn’t know that was going on in his house.

He moved the kid in. He didn’t know how to explain that feeling. He didn’t feel like he got taken advantage of, but he couldn’t put his finger on how he felt. He was still rattled and unnerved about the fact that his daughter was pregnant and lost a baby. He didn’t know what to do with that information. He wondered how to cope with all that went on. What if she hadn’t lost it? Iris would be a mother in less than a year. She wasn’t married and still in school. He didn’t want that kind of life for her though he knows that with the kind of guy Barry is, he would never leave her high and dry. He’d most likely do the honorable thing and marry her. But what about their education? What would they do for money? Where do they all go from there? How does he handle what he now knows?

He started to think about that again and was teetering on the line of anger. His daughter’s boyfriend was living in his house. How does he handle keeping Barry around? He knows that Barry had a rough relationship with his family. How could he send him back to that? Then he started thinking that Barry really isn’t his son. Wally is. And Iris is his daughter. He really owed Barry nothing. But where would that leave him and Iris? Would she resent him for that? He didn’t know what to do.

He just started thanking whomever was really looking out for Iris. He wanted to believe that it was Kristina and Esther. Maybe that had to happen to bring all the darkness to light. He needed to focus on that and the fact that Iris was still alive and well. She was more than important to him. He remembered the day she was born and when he first held her. He really seemed to start living then. He looked into her angelic face and knew that she’d be a Daddy’s girl. She was and he loved her more than she could ever imagine.

Joe wiped the tears streaming down his face and walked back into the hospital. He needed to see his daughter. He still had the chance to do that. He was more than relieved that she was ok. He’d deal with the rest when he was up to it.

He was walking down the hallway when he saw Wally and Barry sitting on the floor outside of her room. They both looked like they had been through the ringer. It was hard for him to look at Barry at the moment. He wanted to hate the kid, but knew he couldn’t. That couldn’t and wouldn’t change the fact that he was still angry at him. He didn’t want to be angry at him, but he was. He was angry at Wally and Iris too if he was being honest. He knew that as a parent, you could love
your kids with all that you are and still be upset with them. That kind of unconditional love would never leave him.

They both stood when Joe approached. He noticed how Barry avoided direct eye contact with him. Joe felt a sense of satisfaction at that. Barry deserved to feel that way. Joe knew he was being stubborn, but that’s the way he is. His daughter lost a baby and was found unconscious because Barry didn’t keep his hands to himself. He knew that whatever occurred between them, Iris was a willing participant. But he wanted somebody to blame. And Barry was the winner in this.

“How is she?” He asks Wally. He really didn’t want to talk to Barry unless it was necessary.

“She fell asleep.”

“Well, I’m going in to sit with her until she wakes up. Wally, you can come in later.” He just completely ignored and dismissed Barry.

Wally just looked at Joe and rubbed his head. Barry was afraid to move. He expected that from Joe, but it didn’t prepare him for how it made him feel. He felt like he was a young kid again and got scolded by his father. He didn’t like the feeling at all. He knew that Joe probably hated him and wanted him out of his house. He was slightly relieved that he had Wally on his side. It made it a little easier to handle. He just thought of all the talks he and Iris had about them being found out and hoping that Wally would accept it. How the tables have turned that Wally did, but Joe wasn’t on board. They hadn’t planned for that.

Barry wondered how Iris would handle that since she loves her father so much and respects him. Plus the fact that she’s a total Daddy’s girl and lived for his approval. He already knew she wouldn’t be able to handle it if Wally didn’t accept them, but what about Joe? He didn’t want Iris to feel like she had to choose between him and her father. Of course he wanted to be with her forever, but how could he be with her if he had to come between her and her father? That didn’t sit right with him. She lost her mother and her father was like Superman to her. He couldn’t be replaced. Barry knew that he could be. She had Josh waiting on the sideline. He started to really feel like utter shit again. He slunk back on the wall and down to the floor again. He just put his head on his knees and sighed. This was a disaster. After all of this, he would still lose Iris. He lost his baby and his future wife. He lost his family. Both of them. He couldn’t deal.

Wally watched Barry and couldn’t help but feel bad for the guy. He knew he was reeling. He couldn’t blame him. He didn’t want to be in Barry’s situation. Not at all. Wally knew how his father was, and knew that didn’t bode well for Barry. He started to wonder how Iris would feel about everything. He knew it would be hard on her if Joe decided that he didn’t like Barry and not want her with him. His approval meant a lot to them both. From the looks of things, Joe didn’t approve of Barry. Wally wondered how going back to the house would go. He and Barry could always leave and go back to school now that they knew Iris was ok.

“I think we can wait for my Dad to see Iris before we say goodbye and make that drive back to school.” Wally says.

Barry looked up at Wally in confusion. “Say goodbye?” He asks.

“Yeah. I know you can’t leave without doing that. Neither can I.”

“I can’t leave her like this, Wally.” Barry states surely.

“Barry…” Wally begins.
“I can’t leave her like this, Wally!” Barry shouts this time. His outburst shocked Wally. Barry took a deep breath and looked at Wally. “I’m sorry. I didn’t meant to yell at you. I can’t, I’m not leaving her like this.” He adds calmly.

Wally knew it was no use. Barry’s mind was made up. He figured he’d have to help Barry with the sneaking around this time. Joe surely wouldn’t want him in the house. This was a mess. “I know you can’t."

“Look, I get that your father hates me now and probably won’t want me in his house, but Iris is my main priority. I’d feel awful leaving her here to deal with this alone. If I have to sleep outside, I’m not leaving here until I know she’s ok."

“I get that. But what about school? We can’t stay here forever, Barry.”

“I know that. I can miss a few days of classes. They just started. It’s no big deal.”

“It is a big deal. You can’t fuck up school. I won’t let you. I care about Iris too, but-“

“Wally, it’s settled. I’m not leaving her. You can go back. I’ll catch the train back there when I can. Iris is my responsibility. This is my fault and I’ll handle it.”

Wally exhaled. Who knew Barry was as stubborn as Iris? That made him like Barry even more. The only thing he ever wanted was for Iris to meet a guy that was good enough for her to treat her like she deserved to be treated. She found that in Barry. He actually breathed a sigh of relief. He knew he couldn’t do a damn thing to stop him. He was happy that Barry felt that way about Iris and made it all about protecting her.

“Well, it’s a good thing it’s Thursday. We’ll just miss tomorrow and stay the weekend. See how that goes.”

“Fine.” Barry says though he really has no time stamp on how long he’ll stay put to make sure that Iris is ok.

Joe entered the room and saw Iris sleeping in the bed. He got a little choked up at his daughter laying in a hospital bed. He knew she was ok, but it still messed with him mentally. He was supposed to protect her and he didn’t. She wound up in the hospital. He knew she was sicker than she said. He never should have left her alone and went to work like Iris insisted. He was just glad he had the inkling to come home and check on her. He doesn’t want to think about what could have happened if he didn’t. It was bad enough that he found her like that. He didn’t want to invite the dreaded notion that he had took too long to find her into his psyche.

He sat down in the chair opposite her bed and just watched her sleep. He remembered doing that when she was younger. He remembered reading her a bedtime story and putting her to sleep. How he made sure he did that every night as his special time to spend with Iris. He loved that she was a total Daddy’s girl. Loved that she thought he was Superman and could save the world from any and everything. It warmed his heart that he had a bond with her no one else could touch or break. He had Wally and loved his son with everything in him, but his life really changed the day Iris was born. 20 years of memories flooded thorough his brain as Iris started to stir. She looked over and saw her father. She wondered where Barry was.
“Dad…”

Joe looked up into her face. “Hey, Iris. How are you feeling?”

“Not great. I think it’s mostly in my head though.”

“That understandable.” Joe replies as he slides his chair closer. He kissed her on her forehead. He was happy to feel warmth and life radiating through her.

“Where’s Wally?” Iris asks. She was afraid to ask where Barry was.

“He’s in the hallway with Barry.”

“Oh…”

“Do you want me to get them?”

“Not right now. Dad…I know you must be angry with me-“

“I’m not angry with you.” He interrupts and grabs her hand. “I’m just glad that you’re ok.”

“I’m glad you decided to come home and check on me. I never should have made you go to work.”

“I’m glad of that too. No, you shouldn’t have. I should have trusted my gut that I shouldn’t have left you alone. But I felt like something wasn’t right while I was at work. I felt it. That’s what made me come home. You scared the hell out of me, Iris. Never do that again.”

“I promise.” She says and manages a smile. They sat in silence for a while until Iris brought up the elephant in the room. Or the one in the hallway. “Dad, I’m sorry I lied to you.”

“You did more than lie to me, Iris.”

“I know. And I’m sorry for that. I know you said you were leaving it in our hands, but I know this isn’t what you meant.” Iris says.

“Yes, I did say that. I don’t know if all of this could have been avoided had you two not snuck around. No, I know this still would have happened anyway. It still hurts that you did all this lying and sneaking around. Just for Wally. I moved him into my house, Iris.”

“Please don’t hate him, Daddy. Please.”

“I don’t hate Bartholomew.” Joe says.

“So, you’re not mad?” Iris questions.

“Oh, I’m mad. You took advantage of my kindness.”

“Dad, I didn’t. I really didn’t. I selfishly wanted him close to me. I won’t lie to you about that. But I hated the thought of him living with people that made him feel like he didn’t belong there. He doesn’t deserve that. Me asking you to let him move in was all my idea. Mine. He offered to get a place here when he got out of school. So don’t be mad at him. Be mad at me.”

Joe searched her face and could tell she was in a lot of pain and also telling him the truth. I still didn’t change how he felt. “I’m not mad at you, Baby girl. I’m not. How can I be mad at you when I thought I lost you forever?”
Iris started to cry at that. “I’m sorry you had to find me like that.”

Joe cried as well. “Me too. All I thought of was your mother. I was about to be really angry with God for taking you away from us too. Then I felt bad for thinking that way.” He choked out. “I just didn’t like finding you like that and honestly didn’t know what I’d do without you. I don’t think Wally and I could do this alone.”

“I don’t know what I’d do without you guys either. I miss Mom, but I’m not ready to see her yet.”

“Well, I already thanked your mother for keeping you safe.” Joe says and kisses her on the forehead again.

Suddenly, there’s a knock on the door and Iris’ doctor walks in. “How are you feeling?”

“I’ve been better.” Is all Iris says.

“Are you in any pain?” He asks.

“Just some cramping. Nothing too major.”

“Well, that’s to be expected. You’re going to-“ The doctor begins, but Joe stands to cut him off. He didn’t want to hear that conversation and thought Iris should talk to her doctor privately.

“Excuse me. But I’ll be in the hall.” Joe says and promptly leaves the room. He again saw Barry and Wally looking like they’d been through the ringer. Barry looked absolutely awful. Joe felt a little sorry for him. Just a little. He knew he was being an ass, but he felt like had the right to be. Even if Barry did love his daughter, it was clear as day that he did, he still could be mad at him for everything. Even if it really wasn’t his fault. He couldn’t blame Barry for falling head over heels in love with Iris. Couldn’t blame him at all.

Barry again avoided eye contact with Joe. He figured he’d have to get used to Joe hating him forever. He just wouldn’t come around him. He’d never, ever put Iris in the position of choosing. He knew he wouldn’t win. He again thought about how that was his main priority when it came to Wally. He didn’t want her to choose between him and her brother. He’d be a terrible person to do that. He knew he wouldn’t like it if somebody asked him to choose between Iris and his father. They were all he had left in the world. He couldn’t lose either of them.

They all just stood there in an awkward silence. There was enough tension to cut it with a knife. All three men hated it. It was the thing all of them wanted to avoid. They were each glad that Iris wasn’t with them to feel it too. Iris hated conflict and tension. Joe hated it too. He hated being upset with his children. He hadn’t been that upset with them since the whole Eddie thing and they weren’t speaking to each other. The West house wasn’t happy and full of life like it always was and he hated that. He hated to feel that way again when they got Iris home. He was the man of the house and it was up to him to make sure everyone felt comfortable in his house. Maybe they needed to have a family meeting.

“That’s my father.” Iris announces kind of awkwardly after Joe leaves.

“I see the resemblance. As I was saying…” Her doctor explained the warning signs and what to expect while she recovered. She didn’t want to hear any of it, but knew she had to. She never thought she’d be going through something like this. She didn’t like how it made her feel alone and like a failure. She had tons of love and support, but that’s how she felt. Like a huge failure that’s being punished for her actions. She got good news after her doctor finished telling her she needed to follow up with her Gynecologist in a week. “Well, you can go home now. Do you have any
“Was this my fault?” Iris asks even though she knows the answer.

“No, this wasn’t your fault. These things just have a way of happening. Doctors believe that certain errors in the chromosomes of the developing baby are incompatible with life and lead to miscarriage. This is suspected to be the explanation behind the vast majority of first-trimester miscarriages, especially in women like yourself, without a history of miscarriage. The exact cause behind those anomalies however, is yet to be determined.”

“So, it was my fault.” Iris says. “I couldn’t grow my baby the right way.”

“No, that’s not it at all. I know it can be very hard to cope with having no answer for why a miscarriage occurred, and you may be tempted to blame yourself. But miscarriage is almost never anyone's fault. It’s not your fault. I don’t see any reasons why you can’t have another pregnancy that you carry to term in the future.”

That gave Iris some hope. “Thanks.”

“I’ll get your prescriptions and discharge papers and have you out of here soon.” He says and then he’s off.

If Iris was being honest with herself, she was afraid to go home. She didn’t know how that would go. She already knew Barry well enough to know that he wouldn’t want to leave her. She also knew her father well enough to know that he was madder than he let on and probably didn’t want Barry in his house. But she wanted Barry with her. It was his baby too. She didn’t want to fight with her father on this. She just didn’t. She was too heartbroken to fight with anyone. She was too broken and hurt to muster the strength to do it. She didn’t even know if she had the strength to get herself out of the bed and get dressed. She wondered where her clothes were. She knew she couldn’t leave in a hospital gown.

She was pondering on that when her three guys walked into the room. They all had the same expressions on their faces. Barry’s the worst of them all. She wanted to get up and hug him. She needed to pull him into her arms. They needed to have another talk. She needed to know how he felt. She locked eyes with him and felt her heart rate pick up. She needed her Bear. She did. She just wanted to lay in her bed in his arms until she felt better again.

“He said I can go home.” Iris says to no one in particular.

“That’s great.” Wally says. “How are you?”

“I’m dealing.” Iris replies. “Has anyone seen my clothes?”

“They cut them off you.” Joe answers as he looked in the mini closet and got the bag they handed to him.

“Great. I guess I’ll flash everyone and wear this gown home.”

“I’ll go home and get you something.” Wally offers.

“Thanks, Wally. You’re the best.”

Wally walked over and gave her a hug and a kiss on the cheek. “I’m glad you’re ok. I’ll be back soon.” He doesn’t even wait for a response before he’s off.
Barry, Iris, and Joe just kind of looked at each other awkwardly. The tension was too real. Iris felt like she’d suffocate from it. She did the only thing she could think of and got out of the bed and sat on the side. She desperately needed to go to the bathroom. She also desperately needed her father to leave. She wanted to ask him to. She hoped he’d leave on his own. She and Barry needed alone time. She hoped that he wasn’t trying to play chaperone like they’d fool around or something. They physically couldn’t and that wasn’t even on Iris’ mind at the time. She just needed her Bear in a way she didn’t need anyone else.

Barry too was thinking that Joe needed to leave. He knew he couldn’t put his foot down and tell him that he needed to allow them privacy. He’d do it if he thought it wouldn’t fuck up things between him and Iris. He couldn’t chance that. He’d deal with whatever Joe threw at him. He could definitely take it. He was the kid who got teased and chased home for being a nerd. He was the kid that got teased and tortured because people thought his father killed his mother. He was the kid that had to go live with relatives that thought the same thing and never made him feel like a part of their family. So he could deal with anything. He had the worst shit happen to him and he still kept going. He and Iris just had some bad shit happen to them and they needed to keep moving. He pretty much said to hell with Joe and walked over to Iris. He kneeled down in front of her. “Are you ok?”

Iris smiled at him. She wanted to kiss his face. She shook her head as the tears fell. “Not really.”

Barry stood and sat next to her on the bed as Joe left the room. He pulled her into his arms and let her cry it out.

Once Wally got into his car, he let out a deep breath. This was a lot. He was still glad that his sister was alright. He couldn’t lose her. His life wouldn’t be right without his little sister in it. He needed her. He looked at the time and realized how much later it was. He hadn’t eaten since that morning. He needed to talk to Linda. He was glad that she kept her phone practically glued to her hand. He needed her as well. He was happy when he heard her pick up.

“Hello?”

“Hey, babe. It’s me.” Wally says.

“Hey. You don’t sound right. Are you sick or just tired?”

“I’m tired, yeah. I’m just here at home at the hospital.”


“Iris-“

“Oh, God. No. What happened to Iris?” Linda asks. She was instantly afraid.

“She’s ok, Lin. My father found her laying on the kitchen floor and they brought her here. She was pregnant.” Wally says.

“What?!“

“Yeah.”
“You said was. She’s not anymore?”

“No, she’s not. She passed out from losing it I guess.”

“Iris was pregnant. Oh, my god. You said she’s ok though, right?”

“She’s as good as she can be. We’re trying to help her through this as best we can. Barry tried to help. It was hard watching that.”

“Barry?”

“Yeah, Barry. He’s the father.”

Linda let out a gasp that she hoped was convincing. So many different thoughts ran through her head. Iris didn’t tell her anything about being pregnant. She figured she must not have known. But Wally knew that Barry was the father. Oh, shit. “Oh, shit.” Linda says out loud this time. She wondered if Wally killed Barry already or he’s waiting to drop that bombshell.

“Yeah, oh shit.”

“Barry and Iris?”

“Lin, I know you knew.”

Linda let out a breath. She didn’t want to lie to Wally or make him feel like an idiot. “Who told you I knew?”

“Nobody. I just knew you did. I knew too.”

“What do you mean, you knew too?”

“I knew about them Linda. I knew the whole time. When I asked you if it felt like we were intruding on their date, I knew that we were. Then those two idiots tried to pretend they hated each other. Iris doesn’t hate anybody. She’s the nicest, most forgiving person I know. She wouldn’t have been that mad at Barry, no matter what he did. And the way he looks at her. I knew. I just pretended I didn’t. I picked with them just to make it interesting. That’s why I invited Patty to that game night. I thought they would tell her he was taken or something. I was waiting for one of them to tell me to fuck off. I wanted them to do that. And they didn’t. They went to so many great lengths to hide how they felt just because of me. They cared want I thought that much. I owed Iris better than that. Barry too.”

“So you’re not mad at me for hiding that I knew?”

“No, not at all. I’m glad Iris had someone to talk to.”

“Wait, so you’re not upset about them?”

“Nope. Not at all. I know I made it real clear that I didn’t want her to date my friends because of the Eddie thing, but it’s not really my right to tell Iris or Barry how to live their lives. I know Barry is a good guy. I know he is. He’s not my friend by accident. He’s perfect for Iris.”

“Yes, he is. The way she talks about him. She really loves him, Wally.”

“I know. I know he really loves her. I’m just upset that the truth had to come out like this. I really was going to sit back and see just how long they kept it up.”
“Just until you graduated and you and Barry weren’t roommates anymore. They really thought you’d hate him.”

“I would only hate Barry if he hurts her. I know he’s not going to do that. Not even from fear of what I’d do, but because he wouldn’t do anything to hurt her.”

“I don’t think he would either. Barry is a great guy.”

“Yeah, that’s my brother.”

“I can’t believe Iris was pregnant. I can’t imagine how she feels. I wish I could come home and see her. I should find a way.” Linda says.

“No, stay at school. Just give her a call. She has us. She’ll be ok.” Wally says and then finishes up his conversation before pulling off. He hurried home and got Iris clothes to wear back home. He was just relieved that she was alive and well, even if it would take her a bit longer to heal from the miscarriage. He had no idea how she felt about that but imagined that it couldn’t be good. He drove back to the hospital and found Joe sitting in the waiting area. He figured he just left Barry and Iris alone. He just took her her clothes and went and sat with him. They just sat in silence until they saw Iris being wheeled out of her room. They saw Barry walking behind her looking like he was walking to the lethal injection room. Wally and Joe quickly followed and Wally got his car. Barry got in the backseat with Iris and she comfortably settled in his arms. Minutes later, they were on the road back to the West house. Barry was painfully afraid of what might occur. Would Joe tell him he wasn’t welcomed in his house once they got there? Was Wally putting on another act about being ok with him and Iris? Was he waiting to kick his ass once they got in the house with no witnesses? Was Joe going to shoot him? What in the hell was going to happen?

He had a feeling they were both just going along with the status quo for Iris’ sake. She wasn’t in the mood for chaos or drama. He didn’t even have to be told that she didn’t want that. Not only didn’t she want it, she didn’t need it. Barry just held her tightly as they drove home. He was starving and needed to let off some steam. That was the least of his worries at the moment. Iris was priority number one.

They made it inside and Barry was just waiting for the anvil to drop. Iris said nothing as she tugged on his hand and headed for the stairs. He was scared to look at Joe and Wally and afraid to follow her. But he had to.

Iris went into her bedroom and sat on the bed. Barry followed her in and made sure he left the door open. There wasn’t going to be anything even remotely close to sex going on, but he still left it open. He didn’t want to give Joe or Wally a reason to physically hurt him. He went and sat next to her. “I need a hot shower.” Iris says.

“Ok. That might make you feel a little better before you eat dinner.”

“I’m not hungry.”

“You still need to eat, Iris.”

“I don’t have the energy to eat, Bear.”

“Then I’ll feed you.”

That made Iris’ heart flutter. She looked over at him. “You really love me, don’t you?”

“You really didn't give me any other choice.”
“I really love you too.”

“So, do you need help? I know Joe and Wally will kill me, but I don’t care. It’s not like I haven’t seen you naked.”

Iris laughed. She needed that. Thanks to the world’s biggest dork, she got to be happy for more than a moment. She then felt bad for laughing. “I’d like that very much. It might not be too pleasant for you though, Bear.”

Barry just looked at her and realized what she was talking about. “If I can’t handle that, then I don’t deserve you.”

“That is essentially the point of no return. There’s no coming back from that.”

Barry chuckled. “I expected that I have to get accustomed to it at some point, right? What am I supposed to do when we get married? Go away for a week?”

“You are awesome and amazing and I love you endlessly for it.” Iris says.

“You’re more than awesome and amazing and I love you endlessly for it.” He leaned over and kissed her. “We’re going to get through this.”

“I know. I just wish we were already there.” She quickly pecked him on the lips again before standing. “I’ll be back soon.”

Iris went into the bathroom. She was ready for the shower. She got in there and proceeded to cry. She was glad she had the sound of the water to drown out her sobs. She knew that what happened was her fault, no matter what her doctor said. She was a terrible person. She didn’t deserve to have Barry be that supportive and understanding. She lost his child. Another family member for him. And she ruined that. She didn’t want to think about it anymore. She wanted to take her medicine and go to bed and forget. She wanted to forget that whole dreaded day. Sleeping would make her forget.

Barry just sat on Iris’ bed, feeling completely out of place. Gone was his feeling of being in a place he called home with family members he actually got along with. He was just waiting for Joe to ask him to leave. Just like in Iris’ dream. He just hoped he didn’t do it too soon so that he could take care of her. She needed him. If he had to, he would insist. He wondered what he would do about making sure Iris ate. He couldn’t cook for shit, but she needed food, especially since she was taking medication. He didn’t want to go down into that kitchen. He was afraid to.

Iris finished up her shower. The thought that Barry was in her room waiting for her made her feel a little better. She looked at herself in the mirror and thought she looked like hell. She felt worse, so there’s that. She dressed in the comfiest pair of pajamas she owned. She wasn’t even going to hide the fact that she was crying. She had every right to.

She walked into her bedroom and saw her Bear sitting there. Seeing him really did make her feel better. She sat down next to him on the bed and reached for his hand.

“Are you ready to eat?” Barry asks.

“Not really.”

“But you have to.”

“I don’t really have an appetite, Bear.” Iris explains.
“That’s understandable. But you need to eat. You shouldn’t take medicine on an empty stomach.”

“I just want to go to bed though.”

“You can. After you eat. That’s an order.”

“Yes, babe.”

“You need to tie your hair up. You can lay down until I find you something suitable to eat.”

“Can you do it for me?”

“I’ll try.”

Barry stood up and got what he needed. Iris truly felt loved when he started combing her hair.

Wally walked up and knocked on Iris’ bedroom door. He really couldn’t believe his eyes when he saw Barry wrapping Iris’ hair. It seemed to Wally that Barry and Iris really were good for each other. It made him happy that he got to know the real Iris and loved everything about her. Barry lived a kind of sheltered life and knew nothing about what he was now experiencing. He seemed to be used to it. Wally figured Barry must have seen her do that more times than he was aware of. They truly looked like a couple that had been together for a long time.

“Hey.” Wally says. He really didn’t know what to say in this situation.

“Hey.” Barry and Iris said together.

“So, Dad and I were trying to figure out what to do about dinner. He decided to go out and get something since nobody is in the mood to cook.”

“Thanks, Wally.” Barry says as he continues to wrap Iris’ hair.

“Dad is upset, isn’t he?” Iris asks timidly.

“You want me to lie to you to make you feel better, or tell you the truth?”

“I guess I already got my answer.” Iris says gravely.

“Well, we know how he is. You get your stubbornness from him.” Wally says.

“I just expected him to be more ok with this than you.” Iris explains.

“I think he’s ok with you two being together. Just not together, together in his house. I know he probably knows I’ve had sex with Linda in this house, but I guess it’s just because you’re his daughter. Or maybe because Barry lives here. I don’t know.”

“It’s fine, Wally. I know I don’t get the same free pass that you get. I hate it, but what can I do?”

Wally decided to change the subject. “How are you feeling?”

“I cry when I need to.” Is Iris’ answer. Wally and Barry both looked at her. That made sense even if they would never know how she feels.

“What about you, Barry?”

“Same.” He says as he finishes with Iris’ hair. He bent down to kiss her on her head. “All finished.
Probably not as good as you do, but I tried my best.”

“Thanks. You’re the best boyfriend ever.”

“You’re the best girlfriend ever.” Barry says.

“I know. You’re lucky to have me. I’m not a total screw up.”

Barry wondered what Iris meant by that. Wally did too. Barry already knew Iris thought it was her fault. He hated that she felt that way.

“I called Linda.” Wally interrupts.

Iris looked up at him. She wondered if he knew Linda knew. “You told her what happened?”

“Yeah. She wanted to come and see you.”

“I don’t want her to do that. I don’t want her to blow off school. You two either. When are you driving back?”

“Wally can leave Sunday. I’m staying until I know you’re ok.”

“You’re leaving Sunday with him.” Iris insists.

“But, I need to--”

“But, nothing. You need to go back to school. You’re double majoring and can’t afford to fall too far behind. I’ll be fine. I have my dad. My friends are here. I have to get back to school too. I wonder how long I’ll be out of practice.”

“Practice?” Barry asks.

“Yes, practice. I have obligations. I want to return to normal, Bear.”

“I’m with Barry on this. You need to take it easy.”

“I will. I’m not going to go do backflips tomorrow morning or anything.”

“I hope you mean that.” Barry says.

“I promise.”

About a half an hour later, Joe returned with dinner. It seemed as if Joe was trying to avoid them. Iris and Barry ate in her room. He didn’t have to feed her like he thought. About another hour after that, she laid down and he got in the bed with her and held her. Iris pretty much lost it when he placed his arms around her. She linked her fingers with his and placed their hands on her abdomen. Something they didn’t even know was there was now gone.

“I think you should leave me, Bear.”

“Why would I do that, Iris? I don’t want to leave you.”

“I lost our baby. It’s my fault. I might not be able to give you babies and I know you want them.”

“Iris. It’s not your fault. Please stop saying it is. I’m not leaving you. If we find out that you really can’t have babies, then I can’t have them either. I don’t want someone else to have my children.”
“But I couldn’t even do something so simple. It was my job to protect our baby. And I didn’t. What kind of mother would I be?”

Iris’ breakdown really hit Barry hard.

Barry cried with her and unsuccessfully tried to convince her that it wasn’t her fault and that he didn’t hate her for losing the baby. He was relieved when she went to sleep.

He quietly slipped out of the bed and went to Wally’s room. He found him just lying in the bed and watching tv. “How is Iris?”

“She finally cried herself to sleep again. This is really killing me, Wally. I hate seeing her like this.”

“I hate seeing her like this too. I don’t know how I’d handle it if this happened to Linda. I commend you for holding it together.”

“I have to for her. She doesn’t need me to fall apart right along with her.”

“No, she doesn’t need that. It’s weird because Iris is usually the one helping everyone get through something. She’s like a therapist/cheerleader. Now she’s going through it and I feel helpless.”

“Helpless is the right word.”

“Did you leave any clothes here?”

“Nope. I wish I had.”

“Well, I can give you clothes. You’re on your own for underwear.” Wally says.

“Thanks for being ok with this, Wally. It really means a lot. Not just to me, but Iris too.”

“I never should have interfered and told you guys that you two were off limits to each other. Thanks for not holding that against me.”

“We get where you were coming from. I hate what that guy Eddie did too. But I’m not him.”

“Good. Just remember that I’ll always be around lurking, just waiting for you to fuck up. Remember that.” Wally says.

“Got it, Rudy.” Barry jokes.

The next morning, Iris drug herself out of bed only because nature called and got back in the bed. The crying started again. Even though it had only been a day, Barry had already had enough of seeing how destroyed Iris was. He didn’t know what to do for her. That killed him. He then got an idea that he hoped would work. He got Iris’ phone. He stared at it for a moment, thinking of what her password might be. He typed in West-Allen because he knew Iris and figured that was it. He was happy when her phone unlocked. He went straight to her contacts and looked for her number. He hoped he wasn’t overstepping his boundaries and doing the right thing. He called Lorraine and prayed she answered.

“Hello?”
“Can I speak to Lorraine?”

“This is she.”

“Um…this is Barry. Iris’ boyfriend. I hope you remember me.”

“Yes, I remember you Barry. How are you? How is Iris?”

“Uh…not good. Iris needs you. I know how close you two are.”

Panic started to rise in Lorraine. She really did love Iris like a daughter. “What’s wrong with Iris?”

“I hate to tell you this over the phone.”

“Please just tell me.”

“Well, Iris was pregnant and she lost the baby yesterday and she’s a wreck. She thinks it was her fault and that she’s less of a woman and a bad person and mother because she lost the baby. I don’t know what else to do.”

“Oh…my. Where is she?”

“She’s here at the house.”

“I’m on my way.”

Barry ended the call and really hoped that Iris wouldn’t be upset with him. Maybe she didn’t want Lorraine to know? Maybe it would be awkward because of her history with Josh? But Barry decided to not think about that. Iris needed her. She really needed her mother, but Lorraine was the next best thing.

He went downstairs and nervously waited for Lorraine’s arrival. He was on the fence still wondering if he did the right thing. Only time would tell.

He was happy that she gave him a hug when he opened the door. He always enjoyed her hugs. It really made him miss his mother, but in a good way. “Thanks for coming and for the hug. I needed that.”

Lorraine rubbed his back. “My pleasure. There’s plenty more where that came from. Now, where’s my girl?” She asks once they break apart.

“You’re not upset that I called you? You know with you being Josh’s mother and their history?”

“No, I’m not upset. I’m upset that iris is in peril. You too. I don’t even have to ask you if it was your baby. How are you holding up?”

Barry shrugged. “I’m just trying to be strong for her.”

“I’m here for you too, Barry.”

“Thanks, Lorraine. It means a lot. I wish my mother was still here. Iris’ too. We need them right now.”

“I know I can’t ever take their place, but I’ll help in any way I can.”

“Let’s go.” Barry says and makes his way upstairs with Lorraine following. He walked into the
bedroom and found Iris curled up on the bed. “Iris. Baby. Someone is here to see you.”

“Who?”

“Iris, it’s me.”

Iris turned to the sound of her voice. “Lorraine?”

“Yes, sweetheart.” Lorraine turned towards Barry. “Can you leave us alone for a little bit?”

“Sure.” He says. He locked eyes with Iris before he left the room and shut the door on his way out.

Lorraine just walked over and got in the bed with Iris. She pulled her into her arms. “Barry called you?”

“He did. He said you needed me.”

Iris broke down and cried at that. She had no doubt that she’d love Barry forever. Not even for all the other reasons she loved him, but for that one.

“I love him for doing that.”

“I do too. He really loves you.”

Iris cried more at that thought. “I lost my baby.”

“I know.”

“I lost our baby and it’s my fault.”

“Sssssshhhh. Don’t talk crazy. It’s not your fault.”

“But it is. Mothers are supposed to protect their babies. I didn’t protect mine. And I’m mad at my mother because she didn’t protect me. I don’t want to be mad at her, but I am.”

Lorraine pulled her closer and rocked her like a baby. “You have no control over God’s will. Neither does your mother. She’s in Heaven looking out for you but she can’t control what He wants.”

“I know I’m not supposed to be upset at them, but I am.”

“I know how you feel, Iris. I do.”

“You do?”

“Yes, I do.” Lorraine says as a tear rolls down her cheek. “I lost 2 babies. One before Josh and one after him. I blamed myself too. The first one I wasn’t that far along. I thought that maybe I had overdone it. Maybe I lifted something too heavy. Maybe I didn’t eat properly. I hurt about that until I got pregnant with Josh. Then I got pregnant with Jeremiah when Josh was two. I was almost 7 months then. I went into labor early and I blamed myself then too. John was away when that happened. He had to come home. Jeremiah took his last breath in his arms. That was really hard to go through. But my husband and my boys got me through it. I didn’t want to chance going through that again so we decided that John and Josh were it. So I know how you feel. It wasn’t your fault, Iris. These things just happen. No one is to blame. I know you and I know you wouldn’t intentionally hurt anyone, let alone your own baby. I know you’re hurting. I know you are. But you’ll have all the beautiful babies you and Barry are supposed to have when the time is right.”
“You got to hold Jeremiah?”

“Yes. He was about 2 pounds. He could fit in John’s hand. He was beautiful but he wasn’t ready for this world.”

“How did you deal with that after holding him?”

Lorraine then looked at Iris in the eyes. “I just realized that Heaven needed a baby more than I did.”

Iris then started to cry at that. She was still hurting and forever would about the baby she and Barry lost. But Lorraine really helped put things into perspective. She needed another woman to tell her that.

Lorraine continued to rock Iris. She then started to sing to her.

*All to Jesus I surrender; All to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him,*

*In His presence daily live.*

*I surrender all, I surrender all; All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.*

*All to Jesus I surrender; Humbly at His feet I bow, Worldly pleasures all forsaken; Take me, Jesus, take me now.*

*All to Jesus I surrender; Make me, Savior, wholly Thine; Let me feel the Holy Spirit, Truly know that Thou art mine.*

*All to Jesus I surrender; Lord, I give myself to Thee; Fill me with Thy love and power; Let Thy blessing fall on me.*

*All to Jesus I surrender; Now I feel the sacred flame. Oh, the joy of full salvation! Glory, glory, to His Name!* 

Iris truly did surrender all. Lorraine made her feel a lot better. She tried to think of a way to pay her back, but knew it wasn’t necessary because of the kind of woman she is.

“Lorraine?”

“Yes?”

“I lost my mother and you lost your baby, but we have each other. I know I can’t replace Jeremiah.”

“And I don’t want to replace your mother. I wouldn’t disrespect her like that. But I know she doesn’t mind that I take care of her little girl because she can’t.”

Lorraine left a little while later. Barry came back into the room afterwards. He was walking a little slowly, possibly scared of what he’d find.

“How are you feeling?”
“Much better.”

“Good.”

Iris smiled and opened her arms out to him and he walked over to the bed. She hugged him tightly. She really never wanted to let him go. “Thank you for giving me what I needed. I’ll love you always for that.”

“You’re welcome. I’ll love you always, anyway.”

“You know this kind of joins us forever, right?”

“I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Chapter End Notes

I promise? not to hurt them anymore. This isn't the end of the story! I just wanted it to end with them, especially Iris being in a good place.
"I kind of gathered that."

Chapter Summary

Barry and Iris continue to deal with their loss. Plus some much needed family moments.

Chapter Notes

Hello all. Sorry for the delay. I know I've lost a lot readers with this story and I just wanted to say a quick "Thank you" to all of you that are still here reading and reviewing. It means the world to me.

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoy.

Barry and Iris continued to embrace, relishing in the fact that they were indeed joined forever. They experienced things with each other they wouldn’t experience with anyone else. That gave them both a sense of comfort. Barry pulled Iris closer and rested his hand on her abdomen. That gave Iris warmth that she felt all the way to her bones. She placed her hand on his and exhaled.

“What do you think it would have been? A girl or a boy?” She asks.

Barry felt a tug in his chest when she asked him that. “I really hadn’t thought about it. I wouldn’t have cared what we got to be honest. How about you?”

“I like to think that it would have been a boy. I know you said to let the name die with you, but he would have been Bartholomew Jr.”

“If you insist. Just as long as we didn’t call him B.J.”

“Bartholomew.”

“Sorry.” He replies.

“I’m glad that we can still find reasons to laugh and joke during this time. It gives me a lot of hope.”

“Yeah, me too. I don’t want either of us to be sad forever about this.”

“Me neither. And for the record, we would have called him Bart.”

“Bart Allen has a nice ring to it.”

“This really wouldn’t have been the right time though, Barry. I would have had to drop out of school, find a job, and worry about daycare…”
“I would have had to get a job, not you. I hate the thought of you having to drop out of school. I would have had to transfer to school here, find us a place to live because I’m sure Joe wouldn’t have wanted us living here with a kid.”

“I can’t call this a blessing, Bear. I just can’t.” Iris says.

“No, it wasn’t a blessing. Not at all because it hurt you. And me. I can never call something that hurt us this much a blessing.”

“But it was for the best. Lorraine told me something that made me able to cope with this better.”

“What did she say?”

“She lost a baby too. Two actually. She lost one like I did and then another after she had Josh. She and John actually got to hold him. She said she realized that Heaven needed a baby more than she did.”

“Wow. That’s…Wow. I don’t know if I would have been able to handle it if we got to hold him.”

“Me neither. But she said that you and I would have all the beautiful babies we’re supposed to have when the time is right. I believe her.”

“We will.”

“Plus I take comfort in the fact that both of our moms are in Heaven and they’re taking care of our baby.”

Barry just pulled Iris closer with that last statement. He knew that with each other they’d get through this time in their lives. They both went through losing their mothers at a young age and survived that, so they could get through anything. They just laid in her bed in a comfortable silence until Wally interrupted them.

He stood there for a moment before he knocked on the door. He just watched how in sync and in tune Barry and Iris seemed to be. He already knew but he realized that Barry and Iris were as meant to be as he and Linda were. He just looked at them and was again taken aback by how comfortable they were with each other. They were complete opposites, but they worked well together. It seemed like they had been together just as long as he’s been with Linda. It just made him happy to see two people he really cared about be happy with each other. That’s all he ever wanted for Iris. For Barry as well.

“Morning.” Wally says as he knocks.

They both slightly jumped from the sound of his voice. Barry sat up while Iris turned her body in the bed towards him. “Morning.” They both say.

“How are you two feeling?”

“Better than yesterday.” Iris answers.

“That’s good to hear. Did either of you eat yet?”

“Nope.” Barry replies.

“So what do we do about breakfast since you’re not cooking?” Wally asks Iris.

“There’s plenty of cereal and milk downstairs.”
“I guess we’ll have to settle for that then.”

“See, this is why you should learn to cook. You too Barry.”

“I’d still prefer your cooking though.” Wally says.

“What are you going to do when you move out and live on your own?” Iris asks.

“I’ll more than likely be living with Linda then. She can cook.”

“And I’m set for life.” Barry replies and smiles as he looks at Iris.

Iris giggled. It felt good for her to do that. To just see her Bear and Wally getting along so well.

“You too still need to learn to do something. What if Linda and I decide to go away for a girl’s weekend or something?”

“Then it’s Hot Pockets and take out until you two get back.” Wally says.

“Pathetic. Linda and I should leave you both.” Iris retorts.

“Hey! I object to that.” Barry says. “You’re not leaving me.”

“Object all you want. I think I’ll give Linda a shot. She would have brought me breakfast in bed.”

“I suck and I’m sorry. Coming right up.” He says and stands. He pecked her on the forehead before leaving the room.

Wally just laughed and came in and sat down on the bed with Iris. This is literally the first time they’ve been alone since he made his emergency trip home. “So, how are you feeling for real? You’re not just trying to hold it together for the sake of Barry and I, are you?”

Iris sat up in the bed. “I feel…hollow, I guess. I wish I felt numb. I don’t. I feel like I lost a piece of me and that makes me sad, but I don’t feel hopeless anymore.”

“Are you in pain?”

“No, not really. Just normal cramping. Nothing major.”

“I’m really sorry this happened to you, Irey. I really am. I have no idea what you’re going through so I won’t pretend I do. Have you thought about maybe talking to someone that specializes in these kinds of things? Or someone that does know how you feel?”

Iris smiled. “I already did.”

“When? Yesterday at the hospital?” He wonders.

“No, not too long ago. I talked to Lorraine.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. She was just here. Barry called her because I needed her. I really needed Mom, but she was the next best thing.”

“Barry called your ex boyfriend’s mother?”

“Yes, he did.”
“Did you tell him to do that?”

“No. He did it on his own. He figured I needed some motherly/female love and called her. He knows how close we are.”

“Wow.” Is all Wally says.

“Yeah. I will love him forever for that. Forever. He put his pride and feelings aside to make sure that I was ok.”

“I’ll say. That’s an honorable thing to do. To call the mother of the guy that could have taken your place speaks volumes.”

“Josh can’t take Barry’s place though, Wally. He can’t. I loved Josh because he was my first love and he’s a great guy, but he isn’t the guy I’m supposed to be with. I know somewhere in the back of Barry’s mind, he probably thinks that too. I know he has some insecurities about that. The whole Black and white thing and the fact that I actually could have Lorraine be my mother in law. He knows that even though I have Dad, I still need a mother’s love and I could get that from her. Just like him with his father being in prison and having Dad around him. How he just wanted to sit with Dad and watch a movie because he can’t do that with his father.”

“Wow. I already knew Barry was a great guy, but that just puts it over the top in how he feels about you. You said the whole Black and white thing. Are you talking about the fact that you’re Black and he’s white?”

“Yes, but there are other things that go along with that.”

“You don’t think I know that? Linda isn’t Black, you know.”

Iris rolled her eyes. “Duh. Of course I know that. But it’s different with me and Barry because Linda is still a woman of color. People don’t mind seeing you with her.”

Wally looked at Iris like she was crazy. “Really? That’s a lie.”

“Ok, well I know some people do. But it’s still different with me and Barry. When we were out, people looked at us a little strangely. Even in 2016, people still have a problem with interracial dating. Black men looked at us and shook their heads. White woman tried to avoid looking at us but had a strange look on their faces. Like they smelled something foul. We both did the same thing. I broke up with him because I know people would rather see him with Patty than with me.”

“You broke up with him that night? Wait. When did you and Barry get together?”

“Yes, I did. It lasted about 10 minutes, but I did. And we got together on the way to the bowling alley. We both knew it was fast as hell, but we’re young and wanted to be together.”

“That’s why it felt like we were intruding.”

“I guess. That was a real first date for us. That’s why I was so upset when you told me to stop leading him on. I wasn’t. I really liked Barry. That’s why he was so upset I said I wasn’t coming. I know people getting together the day they meet is unrealistic and unheard of, but it happened.”

“Me inviting her wasn’t meant to cause problems with you two. I really wanted you two to give it up that you really liked each other and wanted to pursue it. I was shocked that you didn’t crack. Especially when she was practically all over Barry.”
Iris rolled her eyes again. “Don’t remind me. I wanted to slap her. Then when you told me she kissed Barry at the gym, I was ready to kill her. We had just gotten back together and were in a good place.”

“Gotten back together? Damn, Iris. You two broke up twice?” Wally asks incredulously.

“Yes. He broke up with me after that dinner at Josh’s house. Well he tried to break up with me, but I wouldn’t let him. He really thought I was going to choose Josh over him and wanted to let me off the hook. He thought that it would be easier for me since Josh is Black too. Plus I’d have Lorraine and family since he has none. He thought that since you approved of Josh and he was literally perfect, he was going to walk away so that I’d be happy and that we’d be ok. He didn’t want to cause problems between you and me and you and him.”

Wally looked down. “Now I feel bad for talking Josh up in front of him like that. I again thought one of you would crack. Josh is great, I guess and I would approve if Barry wasn’t around.”

“It’s ok, Wally. It’s in the past now.”

“I know. I still feel bad. But in my defense, you were supposed to stop me and shut me up.”

“I was afraid to then. We really thought you’d hate Barry for not sticking to your off limits rule. I didn’t want him to lose you either. He really looks up to you like you’re his brother. He doesn’t have family. He didn’t want to ever be on your bad side.”

“I look up to Barry too even if he’s younger. He doesn’t let that shit that happened to his family define him. And he’s so smart. Dude knows everything. I even admire the way he runs. You really should see it. We were all shocked at how fast Barry is.”

“I’d love to see him run. I love how he doesn’t let what happened to his family define him either. Even after going to live with relatives that made him feel crappy. I think he gets that awesome spirit from his father.”

“How do you figure that?”

“I met him.”

Wally raised an eyebrow to her. “Really?”

“Yeah. I went with him that day he went to visit his father.”

“I had no idea. I thought you were just hanging out that day. But it does make sense now that I think about it. You two really, really got to know each other, didn’t you?”

“Yes. We talked about everything. We know everything there is to know about each other. We didn’t just spend time fooling around.” Iris replies.

“He did say he tells you everything.”

“I know about the stripper, Wallace.”

“He said you did.” Wally replies and laughs.

They sat quietly for a moment. Iris just smiled at her brother. “Thanks, Wally.”

“For what?”
“For being ok with me and Barry. It really means a lot that you approve of us. Having you be on our side is a really big deal to us.”

“You’re welcome, even though you really have no reason to thank me. I know I gave you a lot of shit for years about who you could and couldn’t date. Protecting you is my job, Iris. It is. But I know that I don’t have to protect you from Barry. I know he’s a good dude.”

“He is. And I promise not to date any more of your friends.” Iris says.

“Are you sure about that?”

“Positive. Barry’s the one.”

“Really? Nerdy, awkward Barry is the one?”

“Yes. I love my awkward nerdy Bear. Even if Dad now hates him and us like we thought you would. I can love them both even if I have to keep them separate. I hate the thought of my father hating my future husband, but I can’t choose between them.”

“Dad doesn’t hate Barry.”

Iris raised an eyebrow to him. “Are you sure about that?”

“Not 100% sure, no. But I doubt he hates Barry. I know he hates this situation and having Dad upset at you never feels good. He’s more stubborn than you are.”

“I’m not stubborn.”

“Yeah, you are.”

“Takes one to know one.”

“I am not the stubborn one.”

“You’re such a damn liar, Wallace. Stubborn is in our DNA. We all are.”

“Barry has a stubborn side to him too. He practically fought me in the hospital about leaving. He was even stubborn about coming here with me. He still wasn’t ready to give it up when I told him something happened to you.”

“Really?”

“Yes. He agreed to come for moral support. I had to tell him we could both cut the act.”

“I still can’t believe you knew all that time and were just pretending to be an asshole. I really couldn’t tell a difference.” Iris states.

“Hey! I know I have asshole tendencies, but come on Iris. I’m not that big of an asshole.”

Iris side eyed Wally. “Wallace Rudolph West. You, my dear brother, are king of the assholes. We all know it. Even Linda knows it. And we still love you anyway.”

“Linda said I’m an asshole?”

“Yes. She said you’re her asshole though.”
“That doesn’t sound appropriate.” Wally says and he and Iris laugh.

“You know what we mean. I even gave her the chance to get out. She refused to leave your antagonistic ass. Which is a good thing because I don’t ever want to see you with someone other than Linda. I would drive someone else away. My loyalty is to my sister.”

“I can’t picture myself with anyone other than Linda, so you have nothing to worry about. I want what our parents had, without her dying of course.”

“Me too. I think of what happened to Barry’s parents as well. Can you imagine if that had happened to us? I mean, we lost mom and that was rough, but to lose Dad too? Have him gone like that, but not really?”

“No, I really can’t imagine that. Barry really did lose both his parents. Then he had to go live with relatives that really didn’t want him there. I wouldn’t wish that on anyone.”

“Me neither. Dad told me that if you and Barry had been friends when that happened, he would have taken him in.”

“He did?”

“Yes.”

“We have a really awesome father. He’s not perfect, but I wouldn’t trade him for anyone.”

“Yeah, we got a good one. And changing the subject, nice touch getting Barry a stripper that looks like me.”

“I wanted him to lose his shit and give it up. You two must have really made a pact to not let it out that you were together.”

“Yeah, we did. That’s so sneaky of you to try to trip him up like that. With a look alike stripper. If he had touched her, I was going to kick your ass.”

“I can honestly say he didn’t. You should have seen the look on his face when she came out. I have it on video.”

“You do?”

“Yup. Barry enjoyed his birthday.”

“I want to see it.” Iris says and laughs.

Wally stood up. “Coming right up.” He says and dashes to his room. He came back seconds later with his phone. He just handed his phone to Iris. “Press play.”

Iris did and she heard a lot of commotion and music. She saw two strippers walk Barry up to the stage to a waiting chair. Then she saw her look alike come out. She looked up at Wally. “She does look like me.” She watched her Bear’s eyes almost bug out of his head and laughed out loud. It felt good so good to genuinely laugh. She felt a little tinge of jealousy when she gave him his lap dance, but Barry did behave himself. She finished watching it and handed Wally his phone back.

“There’s one more.” He says and looks for it. He handed the phone back to her again.

She pressed play and saw Barry dancing. She could tell he was drunk as hell. She had never seen him intoxicated, and it was awesome to see. She almost lost it when he got on the table and started
dancing. “At least he has rhythm.” She says and she and Wally crack up laughing when Barry walks in with Iris’ breakfast. He actually had it on the bed tray.

“What’s so funny?” He asks as he sits the tray in front of Iris.

“I was just watching the highlights from your birthday celebration.” Iris says as she smiles up at him.

Barry looked at Wally. “That’s not cool, bro.”

Wally shrugged. “Hey. I had to show her. I’m saving this video forever.”

“I just have to make sure I get some dirt on you as payback. All bets are off when we get back to school.”

“Fine.” Wally says and stands. “I’ll leave you two alone now. I need to go eat.”

Wally left the room and Barry sat down in the spot he was just in. He looked at Iris and smiled. “I know it isn’t as good as you would do, but I tried my best.”

“Thanks, Bear. I appreciate it.” Iris says as she digs in. She tasted the scrambled eggs and they weren’t bad at all. “These are actually pretty good.”

“Eggs are easy to cook. Now if you wanted a fancy omelet or something, then I am not your man.”

“It’s ok, Bear.” Iris says and continues to eat.

“Did you and Wally have a good talk?”

Iris nodded while still chewing. Once she finished, she smiled at him. She then gave him a forkful of her eggs. “It was good to talk to him like we used to, you know? When I wasn’t hiding something from him. You know I didn’t like keeping an important part of my life from him. Now I’m glad everything is out in the open and we don’t have to hide and worry anymore.”

“That’s great, Iris. I’m glad the secrecy is done. It would have been easier on you, but I worried about keeping up the façade at school. I probably would have given us away. No, I did even if Wally always knew.”

“What do you mean?”

“I talk in my sleep.”

“What did you say?”

“Just that I loved you.”

“Whoa.”

“Yeah.”

“You really do, don’t you?”

“My answer will be the same every time you ask me, Iris.”

“I know.”
Iris and Barry lounged in her room and watched tv during the day. She dozed off one time and Barry just watched her sleep. He didn’t deem it creepy at all. He was glad to see Iris letting go of some of her pain and returning to herself. He just imagined sleeping next to her forever and that made him happy.

The past day had been a roller coaster of emotions for him. Everything seemed to be ok and something he could handle, except for the one thing that was lingering: Joe. He really had to wonder where his head was at and how they would go from there. He knew it would truly devastate Iris if Joe was really against them. He was so tired of wondering and dwelling on how the two most important men to Iris would feel about him and his relationship with her. He wasn’t willing to just let Iris go. He couldn’t.

He was starting to think about that when Iris started to stir beside him. She opened her eyes and smiled at him. “Sorry for falling asleep on you.”

“You’re entitled to. Are you alright?”

“Yes. I just need a hot shower and a brownie.” She says and smiles again.

“I can go get you some while you’re in there.”

“I would love that. What did I do to deserve you?”

“I’m the lucky one.”

An hour later, Iris was freshly showered and sitting up in her bed eating her brownies and watching Orphan Black with Barry when Joe knocked on her bedroom door.

“How are you feeling, baby girl?”

“Better.”

“Are you up for getting out of bed?”

“Yes, I guess.”

“Alright. Family meeting. Now.” Joe says sternly and walks away. He completely ignored Barry and they both knew that was not a good thing.

Iris eyed Barry carefully and tried to keep him calm. “I’m afraid to go to this family meeting.” Iris says.

“I would be too.”

“I hope he isn’t going to kick you out.”

“I hope not either. I don’t want to leave you.”

“I don’t want you to leave, but we’re talking about my dad here. He’s an expert in giving the cold shoulder.”
“I’m finding that out. And being on the receiving end of that does not feel good. He’s much scarier than Wally is. Plus he has a gun.”

“He’s not going to shoot you, Barry.”

“Are you sure about that?”

“Yes, I’m sure. That’s about the only thing I am sure about right now.” Iris says as she gets out of the bed.

“Well, good luck. I’ll keep my fingers crossed.” Barry says.

“Thanks.” Iris says and leaves the room. She walked downstairs and saw Wally already sitting on the couch. Joe was just standing there with his arms folded. She had a really bad feeling. She wanted to disappear.

“Where’s Bartholomew?” Joe asks Iris.

“He’s still upstairs. You said family meeting.”

“Yes, I did. This affects him too. Tell him to get his ass down here.”

Iris discreetly looked at Wally. The look on his face didn’t make her feel any better. She turned back towards the stairs and Joe made her stop dead in her tracks.

“Never mind. You just sit down. I’ll get him.” Iris quickly sat down next to Wally and grabbed one of the pillows as a shield. He walked over to the stairs. “Bartholomew. You need to join us.” Joe didn’t even wait for an answer and just walked back over to his post, looking like a bouncer at a nightclub.

Barry almost jumped out of his skin when Joe called him. He felt like he was 8 years old again. He reluctantly made his way downstairs. Joe’s stance scared the hell out of him. He saw Wally and Iris sitting on the couch looking as terrified as he felt. He sat on the end next to Iris. He wanted to be anywhere but there at that moment. He thought about it and maybe Wally was right. They should have left the day before. But he knew he couldn’t have done that to Iris. As scary as this moment was, he couldn’t leave her high and dry.

Joe just stood there and looked at all three of them without saying a word. He could physically see them coming apart. It was time to get the party started.

“So, I brought you 3 here so that we can have a family meeting. It seems as if a lot of things were going on in my house right under my nose that I knew nothing about. First things first. Iris, how are you feeling?”

“I’ve been better.” She replies honestly.

“Are you really up for being out of bed?” Joe asks.

“Yes. I’m fine, Dad.”

“How about you, Wally?”

“Almost the same.” Wally replies.

Joe looked at Barry. “What about you, Bartholomew?”
“I agree with Iris and Wally, Sir.”

“Good. So now that everything is out in the open, you two are a couple, right?”

“Yes.” Iris answers.

“For how long?”

“Since the day we met.” Iris says as she looks over at Barry briefly.

“We all know that you two hating each other was just an act. I’m pretty sure that was all Iris’ idea.”

“You’re right Dad, it was.”

“And the lies and the denial. Was that your idea too?” He asks Iris.

“We kind of had to, Dad. Wally really didn’t give us another alternative. We knew how much he hated the idea of us. I thought you would be ok with it and he would be resistant. Now the tables have turned and I’m-we’re just trying to deal with it.” Iris confesses truthfully. She honestly felt like she felt those times she and Wally got in trouble for breaking the record and the dog. Actually, it felt like it did when Joe sat her and Wally down and made them reconcile after the whole Eddie debacle. This was just as painful as that. She didn’t like being at odds with Wally or her father since they meant so much to her.

“How does that make you feel, Wally?” Joe asks.

Wally looked over at Iris and Barry and shifted in his seat. “Honestly, it makes me feel bad. Yeah I didn’t want my sister dating my friend and I know I took it too far with trying to dictate their lives, but it was only because of wanting to protect Iris even though I know Barry would never hurt her. I didn’t mean to cause all this tension in the house. Me watching them pretend to hate each other and pretend I didn’t know the whole time was not meant to cause all this.”

“So you approve of them being together?”

“Yeah, I do. Even though from really seeing them together, I don’t have any other choice but to be ok with it.”

Joe just stood there and eyed each of them carefully. He then just focused on Iris and Barry.

“So you two had sex in my house, right?” Joe inquires.

“Dad.” Iris says as she looks at Joe.

“Well, you did. Right?”

“Yes.” Iris answers again.

“Well, I guess I can’t get too mad at that since Wally has had sex with Linda in my house, right Wally?”

Wally’s eyes got huge. “What do we have to do with Iris and Barry?”

“I’ll take that as a yes. Right, Wallace?”

Wally shifted again. “Yeah.”
“Well, the difference in that is Wally and Linda are adults and she doesn’t live here, unlike you Barry. I know you’re 21 now and Iris will be in June, but you get where I’m going right?”

“Yes.” Barry replies.

“Well, I gave this a lot of thought and I came up with a solution I think I can live with.” Joe paused for effect. “I decided that having my daughter’s boyfriend living in my house is not what I expected when I allowed Barry to move in. When I opened my house up to him, it was because I started thinking of him as a son since I know he’s a good kid because of what Wally told me and honestly, I can tell. Now, I know I’m not the perfect parent, but I do the best I can. This house has always been a safe haven for people and that won’t change. I don’t kick my kids out on the street.” Joe says.

Iris, Barry, and Wally looked at each other and wondered what Joe was getting at.

“What does that mean?” Iris asks.

“It means that I’m not going to kick Barry out.”

“Really?” Iris asks.

“Yes, really. And before you get all happy about having your boyfriend living here, I need to set some ground rules. The fact that he lives here does not mean you two can just frolic and play house. There will be no moving into the same room. I know I can’t stop you two from having sex, but I’d better not ever catch you or hear you doing that. Do you both understand?” Joe asks as he stares at Barry and Iris.

“Yes.” Barry answers this time.

“I hope you mean that because the minute I do, I will kick you out. Then you can get your own place and do whatever you like.”

“Ok.” Iris says.

“Now, Wally and Iris, you two leave. I want to talk to Barry alone.”

Iris looked at Barry and tried to smile. Barry gave her a smile that looked like it hurt his face. Wally just looked at him and headed for the stairs. He again was glad that he wasn’t in Barry’s shoes. Iris felt bad for Barry. She was glad that her father was letting him stay, but she was still afraid for him. Who knew what Joe would say? Maybe he said he could stay and then wanted to have that alone talk with him to tell him something that would make Barry decide that living there wasn’t a good idea. She was worried to say the least.

She slowly climbed the stairs behind Wally and went to her room. She didn’t need to eavesdrop because she was fairly certain that Barry would tell her everything that went on.

Joe again just looked at Barry and the pitiful and scared look on his face. He knew he was scaring the kid and he didn’t care one bit. He felt like Barry deserved it. He didn’t hate the kid. Not by a long shot. He couldn’t totally blame him for what happened. From the looks of things, Iris was as in love with Barry as he was with her.

“I know I already asked, but how are you feeling Barry? You did lose that baby too.”

“I feel ok. I’m not happy about what happened, but I’m dealing with it.”
“So Iris told me that it was all her idea to ask if you could move in.”

Barry just looked at him and shrugged. “I don’t want to throw Iris under the bus.”

“You won’t be throwing her under the bus. I already know the truth. I remember how surprised you were Christmas morning. You really had no idea we were going to do that.”

“No, I didn’t.”

“Well, I’ve always opened my house up to people in need. You’re the first person that I made it permanent with. I know you won’t live here forever, but you know what I mean.”

“Yes, I do.”

“Do you really?” Joe asks.

“Yes. I didn’t come home with Wally expecting to be invited to stay forever even if he told me I would love it here and be a member of the family in no time. I just thought I’d spend winter break with my friend and his family and then just go back to school. I didn’t expect to fall in love with Iris. I was ok with her being off limits until I met her. I didn’t want to go against Wally, but I couldn’t help it.”

“Did she tell you?”

Barry knew exactly what and who Joe was talking about. “About Eddie?”

“Yes.”

“Yes, she told me. Believe me, I hate it just as much as you and Wally do.”

“I figured you would. But I know you wouldn’t do anything to hurt Iris. I told her that when we talked about you.”

Barry’s eyes got as wide as saucers. “You did?”

“Yes, I did. More than once. She didn’t want to come between you and Wally either. She lied to me and told me nothing was going on or ever would because of that. Even after we all ran into Josh and she broke down about it.”

“That day she was decorating the tree and we found you comforting her while she was crying, right?”

“Yes.”

“So she did still have feelings for Josh?” Barry asks.

“No, she didn’t. She broke down about people controlling her. I, along with Wally and Josh are guilty of controlling her. She felt like Josh forced her to move on, and she did. She resented Wally for trying to keep her away from you. She just wanted to do what she wanted to do, and that’s be with you. I told her I was leaving it in you guys’ hands. I wanted you two to stand up to Wally. But I let Iris make her own choices. And she chose you. That’s a very big deal for someone like Iris considering how loyal she is. And I’m not saying she’s with you out of loyalty, but that’s how she is. She could have easily chosen Josh. Especially when she thought Wally was ok with him and not you. She didn’t want to hurt him either, but she willingly risked her relationship with Wally to be with you.”
“She admitted to me that seeing Josh brought back old feelings and that it could have been easier for her to choose Josh. I was going to walk away and let her be happy with him. It killed me to do that, but I was going to do it for her. I thought her life would be easier if she was with Josh. He’s also Black and he has a family. I’m a white guy with nobody but a father that’s sitting in prison. Iris could actually have in laws if she was with him. I know how important family is to her.”

“‘Iris’ life wouldn’t necessarily be easier because she’s with Josh. Yes she wouldn’t have to face the challenges that you two would face, but being with him wouldn’t be a cake walk for her. He’s in the military. Anything could happen to him. He could come home missing limbs, with PTSD, or in a coffin. I know she’d worry constantly about him. I don’t want that kind of life for her. Even though she already lives that life having me as a father. I could get shot in the line of duty anytime. Anything could happen to you as well. So her being with Josh wouldn’t be easier for her. Iris isn’t the type of person to take the easy way out anyway.”

“I know that. But Josh and Iris wouldn’t have people looking at them like people looked at us. They’d have children that looked like them. She pushed me towards Patty because she knows people would rather see me with a white woman.”

“I know the way the world works Barry. I know how people will look at you two. I know how people look at Wally and Linda. Interracial dating is still a very touchy subject. I’m just glad that all of my kids aren’t closeminded and could find love in people of a different race. I worry about people thinking they have internalized hatred for themselves, when I raised them to love everybody.”

“It still felt bad to have people look at us with a problem when all we did was fall in love.”

“That’s their problem. Not yours. Not Iris’, Wally’s, or Linda’s. If people don’t like seeing you together because of that, then to hell with them.”

“Thanks, Joe.”

“And Barry, you have a family. You’re a part of this one.”

“I’m happy and proud to be a member of this one.”

“I’d just like to say Thank you for what you’re doing for Iris. You’ve pretty much never left her side and that makes me happy. Iris deserved to have someone be there for her because she’s always there for people when they need her.”

“You don’t have to thank me, but you’re welcome. I couldn’t just leave Iris like that. It was my baby too and I love her. I wouldn’t be worthy of her if I did that.”

“Good. I admire the fact that you stepped up, not even knowing your fate. I could have easily told you that you weren’t welcome in my house, but you still stuck by her. I’m not even mad about what happened. I’m disappointed, but not mad. I was young and in love once. I looked at her mother the same way you look at her.”

“We didn’t plan for this to happen. It just did.”

“I know that. I heard you say you were always careful. But the only thing that’s 100% safe is no sex at all.”

Barry felt a little uncomfortable talking about having sex with Iris with Joe. But he couldn’t do anything about it.
“I promise we weren’t being…careless. Neither one of us wanted Iris to get pregnant. But things happen.”

Joe nodded. He felt like he was having ‘The Talk’ with Barry. It reminded him of when he had it with Iris and Wally. “I really did mean what I said about catching or hearing you two.” Joe adds.

“I kind of gathered that.”

“Don’t make me regret that choice, Barry.”

“You won’t.”

“Ok. Well, that’s it. You can return to being with Iris.”

“Thanks.” Barry stood and Joe gave him a hug. Barry walked towards the stairs.

“Oh, and Barry?”

Barry stopped walking and turned around. “Yes?”

“The next time you get my daughter pregnant, she’d better have a ring on her finger.”

Barry just looked at Joe and wondered if that was his way of telling him he had his blessing to marry Iris. “She will.” He says as he runs up the stairs. He walked into Iris’ room and found her sitting on the bed, seemingly waiting for him. He sat down next to her.

“What happened?”

“We just had a man to man talk.”

“About what?”

“About you, me, the family, other people. Lots of things.”

“Are you not going to tell me?” Iris asks.

“He just thanked me for staying by you, how I’m still a member of the family, interracial dating, Eddie, Josh. Warnings. That kind of stuff.”

“He talked to you about Eddie and Josh?”

“Yes. But just about how he knows I’m not like Eddie. How things could still be bad if you were with Josh instead of me. I guess he was just giving us his blessing to be together.”

“So he really is ok with us being together?”

Barry smiled at her. “Yes.”

“That makes me so happy! I don’t have to hide anymore!” She exclaims as she throws her arms around him.

“I know. I’m happy too. Even if I’m still afraid of your father.”

Iris looked him in his eyes. “What did he warn you about?”

“Just not breaking his rule of catching or hearing us.”
“Oh. That. Well, he really has nothing to worry about right now.”

“I know.”

“It just really makes me think of the irony of it all. We were so worried about getting caught that me actually getting pregnant wasn’t even on my mind. I know we tried to prevent that, but in the back of my mind I never thought about it happening. You know?” Iris asks.

“Yeah. I was more afraid of Wally or Joe catching us than that.” Barry says. He got quiet for a moment and started to think. He just looked at her. He searched her face. “Are you with me out of loyalty?”

Iris was about to ask him what he meant by that when her phone started to ring. She released Barry and picked up her phone. She was happy to see that it was Linda. She needed to talk to her sister.

“Hello?”

“Hey, Ri. I heard. How are you?”

“I know, Wally told us he told you. I’m dealing.”

“I take it you didn’t know you were pregnant.”

“No, I didn’t know I was pregnant. I was shocked when the doctor told me I was but that I was losing it. I thought I was having an appendicitis or something. I knew that wasn’t regular cramps, plus the other part.”

“What other part? Were you bleeding?”

“Yes. At first it was normal, then not so much.”

“Shit.”

“I know. I was shocked as hell when he told me I was pregnant. I told him not to tell my father until I figured out how to tell him what was wrong with me.” Iris says as she looks at Barry.

“I don’t even know what to say except that I’m sorry.”

“I’m sorry too. This wasn’t the right time for me to have a baby, but it still hurts.”

“I can only imagine. Are you in pain?”

“No, not really. I just have cramps that are similar to period cramps and it’s like I’m just having a heavy period.” Iris mouthed “Sorry” to Barry and he just shrugged.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’m sure. I’m fine. Well, I’m heartbroken, but I’m physically fine.”

“How are the guys?”

“They’re good. Wally has been great and Bear has been amazing. He’s been my rock and I love that boy to death for it.”

“That’s good to hear. I’m glad you have so much love and support.”
“Yes, I do. I even had Lorraine. She helped a lot.”

“Lorraine? How did that happen?”

“Barry called her because he knew I needed my mother and she was the next best thing. You know I love Lorraine.”

“Yeah, I know. Wow. He called Josh’s mother for you.”

“Yes, he did. We had a really special bonding moment. She knew how I felt because she’s been through it too. I really felt like it was my fault. I now know that it wasn’t and bad things just happen sometimes.”

“What about Joe?”

“He was angry and hurt at first. I thought he was going to kick Barry out.”

“He didn’t?”

“No, he didn’t. He laid down some ground rules though.”

“I’ll bet. And Wally. I can’t believe he knew the whole time. I had no idea.”

“Me neither. I told him I couldn’t tell he was pretending to be an asshole this whole time.” Barry laughed at that and Iris joined in.

“He’s not that bad.” Linda counters.

“That’s what he said. You must really love him if you’re willing to overlook what a pain in the ass he is. I’m stuck with him, but you, you can leave anytime you want.”

“I’m stuck with him too. I love that pain in the ass. How would you feel if somebody told you that you can leave Barry?”

“I would slap them silly. I’m not ever leaving my Bear. He’s a part of me.”

After two days of having Barry basically pampering Iris, it was time for him and Wally to make the drive back to school. They both didn’t think they’d be making that drive back so soon. He still was reluctant to leave her.

They were standing in the living room waiting for Wally. Joe was in his room relaxing. It was easy for him to say goodbye to his sons. That only proved hard for Barry and Iris. “Are you sure you’re going to be ok?” He asks for the hundredth time.

“Yes, Bear. I’m ok. I feel almost normal.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’m sure. You took excellent care of me.”

“I wanted to take care of you. I don’t think I should leave you.”

“Bear, I’m fine. I’m not made of glass. Physically, I’m fine. I’ll get there emotionally. I have my
Dad. I can always call Lorraine. And I know that I can call you.”

“Are you sure?” He asks yet again.

Iris exhaled while Wally was running down the stairs. “Thank goodness. Take him out of here.” Iris says to Wally.

Wally gave Iris a hug and a kiss on her cheek. “We’re going to miss you.”

“I know. I’m going to miss you guys too. But life must go on.”

Barry gave Iris another hug and kissed her. “Are you sure you don’t want me to stay?”

“If you ask me that again, I’m going to break up with you.” Iris says and smiles.

“Fine. So, I won’t see you again until Spring Break, right?”

“Yup. Time will fly by. We’ll be so busy with school that neither of us will notice.”

“Alright, knock all that out. You two act like you won’t see each other for years. It’s only 2 months. I haven’t seen Linda and won’t see her in a much longer time than you two.”

“But we just got together. It’s different.” Barry says.

Wally started walking towards the door. “If you’re not out here in 5 minutes, I’m leaving you behind.”

“No! Don’t say that Wally. He’ll really stay.”

“Why do I get the feeling you want to get rid of me?” Barry asks Iris.

“I’m not trying to get rid of you, per se, but you’re making it worse by not leaving. I wish I could keep you tucked away in my room forever, but I can’t.”

“I know.” He says and kisses her again. “I’ll call you after I get settled.”

“Ok.” She grabbed his chin. “I love you.”

“I love you too.” He says and then he’s out the door. Iris felt a sense of abandonment when she watched him get in the car and Wally honked then pulled off. She would miss her Bear dearly, but they had to get back to normal. Especially her. She locked the door and went upstairs to Joe’s room. She knocked and waited for a response before she entered.

“They’re gone.” She says.

“How are you feeling?”

“I miss him already.” Iris confesses.

“That’s understandable. You’re young and in love.” Iris just nodded and stood there. Joe could tell something was on her mind. “Is everything alright, baby girl?”

“I just wanted to thank you for not kicking him out and being ok with us. It means a lot. I know I broke your trust, but I still want to thank you.”

“I wouldn’t feel right kicking Barry out on the street. You two only did what a lot of kids your age
do. It’s not like I have a reason to hate him. He didn’t hit you or hurt you, so it’s easy to put this behind us.”

Iris hesitated for a bit. “What if I hadn’t lost the baby? Would you still be ok with this?”

“I don’t know, Iris. I would hate to see you completely disrupt your life by having a baby, but I would love your child like I love you and Wally. Why?”

“No reason. I just wanted to ask. I sometimes think of how it would have been if I had it.”

“You’re not planning on trying to have one, are you?”

“Dad! No. I was just wondering. It’s hard not to wonder about the baby.” Iris admits. “I talked it over with Barry and I decided that it would have been a boy and we were going to call him Bart.” Iris really has no idea why she said that to her father, but she somehow needed to. It made her feel better to give their baby a name.

Joe eyed Iris carefully. “Do you need to talk to someone about this?”

“No. I have Lorraine. She understands.”

He eyed her some more. “That’s great, but the offer still stands. I’ll let you talk to the shrink at the station if need be. But you probably need someone that specializes in these matters. I can’t even begin to understand how you feel, but I’ll do that for you.”

“Thanks, Dad. But I’m really ok. I was just thinking, that’s all. I’ve never been through this before.”

“I’m sorry you had to go through it at all. But you’ll be ok, Iris. You’re strong. You can handle anything life throws at you. I admire that.”

“Thanks, but I get it from you. You’ve had to handle some pretty rough things.”

“We West’s are a strong bunch.”

“That we are. Wally is the weakest link though.” Iris says and laughs.

“I won’t tell if you won’t tell.” He says and laughs right along with her.

Iris got back to normal in a gradual pace. She honestly felt fine enough to go back to cheerleading practice. Barry almost came out of his skin when she told him. He checked on her every day, and was still under the impression that she was fragile and would break. She loved that he cared that much about her. She not once felt like he was getting on her nerves. She was a truly lucky girl.

Barry could have easily not cared that much. But he truly did. He was treating her like a queen even from hundreds of miles away.

She hadn’t really told any of her friends about her ordeal. She only told Laurel about it. She was beyond shocked when Iris told her. She gave Iris a hug so tight that it hurt her. Iris realized that Laurel really didn’t know her own strength.

She called Lorraine when she needed a pick me up. Lorraine’s unconditional love for her meant a lot. She went out to lunch with her one Saturday. She was happy to have someone there that understood the pain she was still in. She and Lorraine took a walk around the park arm in arm after
they had lunch. Iris loved having that closeness with her, but sometimes she thought of what it would be like if her mother were still alive. She knew they would be closer than she is with Lorraine. She thought about Barry’s mother as well and hoped that they got close enough to do things like she was doing with Lorraine.

They were walking along quietly when Iris brought it up. It’s something that nagged her a bit. “Do you think we’ll stop being like this when Josh meets someone and you bond with her?”

“No, I don’t.” Lorraine answers truthfully.

“Really? You don’t think whomever Josh ends up with will resent me for still being close to you?”

“I really don’t know Iris. But you are my daughter no matter what. You’re not my flesh and blood, but you are.”

“That’s what I mean. I would feel bad if one of Barry’s ex-girlfriends was this close to his mother. I’d feel threatened honestly.”

Lorraine stopped walking and faced Iris. “I get what you mean. I really do. I can see a girl he brings home feeling that way. But I have a lot of love to give. I know you separated from me because of you and Josh ending and that hurt me, but I love having you back in my life. She would just have to understand that.”

“Would that be fair to her? What if you don’t like her as much as you like me? That could cause tension. I don’t want that.”

“I’m sure whomever she is, I’ll love her. Josh has good taste. But Iris, I must ask. What brought this on?”

“I was just thinking about my mother and Barry’s. Wondering if I’m betraying either one of them. I know that’s silly since they aren’t here, but I do think about it. Losing my baby really made me think heavily about family. I wasn’t that far along, but I miss my baby. I wanted it. I know I don’t make sense, but I have so many things on my mind.”

“You make sense to me. That bond you had with you baby is a bond you won’t ever have with anyone. The bond between mother and child is an incredibly strong and beautiful thing. I’m a mother. I know. I felt my sons move around inside of me. They’ve felt my heart beat. I gave them life, so I know how you feel. You’re longing to have that kind of bond again, even though you have great bonds with the people that love you. But that one was different. If I’m reading you correctly, you think I’m going to abandon you and replace you if Josh meets someone. Am I right?”

Iris wiped tears from her eyes. “Yes, you’re right. I didn’t know how to say that. I would never want to stand in the way of who’s going to be your daughter in law and have her think I’m maliciously being around because of underlying feelings for Josh. I just don’t want you to ever leave me. My mother left me and I can’t deal with that again.”

Lorraine pulled Iris into a hug. “I’m not ever going to leave you, Iris. I promise. You are my daughter and I love you and I’m always going to be here for you.”

Since Wally was in the know and ok with their relationship, it made it a lot easier for them to be
together even if they were apart. Barry didn’t have to sneak and text or talk to Iris and he was glad of that. He knew he couldn’t and really wouldn’t talk dirty to her in front of Wally. He also knew that they couldn’t have phone sex like they did on his birthday, but he could Skype and Facetime with her all the time.

Barry got done studying and called Iris. He felt like it had been too long since he saw her face. He was in a Facetime kind of mood. His heart rate picked up when he saw her. He was always struck by how absolutely gorgeous she was. He never thought a nerd like him would get with someone like her. He would always consider himself lucky. His face lit up when he saw hers do the same thing.

“Hey gorgeous.” Barry says.

“Hey handsome.”

“I miss you.”

“I miss you.”

“How are you? How was your day?”

“I’m good and my day was good. How was yours?”

“Same. I had busy classes today. My inorganic Chem class had a surprise test. So there’s that.”

“I’m sure you did well, genius.”

“I’m not a genius. Just a nerd.”

“You’re an adorable nerd.”

Barry grinned. “If you say so. I look like Herman Munster standing next to you.”

Iris made a face. “That’s not true and you know it. I think you just want me to tell you how hot you are.”

“You think I’m hot?”

“Ummm hmmm.”

“Hot hot?”

“Scorching.”

“You know, I think you’re hot too.”

“Really?”

“Yes. You’re the hottest woman on the planet.”

“Tell me more.”

“I wish you were here with me.”

“Why?”

“So that I can cool you off with my tongue.”
“That sounds awesome, babe. Since you’re hot too, I’d have to do the same to you with my tongue.”

Barry was so engrossed in talking to Iris, he had no idea Wally had come in. “Wow. I think I almost interrupted you putting your hand down your pants.”

Barry jumped and looked up. “Wally…”

Iris was just as shocked as Barry was. “He didn’t hear that, did he?”

“Yeah, I did!” Wally yells.

“You are such a cockblocker.” Iris yells back.

Wally snatched Barry’s phone from him. Then he held it down and looked at Barry. “She isn’t naked or anything, is she?”

“No.” Barry says through clenched teeth. Wally held the phone up to his face. “You’re gross, little sister.”

“I learned from you.”

“Ha.”

“Give Bear his phone back so we can finish.”

Wally smiled. “Sure.” He hung it up before handing it back to Barry.

“I’m going to kill you, Wally.” He says.

“I’m going to kill you if I catch you having phone sex with my sister again.”

“We weren’t having phone sex.”

“Sure sounded like it.”

Iris called Barry back and said loud enough for Wally to hear, “I think I’m going to give Linda a call when I finish with you. Fill her in on some things.”

“You’d better not!” Wally yelled.

“Barry, I’ll call you back in a few minutes.” Iris says and hangs up.

“Shit.” Wally says out loud.

Barry chuckled. “Does Iris have dirt on you?” Wally just deadpanned Barry. “I take that as a yes. I can talk to her for you. But you have to do something for me.”

“What?”

“Let me borrow your car this weekend. I want to go surprise Iris.”

“You just want to finish what you guys started on Facetime.”

“No, I don’t.” Barry lies. “I miss her. I need to see her and check on her myself to make sure she’s ok. You can understand that, can’t you?”
“Yeah, I can. I know you’re full of shit though, Barry. Valentine’s Day is this weekend. I’m not an idiot.”

“I know you’re not. But I really need to see Iris.”

“Fine.” Wally says. “I want a full tank when I get it back.”

“Sure.” Barry says and goes to call Iris back.

Barry awoke early Saturday morning and got himself ready to make the drive to Central City. He was giddy and excited to see Iris again. That’s the first time he had to make that drive by himself, but it gave him time to think. He stopped on the way and got Iris a Valentine’s Day gift. He was happy to do that since it was their first together. He wanted to do something special to continue to show her how important she was to him.

He didn’t care if Joe was home or not. He just wanted to see Iris. He called her when he got on their block.

“Hey gorgeous.”

“Hey handsome.”

“So, what are you doing?”

“Nothing, right now. I really don’t have any plans. I don’t want to go out and see couples together when we’re apart.” She says sadly

Barry smiled. “I know how you feel.” He walked up to the door. He was happy that he didn’t see Joe’s car but he saw Iris’.

“So, what are you doing?”

“Nothing much.” He says as he rings the doorbell.

“I wonder who that is.” She says as she walks downstairs to the door.

“What?”

“Someone is at the door.” She opened the door and was shocked to see Barry standing there with a bouquet of red roses. “Bear!”

“Surprise!”

She jumped in his arms and kissed him hungrily. “What are you doing here?”

“I had to see you. It is Valentine’s Day.”

“That’s tomorrow, silly.”

“I know. But I still had to come.” He finally put her down and came inside. Iris shut the door and pulled him upstairs with her. They got to her room and sat on her bed.

Iris started to get that feeling again. She tried to brush it off. She grabbed Barry’s face and kissed
him.
That made it worse.
She didn’t like how she felt at all.
She felt an overwhelming amount of guilt. Just seeing Barry again made her feel like that.
And she hated it.
Hated it.
And hated herself.
She really hated herself for the lie she was about to tell Barry. She started to feel like she didn’t
deserve him.
She had to lie to him.
Because a lie would be much better than the truth.
A truth that he didn’t deserve.
"I don't want to do better than you."

Chapter Summary

Read it and weep.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone. Here is the latest installment. During text messages, Iris is in Italics, Barry is in bold.

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Iris felt the huge lump form in her throat. She wasn’t supposed to feel like this. She and Barry had always been open and honest with each other, and now she had to lie to him. It killed her to do that. She never wanted to lie to him but felt like she had to because she never wants to hurt him. She loved him too much to hurt him. She knew he loved her too much to hurt her.

Nothing was going the way she expected them to and that was unraveling her. Her life just seemed to be one unexpected event and surprise after another. She felt like she had no choices in her life anymore. Things just kept happening that she was forced to deal with. She felt controlled and hated that feeling. Hated it.

“I’m really happy you decided to drive all this way to see me. You are the best.” Iris confesses truthfully. She would always be happy to see Barry.

“I try. But I just felt like I had to come and see you and see if you were ok with my own eyes.”

Iris kind of looked at him funny. “Is there a hidden meaning behind that?”

“No. Not really.” Barry replies.

“Like what?”

Shit. Iris thought. Shit, shit, shit. So much for faking it with him.

“What do you mean?”

Barry shrugged. “I don’t know. Just something I felt.” He didn’t want to go into too much detail and have her thinking that he doesn’t trust or believe her.

“Like what?”
“Like you’re not as ok as you say you are.”

“T’m ok, Bear.“

*There it is again*, Barry thought. He had a feeling she wasn’t being entirely truthful. But he didn’t want to push her.

“Good. That makes it easier for us to enjoy our first Valentine’s Day together.”

“I’m sure we will, even if that was just an excuse to check on me.”

“It was…mostly. Wally thinks I came here just so we can finish having what he thought was phone sex.” He offers, just to take the heat off a bit.

“Wally is a pain in the ass. We weren’t having phone sex.”

“That’s what I told him. He still didn’t believe me.”

“How long are you planning on staying?”

“Just until tomorrow. I have to make that drive back and get ready for classes for the week.”

“Well, Bear. I’m ecstatic that you’re here. I really am. I thought I’d be spending this weekend alone with Netflix and brownies.”

“We can do that if that’s what you want.”

“Since you’re here, we should go out to dinner or something. It is a lover’s holiday.”

“Great. I’d love to go out to dinner. Or do something else. Whatever you want to do.” He says and smiles at her. He then gave her that look. She already knew Barry well enough to know what that look meant.

“About that. Um…I hate to burst your bubble, sweet Bear. But we can’t do that. I have that headache and pain in the ass that’s called a period here.” She lied and hoped he didn’t know she was lying. *But how could he?* She thought to herself. She just hoped that he didn’t want to do other things besides regular sex. Any other time she’d be up for it, but not now. She watched as the expression on his face changed. She had to admit that it was funny to say the least. She also felt like that was a good thing. He didn’t have to get hurt. Just believe that she couldn’t have sex. Not that she didn’t want to.

“Oh.”

“You should see your face.”

“Did I not hide my disappointment well?”

“No, you did not. I’m sorry I ruined your plans.”

“What? You didn’t ruin my plans. You have no control over that.”

“I know. I still feel the need to apologize.” She says, and that’s honestly the truth.

“No reason to apologize. It’s not like I’m just going to leave and drive back to school because of that. I’m with you for more than that, Iris.”
And that right there caused her to feel guilty again. She felt like she didn’t deserve Barry. She just lied to him to his face. It wasn’t supposed to be this way.

“I don’t deserve you.”

“Have you lost your mind or something? I’m the incredibly lucky one.”

“I’m lucky too. I have the best boyfriend in the world.”

“I kind of have to be. You have far better options out here. But you don’t have to be happy that I’m ok with some natural stuff that goes on that you have no control over. I already explained that to you.”

“I know. But you drove all this way.” And I’m lying to you, Iris added to herself quietly.

“I didn’t drive all this way just for sex.”

“I know.” Then why am I lying to you? Why? Because losing the baby fucked me up more than I realized. That’s why.

“So. What do we do now? You just want to watch something?”

“I was going to binge watch Mr. Robot even if that isn’t Netflix. Are you up for that or do you want to watch something else?”

“I am definitely up for that. I don’t even know why you asked.”

“Are you hungry? Did you eat anything?”

“Yes and no.”

“I’ll go fix us something.” Iris says. She needed the distraction. She needed to give Lorraine a call. She needed her again. She was glad she had somewhere to lean when necessary. She pecked Barry on the lips before grabbing her phone and leaving her bedroom. He just watched her walk away in silence.

He started to get that feeling again as well.

Iris hurried to the kitchen and called Lorraine. She then decided to go into the basement for privacy. She didn’t want Barry to mistakenly overhear he conversation. She didn’t want to do that to him.

Iris was relieved when Lorraine picked up. “Hello?”

“Hello, Lorraine. It’s me.”

“Iris. How are you? It always brightens my day to hear from you.”

“I guess I’m good. Well, not I’m not. Not really.”

“What’s wrong?”

“Well…this is kind of hard to explain. After I lost the baby, and spent all that time with Barry
taking care of me, I really bonded with him and now feel like he’s an actual part of me. Then something changed.”

“Changed? Like what?”

“Now I still feel really close to him, but I don’t want to be with him. And that really hurts me.”

“What do you mean? You want to break up with him?”

“No. I know I really can’t be apart from him. I’m talking about sex. I don’t want to have sex with him. In my heart and my mind, I do. Then it feels like my heart, my mind and my body betray me and I don’t really know how to explain it. It’s really like I’m afraid I’ll get pregnant again and have this happen all over again and I don’t know how to deal with that.”

“Iris, that’s actually pretty normal and common. I went through that. It was a little easier for me because John was away and I had 2 young boys to worry about. I feared having sex and getting pregnant again too. Did this just spring up? What made you come to this?”

“Well, it was a little in the back of my mind. While he was here after, sex was the last thing on my mind so I didn’t have to think about it. Then he went back to school and we talk every day. And now he’s here and I had to lie to him and tell him I was having my period. I don’t like lying to him. But I know I can’t tell him I don’t want to have sex with him and have it not hurt him. Barry has some insecurities when it comes to our relationship. He thought I’d choose Josh over him and he thinks I can have any guy I want, but I want him.”

“I understand your dilemma. I can see why you would be afraid to tell him, but I think Barry can handle that. You don’t have to lie to him. This is the same guy that called me when he thought that Josh could replace him. I think he’ll understand. I really do. But Iris, I think you need to talk to a professional about this. I’m just giving you my honest opinion and my ability to empathize with you. Losing a baby is not easy on a woman. It’s really not. Your mind and your body needs time to heal. There is no time stamp on how long that will take. You’re probably confused about your feelings because you have nothing to relate it to.”

“I am confused. Because I really love Barry. He makes me happy and I never want to hurt him. It really confused me to not want him like I’m used to wanting him. I thought something was wrong with me. Now I’ve told him this lie and he drove all this way to check up on me because he could tell something was off about me. He’s going to hate me for lying to him.”

“No, he’s not. Barry is probably confused too. I know he is. He doesn’t know what to do. It’s ok that you two are confused. But be happy that he cares that much about you. I’m pretty sure there are women that go through this and the guy doesn’t really care.”

“I know. And that’s why I feel guilty. Barry doesn’t deserve this.”

“You didn’t do anything horrible. That was a little white lie. He will understand. He’s not some jerk that only cares about his wants. I’ve been around him far less than you have, but I know you did good with him. Talk to him. Be open and honest. That’s the only way you two will make it. I want to see that happen for you.”

“You always say the right things. I’m so happy you’re back in my life.” Iris says as she wipes away tears.

“I’m happy you’re back in my life too, Iris. I really missed you. I missed you like I miss my boys.”

“Again, I didn’t mean to abandon you. I really didn’t. I regretted not having you around.”
“I know why you did it. It hurt, but I understand why. That’s over now and I have my girl back. You know you can always call me or drop by.”

“I know. Thanks for everything. I love you.”

“You’re welcome. I love you more.”

Iris ended her call and got herself together before she left. She hoped and prayed that Barry stayed in her room. She’d have to lie again and tell him that she was doing laundry or something. She didn’t want to spiral into a chain of lies. She wanted to be honest with Barry. She owed him that. She thought she was done with lying and hiding once everyone found out about them. She needed to do better. She wasn’t an untrustworthy person. But she lied only to protect Barry’s feelings. Hurting him was not in her heart.

She went back and looked in the fridge and decided on what to make them. She wanted to do something quick and that they were able to eat in her bed.

“Hey.”

Iris slightly jumped at the sound of Joe’s voice. “Hey, Dad.”

“What are you doing?”

“Looking for something to fix. I’m hungry.”

“You looked like you were in a daze. Are you ok?”

“Yes. I’m just trying to decide on something quick and practical.”

“Where’s Wally?”

“At school, I guess.”

“Then why is his car here?”

“Oh. Barry came for a visit. He’s upstairs.”

Joe raised an eyebrow at Iris. “Oh, really?”

“What?”

“He just came for a visit?”

“He does live here, Dad. Or did you change your mind about that?”

“No, I didn’t change my mind. I’m just surprised he made that long drive. That’s all.”

“He felt like he needed to check up on me.”

“He didn’t just come home so that you two could practice, did he?”

“Dad! No! Stop. You’re making me uncomfortable.”

“Good.” Joe says and grabs apple before leaving the kitchen. He walked upstairs and sure enough found Barry sitting on Iris’ bed. “Hey, Barry.”

“Hey, Joe.”
“So you came to check up on Iris?”

“Yeah. I felt like I had to.”

“Is that all?”

“Yes.”

“What’s with that huge bouquet of roses, then?”

“Oh. Iris deserves roses.”

“You’re making sure you’re a keeper, aren’t you?”

“I have to. Iris might wake up and come to her senses one day and realize she can do better than a dork like me.”

“She’s not going to do that.”

“How do you know?”

“Because I know.” Joe replied. “I hope you haven’t forgotten the rules. I know how special Valentine’s Day is for people in love.”

“No, I haven’t forgotten. We’ll be on our best behavior.”

“Good. Because she still doesn’t have a ring and I won’t have to go Floyd Mayweather on you.” Joe says and takes a bite of his apple and walks to his room. Barry swallowed and was relieved that they had an excuse not to fool around.

Iris watched her father leave the kitchen and returned to what she was doing. Then she decided on loaded grilled cheese sandwiches. She figured Bear would love those. She started frying the bacon when her phone went off, alerting her of a text. She opened it and read:

I have a confession to make.

Oh?

Yes.

What is it?

Your father just caught me whacking off.

Iris looked at the text, and looked at it again. Her eyes almost bugged out of the sockets.

What?

I didn’t know he was coming. I thought it was you and he caught me.

Bartholomew.

Please tell me you’re joking.
I am.

*Bartholomew Henry Allen.*

I’m sorry.

Iris just laughed and finished up with their sandwiches. She grabbed a bag of chips, then realized she forgot drinks. She figured Barry could get those. She quickly walked to her room and found him sitting on the bed comfortably with his shoes off.

“Are you done pleasing yourself?”

“I was kidding.”

“Somehow I don’t believe you. I forgot drinks.”

“I’ll go get them. You should’ve yelled.”

“I know. I didn’t want you to think something was wrong though. I know you think I’m fragile.” Iris settled comfortably on her bed and made room for him.

“I do not think that.” Barry says and disappears from the room. He was back in what seemed like seconds. He settled in the bed beside her.

“Did you bring clothes with you?” Iris asked before she bit into her sandwich.

“Just something to wear home. Why?”

“How can we go out to dinner then?”

“We just won’t go to a fancy place.”

“We can go to Red Lobster.” Iris says and then giggled. She thought about that line from Beyoncé’s song and blushed. Maybe she wasn’t that abhorrent about sex after all.

“What’s so funny?”

“Nothing. It’s a girl thing.”

“Yeah, right. I know what that means.”

“Really?”

“Yes. I listen to Beyoncé. Did you forget?”

“Nope.” Iris answers and moved closer to him. She offered him her sandwich and blushed when he winked and bit into it. She loved that dork more than she could describe. And she owed him better than the lie she told him earlier. She waited until they were both finished eating and put the plates on her nightstand. She grabbed Barry’s hand and looked him in the eyes. “I lied to you, Bear. I’m sorry that I did because we’re not ever supposed to lie to each other if this is meant to last.”

He searched her face and Iris felt her heart drop when she saw the expression on his face change. “Ok. What did you lie about?”

“You were right. I’m not as ok as I say I am. So much so that I lied. I’m not on my period, Bear.”
“Ok…?”

“I lied to you to take sex off the table because I’m afraid of having it right now and I didn’t know how to tell you that without hurting you.”

“I told you I didn’t drive all this way for sex, Iris.”

“I know you didn’t. I’m glad you know me well enough to know that I’m not completely ok. Losing our baby hurt me in a way I’ve never been hurt before. I didn’t even know and it still hurts. I wanted it. I would have had a part of both of us even if it would have thrown a huge wrench into our plans. You know I felt like it was my fault, and I still have lingering thoughts of that. We were careful, and it still happened. It made me think that if we got back like we were, it would happen again and I would lose the baby again and I didn’t, don’t want to go through that again.”

“Did you think I wouldn’t understand that? I didn’t and could never hurt like you, but it was my baby too and I’m hurt that it’s gone.”

“I know, Bear. I knew you could understand that. You understood my pain and knew that I needed a mother’s love. But the way I started feeling about sex made me feel a way that I didn’t want to feel. My heart ached for you and I was so happy to see you, but that feeling hit me in the gut and I didn’t know what to do about it. I never wanted you to feel like I don’t want you because I do. I’m always going to want you. But if I told you I didn’t want to have sex, I know somewhere in the back of your mind you’d think it was because my feelings for you changed and they haven’t. I know you think I can do better than you and that kills me because I can’t. I don’t want to do better than you. I’m supposed to grow old with you. I can’t wait to see what we look like when we’re 80.”

“You’ll probably look 40.” Barry joked and Iris laughed.

“No matter how I look, I’m supposed to carry this out with you. So I’m sorry I lied to you and I won’t do that again.”

“I knew you weren’t completely ok. I knew it. I felt it. That’s why I had to come see you. I understand you not wanting to go through that again. I really do. I don’t want us to go through that again. I do think you can do better than me, but you’ve given me reasons to not think that anymore. It’s too soon for us to get together like that. It’s only been a month. I should’ve realized that.”

“I should have too. I thought something was wrong with me. I talked to Lorraine and she told me that was normal and that she went through that too. She told me I needed to be upfront with you if I wanted us to make it.”

“Lorraine is amazing.”

“She is. I won’t ever disrespect my mother and say I wish she was mine, but having her in my life makes it easier. I’m surrounded by 3 guys that I love and a sister, but I need a mother’s love. We both do.”

“So what are you going to do? I think you might need to talk to someone. Or maybe just give it time and we go from there.”

“That sounds like a plan.” Iris says as she lets Barry’s hand go and snuggled in his arms.

Barry and Iris did stick to that plan and allowed themselves time to properly grieve their loss. Iris
got the help she needed and pretty much returned to normal. Their relationship grew and they bonded more and more. They really became this unbreakable unit.

They stuck it out and dealt with being apart during the school year and spending a lot of time together during their breaks. Barry still lived at the house and he and Iris did their best to respect Joe’s rules of not catching or hearing them. They just pretty much shacked up in Barry’s room.

When Wally graduated, got engaged to Linda, joined the police academy, and got a job at CCPD with Joe and moved out, they dropped subtle hints to Joe about him having Wally’s old room. Joe lied and said he was turning it into a gym. Truth be told, it was better that they kept their rooms the way it was. It was easier for them because they weren’t financially stable enough to move out on their own.

Linda graduated and then the wedding was seriously two months after that. She pretty much drove Iris crazy since she was the Maid of Honor. Iris just reminded her that she would pay her back when her time came. Barry was Wally’s Best Man because they seriously were like brothers. It was only fitting.

Barry made sure to get Wally back by getting him a stripper that looked like Linda for his bachelor party. They partied hard that night, while the girls did the same for Linda’s bridal shower. She squealed with delight at the amount of lingerie people gave her.

The wedding was absolutely beautiful and Linda made an even more beautiful bride. When Iris walked down the aisle right before the flower girls, Barry couldn’t keep his eyes off her. He looked forward to when their time came. They agreed to do it after they both graduated and got established just like Linda and Wally. It didn’t stop either of them from thinking about it. Wally had to actually tap Barry to get his attention when it was time for the rings.

When Wally threw the garter, Barry was seriously the only guy that wanted it. Iris pretty much climbed over people and used her cheerleading skills to catch that bouquet. She was literally the littlest person out there and bulldozed her way to catching it.

Wally couldn’t help but tease her about it. “You wanted that bouquet, didn’t you?”

“Well yes, I wanted it. Barry caught the garter. There was no way I was letting some other chick catch it and take a picture with my man."

“You’re just as whipped as he is.”

“And proud of it.” She said and smiled at her big brother.

Barry and Iris finished their last year of college and graduated within days of each other. Iris was more than proud to see Barry go through two graduations. They had a huge cookout at the West house afterwards. Joe pulled some strings and got Barry a job at the crime lab in CCPD, while Iris became an intern at CCPN.

Barry loved working in a lab like he always dreamed about. With his smarts and two degrees, the lab was essentially his. He was happy to show it to Iris right after he started working there while she met him for lunch one day. Iris found it funny when she walked into the station and saw Patty, and she looked at her strangely. She laughed when she thought of how Barry described avoiding her at all costs. He really didn’t think she even knew he worked there as much as he ducked her out.
“Here to see you father or your brother?”

Iris smiled. “No actually, I’m here to have lunch with my boyfriend.”

“Your boyfriend works here?”

“Yes.” Iris says and smiles. She saw Barry jogging down the stairs and walked up to them.

Barry kissed Iris right on the lips. “Hey, babe. I’m happy to see you.”

“You act like you didn’t just see me at home this morning.” Iris says then pecked him hard on the lips.

“I know. But I miss you when we’re apart. I can’t help it.” They stared at each other in the eyes with Patty just standing there watching.

She cleared her throat. “So, you two are together?”

“Yup.” Iris answered and smiled.

“Wow. Really? You just got together?”

“No. We’ve been together since the day we met. Right, Bear?”

“Right.”

“What about the girl named Felicity?” Patty asked and Iris and Barry wondered how and why she remembered all that.

Barry chuckled and put his arm around Iris and pulled her closer. “Felicity was just a decoy to ward Wally off. Iris was and still is my girlfriend.”

“And the army boyfriend?”

“Yeah, he was real, but he was a decoy too. We really had to do a lot to hide this from Wally. That worked until he caught us in the act.” Iris lies and loved the expression on Patty’s face.

“I thought you said he was like an extended brother and was off limits because Wally didn’t want you dating his friends?”

“Wally didn’t want me dating his friends, but we just couldn’t help ourselves. And saying he was like an extended brother was a lie. I can’t sleep with and kiss my brother.”

“Well, it was good to see you Iris.” She says and walks off. Barry and Iris just headed to his lab walking hand in hand.

They both were making decent money and realized it was time for them to move out on their own. Joe tried to act like he didn’t care, but he would miss having them in the house. That house hadn’t been empty since he bought it. He was happy that he raised his kids there, and would have a place for his grandkids to come to when that happened for Wally and Linda and Barry and Iris.
Iris used her journalism skills and did research and found them the perfect place. They would finally be able to do whatever they pleased, whenever they pleased. They no longer had to sneak to the basement or try to be quiet.

Living together was a new adventure for them. They had essentially already been living together for over 2 years. Now they were really living together as a couple.

They had a housewarming and Iris came up with the idea to have date night with Wally and Linda once a month on Sundays. Iris and Barry got caught up one afternoon and tried to have a quickie before they arrived. Getting interrupted reminded them of being younger.

Wally really became his condescending self after it took them a long time to answer the door. “What took you two so long to answer the door?” He asks.

“We were sleep.” Iris lied.

“Sleep? Yeah, right.”

“We were fucking, ok? Is that what you wanted to hear? You already know we do that so cut the bull.”

“Wow. Take it down a notch.”

Iris turned to Linda. “And you chose to marry that.”

“She made a good choice.” Wally replies.

“If you say so.”

Barry grabbed Iris’ hand. “Excuse us for a moment.” He says and pulls her toward their bedroom.

“I’m gonna pull a Joe West and say I’d better not hear you two having sex!” Wally called after them.

“Good lord, Wally. You act like we don’t do the same thing.” Linda says.

“I know. I just love messing with them. They’re an easy target.”

“Now I’m starting to side with Iris and say that I feel sorry for our future kids.”

“Oh, I’m going to be the best dad ever. I hope we have girls so that I can scare the crap out of some little boys.”

“You are relentless.”

“Hey. I need to make up for not being able to really keep Iris and Barry from getting together.”

“Bull. You love Barry like he’s your brother and you love Iris.”

“Why are you trying to ruin my fun?”

“Because I’m your wife. That’s my job.” Linda replies.

“You’ve been hanging around Iris too long.” Wally says. They sat there in a comfortable silence until Wally got up and walked into the kitchen. He found a still warm pan of mac and cheese and decided to dig in. He fixed himself a nice sized bowl of it. Iris caught him as soon as he started
chewing.

“What are you doing?”

“I’m sorry. I had to. I haven’t had this in so long.”

“That’s Bear’s pan. You fucking ate Bear’s special pan!” Iris exclaimed as Linda and Barry walked into the kitchen.

Wally looked like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar. “What do you mean by Bear’s special pan?” Wally asked and was really afraid to hear that answer.

“It’s the pan I make just for him and you ate it!”

“Why are you freaking out? Does this pan have something special in it or something? Please say no.”

Iris looked at Wally like he was crazy and Linda and Barry just watched the exchange. “Ew! You are fucking gross! Do you think I’d put something in it? What kind of person do you think I am?”

“You said it was Bear’s special pan! What am I supposed to think?”

“It’s special because I make it just for him.” Iris answered.

“And me having some is a problem because…?”

“Because Barry earns that pan, that’s why.”

Wally just looked at Barry and watched him turn red. “What does Barry do to earn this pan?”

“You don’t want to know. I can’t believe you ate his food.”

“How come I can’t get a special pan of food like Barry does?” Wally asks Linda.

“Maybe you need to do what Barry does to earn his pan.” Linda replied.

“I told you to leave him years ago, but you didn’t want to listen.”

“There’s nothing I can do about it now. I’m stuck with him.” Linda says.

“Are you two really going to talk about me like I’m not standing right here?”

“Yes, because you violated in a major way. You ate my Bear’s food.”

“It’s ok, Iris.” Barry adds.

Wally shook his head. “I can’t believe you flipped out because I ate some mac and cheese that you made for Barry.”

“You don’t deserve it like he does.” She turned to Barry. “I’ll make you more next Sunday.”

“Don’t tell me you do this every Sunday.” Wally inquires in a sarcastic tone.

“Yes, I do. What’s the big deal? We made a pact. He keeps the facial hair and I make this. You messed up our tradition.”

“You two are weird and perfect for each other.” Wally says.
“And you’re still an asshole.” Iris says and smiles.

Iris and Barry had been going strong since they moved in together. Barry started getting that feeling like it was time to officially propose to Iris. He knew he had to find her the perfect ring. He went and looked for one while he was out getting his haircut. He looked and looked through the rings until one just jumped out at him. It was perfect for his Iris and bought it right on the spot. Out of respect, he knew he had to talk to Joe first before he asked her. He knew Wally was out on patrol and didn’t have to worry about inviting him, even if he knew his plans. He walked up to Joe’s desk one day, to get the ball rolling. “Hey, Joe. You want to grab lunch today?”

“Sure.”

“Great. My treat.”

“Looking forward to it.” Joe says.

“Yeah, me too. I’ll see you soon.” Barry says and heads back to his lab. He was anxious like a puppy ready to go for a walk. He took the ring out of the hiding spot in his lab. He put it there because he didn’t want to chance Iris finding it and ruining the surprise he had planned for her. He grabbed his blazer and went and grabbed Joe. They made the trek to Jitters and sat down. Barry was bursting at the seams.

“What’s wrong with you?” Joe asks.

Barry reached into his jacket and pulled out the box. He handed it to Joe. “I want to propose to Iris and I’d like your blessing.” Barry says happily.

Joe picked up the box and looked at the ring. It was gorgeous and perfect for Iris. He knew she’d fall apart when she saw it. Joe closed the lid and slid it back to Barry. “No.”

“What?” A flustered Barry asks.

“No, you do not have my blessing.”

“But you said-“

Joe started laughing. “I’m kidding, Barry. Of course you have my blessing. I’ve been waiting years for this.”

Barry exhaled and then relaxed. “Ok, cool. Good. Thanks.”

“This won’t be a shotgun wedding, will it?”

“No, Joe. Iris is not pregnant. At least I don’t think she is.”

“As long as she’s a married woman before the kid is born, I’ll be happy.”

“I don’t think we’re quite ready for a kid yet. We’re only 24. We have plenty of time.”
Since he did have the ring and Joe’s blessing, he set out to propose as soon as possible after that. He came up with a great way to surprise her and hoped it went off without a hitch. He brought it up one Saturday while they were in bed after having breakfast.

“What are we doing today?”

Iris turned and looked at him. “I really don’t have any plans. We can do whatever after we get the place straight.”

“How about we go hang out at the mall like some teenagers?”

“That sounds like fun. It would be great to unwind after a long work week. I’m game.” Iris smiled and noticed the sheepish expression on Barry’s face. It reminded her of when they first met. Then the look changed and she of course knew what that look meant.

He turned towards her and kissed her while hiking up the tee shirt of his she was wearing. He gave her that wink that made her weak in the knees. “I’m still hungry.” He says as he slid lower.

Iris giggled. "It’s not even Sunday."

“I do this on more than just Sunday.”

“I know, but…” Iris lost that train of thought when his mouth connected to her. Sex with Barry was always great and always left her satisfied. But him going down on her took it to another level. He really enjoyed doing that to her and that made it even better. The length of his fingers combined with the movement of his tongue always went together in perfect harmony to get her off. He knew the right combinations to get the woman he loved and wanted to spend forever with to lift off the bed and cry out his name.

When he went for her clit and didn’t let up, he knew he hit the jackpot.

“Oh, shit Bear. I’m really close…Shit Bear….Oh…Bear…” Iris panted out and sure enough he knew he had gotten her off. Today was going to be a special day for them. She looked down at him. “I think that earns you a trip to Red Lobster.”

A few hours later, Barry and Iris got dressed for their little date. Barry pretty much watched Iris’ every move. He was so excited and so anxious to propose that he wasn’t acting like himself.

Iris picked up on it and brought it up while she was looking through her closet for something to wear. She pulled out jeans and Barry muttered, “No jeans.”

Iris turned towards him and looked at her energetic puppy wagging his tail. “Why not? We’re just going to the mall and Red Lobster.”

“I know, but I want to see your legs. Wear a dress. Please?” Barry asked and gave her that sad puppy dog expression that she’s a sucker for.

“Ok. But you have to wear your glasses then.”

“Why my glasses?”

“Because you’re hot in glasses, babe. I low-key wish you wore them all the time. But then I remember how gorgeous your eyes are, especially with those mile long lashes, and I change my
mind.”

“I can make an effort to wear them more often.”

“Please do.” Iris says and smiles. She pulled out an outfit she forgot she bought. It was a red skirt set that had a midriff top.

“Yes. That’s the one. Wear that.” Barry practically screamed.

Iris looked at him strangely. “What is wrong with you? You’ve been acting weird all day.”

“I always act weird.”

“No, you don’t. But you’re acting really weird today.”

Barry just shrugged. “I don’t know. I guess I’m just not myself today.”

“Uh huh.” Is all Iris says as she starts getting dressed. Barry watched that too and just continued to sit on the bed in his boxers just watching her. “You know, you can’t go out like that.”

“What?”

“You can’t go out in your underwear, Bear. We might run into Thirstarella.”

Barry slightly rolled his eyes. “I haven’t heard you bring that name up in a long time.”

“Because she’s irrelevant, but I remember the day you had those sweatpants on that I had to throw away. She’d get a better view of my goods and then I’d have to kill her.”

“She goes out her way to avoid me now. And you’re right, she is irrelevant. She never stood a chance.”

“I know that. I loved it when she finally realized that. Now get dressed, Mr. Allen.”

“Yes, Ms. West.” He says and got dressed. Iris thought he looked especially handsome in his dark jeans, blazer, white button down shirt and glasses. God she loved how he looked in glasses.

They finally made the drive to the mall and did some window shopping. Barry carefully guided Iris to the spot he wanted them to wind up at. He purposely stopped in front of Build A Bear.

“Look, babe. It’s Build A Bear! Remember you took me here on our cheesy official first date?”

“Yeah, I remember. Want to go in? We can make new bears.”

“I would love to!” Iris exclaimed happily.

They went inside and looked around. “What kind of bear do you want this time?”

“Any kind will do.”

“Well, let’s get started.”

Iris picked out their bears and started to look through the clothes. Barry did the same and found the ones he needed. He was just waiting for Iris.

She found something she liked and got jumpy like she did the first time. “Look, Bear!” She says as she turns around.
“I found the perfect outfits Iris.” Barry says as he holds up the wedding dress and the tux.

“That’s really cute. I love it.”

“I love it too because hopefully it will match us.” He got down on one knee while pulling out the box. Iris already started spilling tears. She saw the people around them looking on happily and she felt like she was on top of the world. Barry grabbed her hand and smiled at her. “Iris, I’ve loved you since I first laid eyes on you. You are the best thing to ever happen to me because I’ve been truly happy and lucky since I met you. I’d be even luckier and happier if you would be my wife.”

“Of course I’ll be your wife. You’re supposed to be my husband.” She says as she wipes the tears away as he slipped the absolutely gorgeous ring on her finger. Iris grabbed him by his collar and pulled him to his feet and literally jumped in his arms and kissed him deeply. She heard clapping and continued to kiss him. She didn’t care who was looking. The man she loved just asked her to marry him.

Barry reluctantly broke the kiss. “Do you still want to make our bears?”

“Yes. I’m giddy and excited but we have to make our bride and groom bears.” Iris kissed him again and he finally put her down. “That’s why you were acting so weird earlier.”

“Yes. I couldn’t wait but I knew I had to.”

Iris beamed and looked at her hand. “My ring is beautiful. I can’t wait to show it off.”

“I’m glad you love it. I saw it and thought it was perfect for you.”

“It is.” She grabbed him by his collar and kissed him again. They happily made their bride and groom bears and Iris practically floated after they finished. She made a habit to tell everyone in the restaurant that they just got engaged.

They returned to their home and were all over each other before the front door even closed. They were having sex for the first time as an engaged couple. The sentiment meant something to both of them. They went at it like animals until the sun rose.

Iris couldn’t wait to show off her ring and start with the wedding plans. She essentially went nuts the first chance she got. She insisted that she and Barry have an engagement party and take engagement photos. She actually asked one of the photographers at CCPN to do it since he moonlighted as a wedding photographer on the side. She hired him for the wedding too.

She went through her things and found her cheerleading outfit. She wanted a picture in that with Barry in his old track uniform. She didn’t care how cheesy it was. She and Barry were a cheesy couple. No sense in trying to change that fact. Barry just looked at her and laughed. He was thrilled she was that happy about marrying him and wouldn’t change it for the world.

They took a picture with her sitting on his shoulder in the cheerleading outfit, one with her on his back, and one where they were both wearing tee shirts. Iris had on a white one that said ‘Mrs. Allen’ and Barry had on a black one that said ‘Mr. West’. They took several where they were dressed up and embracing. But her favorite one was the one where they were both in white button down shirts and glasses and she was grabbing his tie. But she put the one with their cheerleading and track outfits on the invitations since it was such a fun picture.
She then started with her torturing of Linda since she was the Matron of Honor. Linda couldn’t do anything but laugh at her because she was the same way.

They went to do the cake tasting and Iris seriously wanted a brownie cake and she got one that was just for the bride. Going to pick out the bridesmaid dresses was an adventure. In the midst of all that wedding planning and things, Linda found out she was pregnant. Iris was honestly as happy as Linda was. They knew that the baby would be born before their July wedding date so they still could find a regular dress for Linda. They of course had red as their colors and Iris picked the same pretty red dress for all the girls, Linda’s just had a white sash.

Then it came time for Iris to find her dress. She invited Lorraine because it seemed right to her. Her real mother wasn’t there to see her, but she knew Lorraine thought of her as her daughter and would want to be there. Iris was even happy for them all when Lorraine told her that Josh met someone and she really liked her.

Iris hemmed and hawed until she found the perfect dress. She figured she must have tried on about 50 dresses until she found the one. She cried and so did Linda and Lorraine when they saw her in it.

Joe was more than happy to help pay for the wedding. He did have some old fashioned traits about him and felt like he was supposed to as the father of the bride. Plus he was happy he was going to be a grandfather. He couldn’t wait until Linda and Wally’s baby was born.

The invitations went out and they had almost everything ready. April rolled around and Linda gave birth to a boy they named Wallace Joseph West, that looked so much like Wally it was scary.

Iris almost fell apart when she held her nephew for the first time. She fell in love and thought about the baby she lost all those years before that. Little Wally was beautiful and Iris didn’t want to part with him. Everybody in the room got teary eyed watching Iris with her nephew. Especially Barry. That really tugged at his heart and made him wish the baby was theirs. But their time would come. They had to get married first.

It was time for Barry’s bachelor party and Iris’ bridal shower. There weren’t any look alike strippers this time but they did get insanely drunk. They pretty much tore Joe’s house apart.

Iris did get a stripper for hers. The dude came in wearing a lab jacket and glasses and Iris loved every bit of it. She too got an insane amount of lingerie. She even got the chance to meet Josh’s girlfriend Danielle. She was beautiful and perfect for Josh. She was in the military too so it worked for them.

The day of the wedding, Iris got pampered at Joe’s house. It seemed fitting that she get ready for her wedding at the house she grew up in. She looked like an actual doll when she was finally ready. She had to resist the urge to hold Little Wally for fear he’d throw up on her or something. He looked like a doll as well in his little tux.

Barry and the guys stayed at Wally and Linda’s house and got ready there. They got to the church and they noticed a heavy police presence. Barry just figured it was the guys on the force showing support.

He was standing in the groom’s chambers when he heard a familiar voice.

“Hey Slugger.”

Barry went stiff and turned around. He couldn’t believe his eyes when he saw his father in a suit.

“Dad?”
“Yes, son.”

“What? How are you out of prison and here for this?”

“Well, your father in law is a great guy. It felt like meeting an old friend when I met him.”

“What?” Barry asks with tears in his eyes as he looks at Joe, then Wally, then his father again.

“I pulled some really, really strong strings and got them to release your father in my custody so that he could see you get married. That’s why there are so many cops here. We all know he didn’t do what he was accused of, but it’s just precaution.”

Barry did fall apart at that and gave his father a hug. He hadn’t hugged his father in over ten years. He felt like he owed Joe his life.

“Thank you, Joe.”

“Seeing you hug your father and having him see his only son get married is all the thanks I need.”

The women and Little Wally arrived at the church and Joe seriously fell apart seeing his baby girl dolled up in a wedding dress. “You look like a princess. I wish your mother was here to see it.” He says as he cries.

“Please don’t make me cry, Dad. I don’t want my makeup and my dress ruined.” Iris says.

“Right. Sorry. So are you ready to get married?”

“Yes.”

"Good. But first I need to show you the surprise.”

“What surprise?”

“Hi, Iris.” Henry says.


“This was all your father’s doing. And yes Barry knows. I just saw him.” Henry says as he kissed Iris on the cheek.

“Is he ok?”

“He’s doing as good as he can. You look beautiful. He might pass out when he sees you.”

“Thank you. I’m so happy you’re here to see Barry get married. I know this means a lot to him. To us.”

“Well I know he’s only getting married once and I’m glad I don’t have to miss it.”

“Of course. We’re in this for the long haul.”

All the guest were seated and it was time for the wedding to start. There was a collective “Awww” when they wheeled Little Wally down in a wagon, and another one when Linda’s niece Ashley walked down as the flower girl.

Wally of course thought Linda looked beautiful, but Barry lost it when the doors opened up and he
saw Iris and Joe. Many people cried at how gorgeous she looked. Lorraine was mess. Josh was seriously happy for her seated next to his girlfriend and thought she did look beautiful. Nobody thought that more than Barry though.

By the time Iris made it to his side, he was a wreck. He was about to marry Iris and his father was there to see it. Only the birth of his first child could top this moment.

When it came time for their vows, they both chose to speak from their hearts. Barry went first.

“When my roommate and friend invited me to come home with him for Christmas break, I was happy and just thought I’d meet his family and make new friends. He didn’t neglect to tell me that his little sister was off limits. That was perfectly fine with me until I met you. Even when you jumped on me in Wally’s bed because you thought I was him and scared the life out of me, and almost bashed my skull in with a lamp, I was a goner. There was no way in the world I could listen to Wally’s rule of you being off limits. As much as I valued my friendship with him, I was going to give it up for you. Luckily I didn’t have to and got to be with you in the process. You are the absolute best thing to ever happen to me and I still sometimes wonder how I, the truly unlucky dork, and uber nerd, wound up with a life this great and an absolute goddess. I’ll spend my life making sure you never think twice about becoming my wife. Like you said, I can’t wait until we’re 80 years old either. I know you’ll look 40, and people will wonder what you’re doing with a live raisin, but I can’t wait for that. I love you, I always have, and I always will.”

Iris got herself together and went next.

“I often think back to that completely crazy way we met. I went into my brother’s room expecting to find him and found some strange white dude in his bed instead. I was drawn to you the moment I touched you. I know it sounds cheesy and cliché, but it really was love at first sight. And that’s really saying something because I had my hair bonnet on. Then that big brother of mine popped in my head and I knew I had to back off. I had to pretend I didn’t love you and that was a really hard thing for me to do. I knew I had met the man I was supposed to marry and have babies with. I met the man that looked at me like I placed each star in the sky and it almost killed me that I was going to have to give you up. That became impossible and I followed my heart. I’ve been doing so ever since. You’re the perfect man for me and I’ll love you forever.”

Iris and Barry exchanged their rings and kissed like nobody else was in the room. The minister had to clear his throat. They walked down the aisle hand in hand and on top of the world.

They actually made out like teenagers in the limo.

“I can’t believe we actually got married.” Barry says.

“I know. It’s kind of cool, isn’t it?”

“It’s more than cool.”

Iris snuggled into his arms and linked their hands until her wedding ring was sitting right on top of his. They sat like that the whole way to their reception. Iris was giddy when they announced Mr. and Mrs. Iris and Barry Allen.

She was giddy and jumpy for their first dance. When “Who Knows?” by Musiq Soulchild started to play, they just swayed to the song at first. Iris just looked up at him and stared deep into his eyes the whole time. The way Iris was looking at him made Barry smile. She was actually his wife now.

Iris then had a dance with Joe, Henry, and Wally. Barry was on top of the world when he saw Iris
dance with Henry. He never in a million years thought he would see that.

Then Wally got everyone’s attention to give his Best Man speech.

“As you all know, I’m Iris’ awesome big brother. I’m also Barry’s twin brother. I know y’all see the resemblance. After hearing their vows, my intuition was correct. I knew something happened when they first met. I have never seen two people fall completely in love that fast. They both knew how I felt about my sister dating my friends and they completely disregarded that. Then I had to watch these two idiots pretend to hate each other for my benefit when it was clear they were in love. I got a lot of fun out of that. I purposely did things just to mess with them trying to force it out of them. They’re both stubborn as mules and I love them both. Barry without a doubt is perfect for Iris and she’s perfect for him. It would be weird to see either one of them with someone else. And I know that they just got married and of course I approve, but I still have to tell Barry in front of everyone that I will kill him if he hurts my sister. I know that’s never going to happen, but as her big brother, it’s my right to say that. I’m so happy for my sister and my brother. I love you both.”

Iris then made it her business to dance the night away. She took her nephew and just danced with him. It made Barry smile to see that. He knew Iris would be an amazing mother one day.

When it came time for Barry to throw the garter, Josh caught it. Iris pretended to throw her bouquet and then handed it to Danielle. She wanted to see that happen for them. Lorraine and Josh thanked her for that and wished her the best.

They enjoyed their dinner and their wedding cake and smiled for what seemed like thousands of pictures. Iris was happy when it was time for her and Barry to leave for their honeymoon in Hawaii.

They stayed in the honeymoon suite at the airport’s hotel. Barry actually picked Iris up and carried her over the threshold. He was dying to do that. The amount of rose petals and the chilling champagne made them smile.

“You know, I’m a little glad you suggested we not have sex for a while before the wedding.” Barry says as he takes off his tux jacket and bowtie.

“I know. That will make our first time as husband and wife special.”

“It will.”

“You know what we have to do, right?” Iris asks.

“What?”

“We have to have sex while I’m still in my dress.”

“What?”

“Yes. That’s a new craze.”

“What if we have a daughter? Isn’t she supposed to wear your dress?”

“Nobody does that anymore, Bear.”

“Oh. Ok.”

“So we can really wreck this dress.” Iris says and smiles.
“I think I need to take my stuff off though. It has to go back.”

“I like that aesthetic. You completely naked and me in my wedding dress.”

“As you wish, Mrs. Allen.” Barry says as he starts to undress.

“Mrs. West-Allen. You know I’m hyphenating.”

“Right.”

Iris and Barry set off to indeed have sex for the first time as husband and wife with Iris still wearing her wedding dress. Their lovemaking was totally different this time. It was passionate and deeply intimate though they had been intimate for years. It was just something about the fact that they were now married. Iris really liked the joining of their hands and the linking of their fingers that now adorned wedding bands. It was more than she could have hoped for.

Barry and Iris made love almost the entire night.

They also made a baby.

Chapter End Notes

So, this is the beginning of the end. I was told to end it and that's what I'm doing. I know a lot happened, but I hope I did it in a satisfactory way.

I know what happened with Henry would never happen, but so what. He needed to see Barry get married.

For a visual reference, I'm picturing Danielle as Danielle Brooks.
Iris awoke cradled in Barry’s arms. She smiled when she looked at her wedding rings with her fingers splayed out on his chest. They actually got married. The day before was a great day. An excellent day. Nothing went wrong, and her father in law actually got to see them get married. That made the day better.

Barry started to stir beneath her. He was now her husband. She got giddy just thinking about it. She figured he was tired after the night they had, but they couldn’t sleep in like they wanted and needed. They had a plane to catch.

Iris sat up in the bed just as Barry opened his eyes. They locked their eyes on each other and both smiled. “Good, morning.” Barry says.

“Good morning.”

“What time is it?”

“Time for us to get up and get ready before we miss our flight.”

“We really got married yesterday? That wasn’t just a dream?” Barry asks.

“Look at your left hand.” Iris instructs.

Barry looked at his hand and the silver wedding band on his ring finger. He smiled when he looked at it. He knew he would never take that ring off. “This is the first time in my life when I’ve worn a ring.”

“Sorry, but you have to wear that. People should know that you’re a taken man.”

Barry grinned at that. “Yes, they should. But I was taken way before you put this on me.”

Iris smiled. “True. You were taken the second you laid eyes on me.”
“That is absolutely correct. Even with the hair bonnet on. Which you don’t seem to be wearing now.”

“Tying up my hair was the last thing on my mind last night.”

“I could tell. You didn’t even let me take your wedding dress off of you first.”

Iris giggled at the memory. “Come on, Bear. Us having sex with my dress on was hot. When will we ever get the chance to do that again?”

“Never. Unless we renew our vows.”

“That’s perfectly fine by me. I’ll have to get another dress if we do because we ruined that one.” Iris says as she peers over the bed and looks at the discarded wedding dress.

“Yeah, we did. I think I ripped the zipper.”

“I can get it fixed when I get it cleaned, but I’m only going to put it away. I would like to have it intact in case I want to put it on in about 5 or so years to see if it still fits.”

“I’m sure it will.”

Iris looked at him skeptically. “Really? I might pop out a little Allen before then and gain a few.”

“Who cares if it doesn’t? Nothing will ever retract from the way you looked in it yesterday. I’ve never seen you look more beautiful.”

Iris blushed. “I did look great, didn’t I?”

“You looked more than great. Did you see me almost lose it?”

“Yes. And that was the perfect reaction. You know, you looked pretty good yourself.”

Barry playfully rolled his eyes. “Please. I looked like every guy in the wedding and every man ever to wear a tux. Nothing special about that. But you. You actually looked like a goddess and I still can’t believe you’re my wife.”

“Bear, you did tell me you were going to make me your wife one day.”

“I know. Right before the first time we had sex.”

“Speaking of sex, I think we should have shower sex before we get ready to leave.” Iris says as she hops her naked body off the bed. Barry followed her with his eyes. The gorgeous and naked woman walking away from him was actually his wife. He’d never get over that fact. A dork like him married a goddess. He lost that train of thought as he too hopped his naked body out of the bed and walked into the bathroom where he found Iris brushing her teeth. He did the same then relieved himself.

“I’ll be waiting.” She says before turning to walk away.

Barry grabbed her by the arm. "Not so fast." He says and pulls her in for a kiss. They both felt electricity from the kiss and Iris felt Barry stiffen immediately against her.

Iris looked down at his burgeoning erection and then back up at him. "I know I suggested that we have shower sex, but how you can still get one of those instantly after last night is beyond me.” She says in awe.
"It's because I have the most beautiful woman in the world standing naked pressed against me. You should be concerned if it wasn't turned on." Barry says.

"I guess so. I get turned on by my hot husband." Iris says as she wraps her arms around his neck and kisses him deeply. "In fact, I'm really turned on right now." She says once she breaks the kiss.

Barry just grabs her by the hand and walks over to the shower. He opened the glass door and escorted Iris in and turned the water on. He pressed her against the wall and started to kiss her feverishly. He couldn't get enough of her kisses. He grabbed his penis and started to stroke it against her as he pressed her closer to the shower wall. He went for her neck and stuck his tongue out and licked along her spot as he reached in front of her to stroke her silky walls. He took his finger and started to rub on her clitoris.

He squatted before her and grabbed both sides of her hips and pulled her closer to him. He kissed everywhere his lips could reach before he kissed her soft mound. He let his fingers and tongue to the walking while she lightly grabbed on his hair. She always had to remind herself to be careful so that she didn't hurt him, but him being in that area and kissing her passionately did something to her. She gasped and yelped when she felt him suck on her lips. She loved everything that her husband did to her sexually.

Once he had finished lapping her up and was pleased that she was satisfied, he stood up. Barry stroked and rubbed her sensitive nub slowly and passionately. Iris started to moan and it made him harder. He took his other hand and rubbed her breast and then softly kissed it and sucked on her nipple. He went back to kissing her hot spot on her neck. He took his finger and started to rub her nipple while simultaneously rubbing her clit. He made her moan louder when he took his two fingers and entered her. He finger loved her until she whimpered his name.

Barry again kissed her deeply as Iris placed her arms around his neck. He slightly lifted her as she lifted one of her legs and placed it around his back. He stroked her with his fingers and teased her a little when he entered her slowly, inch by inch.

He gave her a few thrusts and pulled out. He loved the look on her face when he did that. “What?”

“You either put it back or I’m divorcing you.” Iris says.

“What?”

“You heard me. Put it back. It belongs to me anyway. It might be attached to your body, but it’s mine.” Iris says as she smiles widely at him and then leaned forward to peck him hard on the lips.

“As you wish, Mrs. West Allen.”

“You’re the perfect husband.”

“I try.” Barry says as he enters her again. Once he was fully inside of her, he settled into a steady pace as he made love to his wife like it would be awhile before they made love again.

Her walls felt exquisite as they gripped him. Not because she was tight, but because she felt so good to him like an anomaly of some sort: he felt like he could get lost inside of her. His body fit hers and her body fit his like a glove. He had had sex many times before, but not like this. It was like Iris’ body held a secret only he could find.

Iris stared deep into his eyes as she started to kiss him and then buried her face in the crook of his neck. She nibbled on his neck and ear as he continued to thrust into her. Her moans excited him and made him increase his pace. Iris held in her breath and exhaled at the sudden change of pace.
She took her face from his neck and started to kiss him on the lips. She softly nibbled on his bottom lip and gasped into his mouth as he reached a spot that made a shiver run down her spine and land in her pubic region. The sex was mind-blowing. They had good sex in the past, but this was beyond good. It was beyond great. Maybe her feelings and love for him plus the fact that he was now her husband had something to do with it, but she didn't care and didn't need to question it. She stopped thinking about that and focused on her beyond hot and dork of a husband making sweet passionate love to her against a shower wall.

Iris was reaching her brink again and her walls clamped down on him. She tightened her grip on his back as she returned to burying her face in his neck. She lightly nibbled on it as the orgasm overtook her.

He exploded only moments later, but didn't stop his thrusts into her. Iris had already gone over the horizon, and Barry was trying to take her there again. They both knew they needed to come down off their high and actually shower so that they could get dressed and leave the hotel. They would much rather spend the entire day making love like they did the previous night.

"Barry...Barry...yes...oh...ah...yes...Barry..." Iris started to pant out. Barry unloaded into her and went stiff before lowering Iris to the shower floor. “That was kind of awesome, Bear.”

“I know. It seems like married sex is better for us.”

“Yeah, it is. Maybe we should’ve gotten married sooner.”

“We could have, but this is great now.” Barry says.

“True. We have the rest of our lives to be married. Plus we have a honeymoon to go on. We really need to get a move on.”

"Shit, Iris. I can't get enough of you." Barry says as he goes to kiss his wife deeply.

"I can't get enough of you either. That was amazing." She says once she breaks the kiss.

“I think I’m good for one more.”

"I think we need to call it quits before we miss our flight.” Iris says.

Barry reluctantly obliges. "Ok." He says and the couple start with their bout of sensuously washing each other's bodies. He takes the sponge and completely covers the whole front of her body with the creamy body wash she loved to use. He heard her moan at his gentle actions of bathing her. Even though they needed to get a move on, he took his time washing and caressing her body. He seldom broke eye contact with her as he gently washes her entire front. He paid special attention to her most sensitive areas by rubbing the sponge slowly and sensuously over her smooth skin. He stops suddenly and turns her around to wash the back of her body. He slowly and purposely touched areas he had already washed just to touch her. Once Barry is done with her, Iris grabs the soft sponge and adds body wash and starts wash his body.

Barry and Iris finished up their joint shower and dressed. She packed up the things they needed to take with them and tried to make the room look a little presentable for when Wally came to pick up their things that they weren’t taking like her dress and his tux that had to go back. She laid out her dress and just smiled. She loved her dress the minute she saw it on the hanger and loved it more when she tried it on. Her wedding day was literally the best day of her life and she wanted to remember and cherish it forever. She couldn’t wait to see the pictures.
Barry noticed how lost Iris got and hoped that whatever was on her mind was good thoughts. “Iris, are you alright?”

Iris turned to look at him. “I’m more than alright. I was just thinking about yesterday. I can’t wait to see the pictures.”

“Yesterday was the best day of my life. And my father got to be there. I can’t wait to see the pictures either.”

“Your dad being there was amazing. I’m glad he got to see us get married.”

“Me too. I don’t know how I can ever repay Joe for that.”

“I think your father being able to be a part of it all was repayment enough for him. I know he’d be devastated if he didn’t see me or Wally get married.”

“You’re right. He said seeing me hug my father was enough for him. I just feel like I owe him, you know? He has done so much for me.”

“That’s how my father is. He never asks for anything in return for the things he does for his kids.” Iris says as her phone goes off. It really was time for them to get going even if that was the alarm alerting them to get ready.

Barry looked around. “Do we have everything?”

“Yes. Aren’t you glad you have an organized wife?”

“Yes, I am glad of that. You’re the reason I’m on time for work every day.”

“Yeah, your perpetual lateness is a habit I don’t think you’ll ever break.”

“I was on time for our wedding.”

“That’s because you had my Dad and Wally there.”

“That’s not why. I wouldn’t ever be late for something like that. I didn’t want you to think I left you at the altar or anything.”

Iris giggled. “I never would have thought that.”

“You’re right. Only an idiot would leave you at the altar.”

“Exactly.”

Barry and Iris grabbed their luggage and everything else they needed for their trip. Neither of them packed much because they didn’t really think they’d need much clothing on their honeymoon. They walked down to the lobby and waited for the shuttle to the airport. Twenty minutes later they were standing in line to go through airport security. Iris and Barry were happy that it wasn’t that busy since it was a Sunday. They knew they had 2 long flights ahead of them and wanted to make the best of it. They boarded their plane and seriously acted like the newlyweds they were on the flight.

Barry was feeling bold. He looked over at Iris in the window seat and gave her that look.

“Don’t give me that look, Bear.”
Barry feigned innocence. “What look?”

“That look that I know too well and have been looking at for years.”

“I still don’t know what look you’re talking about.”

“That look that lets me know you want to get busy.”

“Oh, that look?”

“Yes, that look.”

“Well, it is Sunday.” Barry says and gives her that look again.

Iris felt a tingle in her spine from that and slightly shifted in her seat. “I know it’s Sunday.”

“Do you know what usually happens on Sunday?”

“I don’t recall.” Iris lies.

“You don’t?”

“Nope. I think you need to refresh my memory.”

“Meet me in the bathroom.” Barry says as he starts to unbuckle his seat belt.

“What?”

“I said, meet me in the bathroom.”

“Are you really suggesting we fool around in the bathroom? What if we get caught?” Iris asks in a heated whisper.

“Who cares? We’re on our honeymoon. We should be allowed to fool around in the bathroom. We’re not the first couple to do that.”

Barry then got up and made his way to the bathroom. He saw the flight attendants standing next to the doors getting the drinks ready. He was highly disappointed when he went in. He came back to his seat and pouted like a little boy.

“What’s wrong?”

“The flight attendants were right there. We can’t.”

“Awww, poor Bear. We can just do it when we get to Atlanta.”

His face then lit up. “Ok.”

Iris took the time to put some of her blanket over Barry. She took his hand and put it in her lap. She was happy she was wearing a dress. He wasted no time sliding his fingers between her panties. He found her lips and started to stroke. Iris did the same and made her way to his crotch. She undid his zipper and stuck her hand in. Barry already being erect turned her on like they hadn’t just spent the entire night having sex. She wanted him back inside her. She couldn’t wait for that plane to land. They were rudely interrupted by the flight attendant walking by who cleared her throat. They felt like Joe had caught them and stopped fondling each other. The same flight attendant gave them a sly smile when she asked what they wanted to drink.
“Honeymoon?” She asked as she handed the cans to them.

“Yes.” Barry says and smiles.

“I figured that. You’re not the first couple I’ve had to clear my throat for.” She says and then moves to the people behind them.

Iris and Barry probably turned red from embarrassment. They were relieved when that plane landed. They had a little time before their next flight so they decided to get something to eat since they hadn’t had breakfast. Atlanta’s airport was huge and had lots of restaurants.

Iris lightly tapped Barry on his arm. “Bathroom.” She says and then darts off.

Barry was standing there trying to decide where to go to eat when he heard someone call his name.

“Barry Allen?”

He turned in the direction of the person calling him and was face to face with none other than, Becky Cooper. His high school girlfriend and first. He hadn’t seen her in almost 10 years, but of course still recognized her. He was shocked to see her and honestly never thought he ever would see her again.

He put on a fake smile. “Becky Cooper. Hi.” He says and fidgets a little. He ran his hand through his hair.

Becky walked up to him and gave him a hug. Barry remained stiff, but she either didn’t notice or didn’t care. He hoped she didn’t do more than hug him. “I haven’t seen you since we graduated.”

“I know.” Barry says and tried to smile.

“You live in Atlanta?”

“No. I’m here for a flight. Had a layover.”

“I do live here. Been here since college. I just got back here from Texas. So where are you going?”

“Hawaii.” Barry says to keep the conversation short.

“What are you going to Hawaii for?”

“My honeymoon.” Barry says and then offers a genuine smile just thinking about it.

“Honeymoon? You just got married?” She asks in surprise.

Barry held up his left hand, proudly displaying his wedding band. “Yesterday.”

Becky tried to smile, but it looked like it hurt her face. “Wow…You actually got married…Wow. Barry Allen got married.”

Barry kept his smile on his face. “Yup. I got married.”

“Where’s your wife?” Becky asks almost harshly. She was dying to see what Barry’s wife looked like.

Iris walked up and slid next to Barry. He put his arm around her and kissed her on the top of her head. “Right here.” He says happily.
Iris smiled widely and stuck out her hand. “Iris Allen. Nice to meet you.”

Becky’s face was stoic. She extended her hand almost robotically. “Becky Cooper.”

Iris smiled even wider remembering who Becky Cooper was to Barry. She was face to face with his first. It didn’t make her feel like she thought she would. Probably because she and Barry are married now. After Barry being around Josh more than once, she was finally around someone he slept with before her. “It’s really nice to meet you, Becky.” Iris offers sincerely as they break hands. She then put her arm around Barry and snuggled close to him as she sized Becky up. She was taller than her, but definitely shorter than Barry. She had blonde hair and brown eyes and was thin. She was pretty and did look a little like Patty. And she didn’t intimidate Iris one bit. There was no reason for her to. Barry was her husband and she knew he only had eyes for her just like she only had eyes for him.

“It’s really nice to meet you too.” Becky says as she too sized Iris up like she just did her. Barry’s wife was short and pretty. She couldn’t help but notice that she was Black. Not that it mattered, it just surprised her. She wondered how she and Barry got together considering how big of a nerd he was. Barry looked a little different than the last time she saw him. He was a little taller and not as skinny as he used to be. She could see that his arms were more defined than they had been. She figured he started working out. He had a little bit of facial hair that she never seen on him. He had this confidence to him that he didn’t have when they were teens. All in all, the years seemed to agree with Barry and she had to admit that he looked good. He wasn’t the same scrawny nerd that was her first boyfriend and everything else. He was now a man. A married man. That little tidbit really threw her for a loop, although she understood that Barry had some great things about him. She was really smitten with him when they were younger. Enough so that they slept together. And now he’s standing in front of her with his wife. His gorgeous wife that looked nothing like her. She really wanted to know how they got together.


“I’m a loan officer at a bank. And no, not married and no kids. What about you guys?” She was fishing for information.

“Well, I’m a forensic scientist. I work for the police department and Iris is a journalist. I work with my brother and father in law.”

“Your brother? I thought you were an only child?”

“I am. It’s Iris’ brother. He’s my brother now.”

“Is that how you two met?”

Iris smiled. “Kind of. My brother brought Bear home with him for winter break from college one year, and we’ve been together ever since. It’ll be 5 years in December, though we’ll probably just celebrate our wedding anniversary from now on.”

“Bear?”

“Yeah. I call him Bear.” Barry grinned at that.

“That’s great. Any kids?”

“Not yet.” Iris says and smiles. “But we’re working on it.”
They all laughed though Becky had to force hers. “That’s really great. It was nice seeing you again, Barry. And really nice to meet you, Iris.”

“Likewise.” Iris says and offers a wide smile.

“Yeah. Good seeing you, Becky.” Barry says.

Becky lifted her hand to wave and just walked off.

Iris waited until she knew she was out of earshot before she spoke. “So that was Beck-y Coo-per.”

“Yeah. You didn’t have to say it like that.”

“Oh, yes I did. So that was your first?”

“Yes.”

“She does look a little like Thirstarella.”

“You’re not jealous, are you?” Barry wonders.

“Of course not. You’re my husband now.”

“Good. Now we’ve both been around each other’s firsts.”

“Right. And firsts don’t matter. Only our last.” Iris adds and smiles.

“Right.” Barry says then thinks about something. “Iris Allen, huh? I thought you were hyphenating.”

“I am. But I had to let her know that I’m yours.”

Barry and Iris went to Das Waffle House before they headed back to their terminal for their flight to Honolulu. They were both seriously jet lagged and wiped out when they got there. They did enjoy getting the leis and how breathtakingly beautiful it was in Hawaii.

They took their shuttle to their hotel that was beautiful. They loved that they had doors that lead them onto a little deck that went out directly to the beach. They didn’t even bother with unpacking. They just took their shoes off and walked hand in hand in the sand on the beach.

“It is so beautiful here.” Iris says.

“Yeah, it is. I already don’t want to leave.”

“We are not going to think about leaving when we just got here, Bear.”

“Sorry.”

“I have an idea.”

“What kind of idea?”

“I think we should go skinny dipping after the sun goes down.” Iris says.

“I say you’re on. I think we should have sex in the sand too. We did say we wanted to have sex in public.”
“I guess I can sacrifice getting sand in places it doesn’t belong so that we can.”

“If you had to pick one, what was your favorite moment from our wedding?” Barry asks.

“I can’t just pick one. Our wedding was perfect.”

“It was. But just pick one.”

Iris thought for a moment. “I think I’ll have to go with putting your ring on. I really liked doing that. A close second is when your father told me you might pass out when you saw me. Just the fact that he was there. I know that meant a lot to you.”

“It did. I think mine is when I first saw you when they opened the doors and you walked in with Joe. I almost lost it at how beautiful you looked. My close second is how you looked at me during our first dance.”

“I think that moment was like the top of the happiest I’ve ever been in life.”

Barry just pulled her hand up and kissed it. “Yeah, me too. I’ve never been this happy. Not until I met you. Now you have my last name. How much better can life get?”

“We could hit the lottery and win millions and move here permanently.” Iris jokes as she playfully nudges him.

“That would be awesome. It just feels good knowing that our dreams came true.”

“It does feel good.”

“I love you, Iris.”

“I love you, Barry.” She says and lightly squeezed his hand.

Barry stopped walking and released her hand. He then grabbed her face and kissed her deeply. She had to stand a little on her tip toes to kiss him like she wanted to. She would always love kissing this man. He suddenly broke the kiss. “Race you to the room!” Barry says and he’s off.

Iris had to get her bearings because he caught her off guard. She started to run behind him. Barry was still extremely fast even running on sand. “No fair, you cheated!” She screamed as she happily ran behind him. She didn’t care that people were around looking at them. She was having the time of her life with her husband.

Barry slowed his jogging and let Iris pass him. He started running again and easily caught her. He grabbed her by the waist and playfully fell into the sand. Iris climbed on top of him and grabbed his hands. She leaned down and kissed him.

Barry just smiled and looked into her gorgeous face. “I’m so happy you married me.”

“I’m so happy you married me.”

“Do you really think I could have married anyone else?”

Iris playfully thought about it. “Ummm, I think Beck-y Coo-per was willing to become your wife. Thirstarella too. They could have been sister wives.” Iris joked.

Barry let out a hearty chuckle. “Sister wives?”
“I know you’ve heard of sister wives. Where the man has as many wives as he wants, but he’s only legally married to one?”

“Well, I’m already legally married to you…”

Iris gave him a look he hasn’t seen too often. “Yeah. You’re legally married to me and only me. I’m not sharing my Bear with any other woman.”

“I don’t want any other woman.”

“Good call, hubby. But we can do the brother husbands then. I’ll get me a couple more dudes. What do you say?”

Barry rolled them over so that Iris was now under him. “I say, that’s happening over my dead body. I’m not sharing you with anybody. Do I have to step my game up and make sure you don’t want anybody else?”

“Your game is perfect, Bear. What other man will give me what you give me on Sunday?”

“Which I still owe you for.” Barry says and gives her that look.

“I like the sound of that. I’m a little thirsty myself.”

“Let’s go.” He says and gets up. He held out his hand and pulled her to her feet. They made the short walk back to their room and headed for their bathroom.

Iris looked at the huge jetted tub and wanted to do that instead of showering. She thought the bath would be more romantic. “I think we should turn out all the lights, light some candles and get in the tub.”

“I think that’s a good idea. We’ve never taken a bath together before.”

“You’re right. We haven’t. We can literally do everything we never did while on our honeymoon. There’s no turning back now.”

Iris set out to get the candles while Barry secured the room and turned off the lights.

They quickly undressed and got into the tub. Iris wrapped her arms around Barry's neck and kissed him deep on the lips. She took one of her hands and reached down to rub his already hard dick with her hand as he rubbed her back with his hands. She started to grind on him as the jets shot the water out at them. Them being in the water made everything seem hotter and wetter. Iris took her hand and started to stroke his dick. It was already harder than she ever felt it before as it started to throb in her hand. She stroked his shaft and rubbed the tip. She wanted it inside of her. Barry seemed to be on another level. She should have suggested bathtub sex to him a long time ago.

Barry took his finger and slipped it inside of Iris. He felt her walls tighten around his finger. He took his thumb and started to massage her clit. He massaged her clit and stroked her lips. He wanted to prolong it as long as he could.

Iris started to moan and that really turned Barry on. His wife was hot and gorgeous and all his. He loved the way her body responded to him. She had no problem in letting him know how much she enjoyed what he did to her. He loved that more than anything. Not only did she really love him, she was deeply attracted to him and that made him think they would always have fire and passion in their marriage.
They didn't say a word to each other but they had eye sex as they kissed and extended their foreplay. Being in the bathtub was a huge turn on and Barry wondered why she never thought to try that before. He wanted to be inside of his wife, but he also wanted to take his time. He wanted to savor getting her there and they had all the time in the world.

Barry surprised Iris by grabbing her by the waist and pulling her up. He was dying to taste her. He sat her on the edge of the tub and placed his head between her legs. Iris called out his name as she felt his tongue connect with every area between her legs. She felt him lick her lips after he licked and sucked on her clitoris. He then went down to suck on her swollen lips again. Her thighs shook as he went back to sucking on her clitoris. It didn't take long for the orgasm to completely overtake her as she continued to shake. He again grabbed Iris by her tiny waist and pulled her back onto his lap. He took his dick and slowly slid it into her. He jerked from the tightness and wetness of her. Iris started to tongue kiss him again as she started to ride him. She loved the way she tasted on him.

Barry shifted his body a little lower so that he could suck on her nipples. They were hard and waiting to be kissed. He nibbled on one and went to the other. He traveled from her nipples to her neck and started to suck on her spot. He felt her walls tighten around him again.

He was happy that his body was cooperating by extending his erection. He thought the opposite would happen because of the increased water. Maybe because the whole scenario was hot and turned him on immensely. He decided that they would have bathtub sex more often.

Barry felt Iris go stiff and start to slow her movements which made him increase his. He felt her walls tighten around his dick and felt her cum on him. She was so wet he could barely stand it. He continued to pound into her until he felt the semen shoot out of him and into her. He got completely caught up in having that kind of sex that he really wanted more. He needed a moment to recover, but definitely wanted to be inside of Iris again. He pulled her off of him and sat her beside him.

Iris tried to come down from her high. Bathtub sex was definitely on their ‘to do’ list. They were going to do more of that in the future. She was thinking that they had to really get a nice tub in the house they bought. This was seriously some of the hottest sex they ever had.

“Sit on the edge.” Iris almost commanded. Barry got a little excited and did what she asked.

She got on her knees in front of him and grabbed his thighs and pulled him closer to her. She grabbed his dick with her hand and she started to stroke it. The more she stroked, the bigger and harder it got. She would always love the size of Barry. It was just perfect for her. It made her not want any other man.

She grabbed it by the base and slowly put the tip into her mouth and started to nibble on. She then opened her mouth farther to take as much of him as she could into her mouth until the tip reached the back of her throat. Barry shifted his body on the edge of the tub under her. He was literally getting weak in the knees. She started to bob her head up and down while massaging his balls and that pretty much sent Barry over the edge. She then sucked and licked on the thick vein running through his penis that lead to the head. Barry couldn't keep his eyes off of her and she continued to suck and lick on his dick. He got extra excited as she looked up at him and winked. Before he had any control over his actions, he just exploded causing it to shoot out. She started to nibble on the tip again and that caused Barry to jerk involuntarily. Iris just finished and smiled at him when she was done.

He slid back into the tub and pulled Iris into his lap again. He wanted her badly. He kissed her deeply as he started to finger her again. He just couldn't seem to get enough of her. He felt insatiable and wondered if it was all in his head that they were like this since they got married.
He thought about how he always wanted Iris. Always. From the moment he laid eyes on her, he wanted her. And he got her and it was hard for him to go without touching her all the time in the beginning and when they were apart at school. Then living together in the same house and being restricted was hard to get used to. Then they moved in together and the restrictions were off. He could have Iris anytime he wanted and they took full advantage of that, but they did way more than just fool around all the time. Now that they have the bond of marriage with the wedding vows and the rings, he felt undeniably closer to her and wanted to have that closeness always. He had always heard from people that newlyweds do spend a lot of time having sex in the beginning. But he wondered if that was really only true for couples that hadn’t been together first. He and Iris slept together the day after they met each other and they still managed to last. They seemed to do everything fast, but that never put a damper on their relationship. Now they’re really together and bonded for life and he felt the need to really increase that bond. Sex wasn’t the most important thing in their relationship, but it meant a lot that they wanted each other in that way.

And boy did he really want Iris. He was perfectly willing to almost never leave their hotel room and just spend all their time continuing to consummate their marriage. He felt like he’d miss out on something if they didn’t. That didn’t really make any sense, but that’s how he felt. He wondered what Iris was thinking.

She must have heard his silent questioning, because she pulled away from him and just stared into his eyes. “I feel like even though we’re having the best sex we’ve ever had, it feels like it’s not enough. Does that make sense to you, Bear?”

“I was just thinking that. It really feels like I can’t get enough of you and I want to spend all my time trying. I think the wedding really got in our heads because it’s not like we haven’t been sleeping together for years. We already lived together.”

“I think it’s kind of weird too, but in a good way. I’m not going to question in anymore. I think we should just go with it.”

“I agree.” Barry says and kisses her again. He was hard and ready for her. They had another round in the tub before actually bathing, drying off and making their way to the bed. The fire was still there and they went at it again. And again. They took full advantage of their honeymoon.

Jetlag and exhaustion finally got the best of them and they were out for the count.

Barry actually woke up the following morning before Iris. He just watched her sleep. He still felt like her being his wife was a dream, but it was real. He wondered what they would do that day when hunger pains seemed to get the best of him. That seemed to be a higher priority than going to the bathroom. He didn’t want to wake Iris, but knew he couldn’t just eat without her. He knew she was tired, but so was he, but he needed her awake. He went to the bathroom, hoping she’d be woke when he finished. By some stroke of luck, she was.

“Good morning.” She says as he walks over to the bed.

“Good morning.”

“I need the bathroom and food. In that order.” She says as she gets out of the bed and walks to the bathroom.

“I know. I’m starving.”

“Well, they have continental breakfast, then we can take it from there.”
They both got dressed and headed for breakfast. They then took a stroll around the areas surrounding the hotel. They wound up back there and decided to spend their day on the beach. The next day they went sightseeing and horseback riding which was extremely fun. The day after that they went parasailing. Iris was sure she enjoyed that more than Barry did.

They had an extremely good time with the activities they offered them and the insane amount of sex they had. They spent another day on the beach and went to a luau the day after that. They again wanted to venture off and explore Honolulu.

They both thought they had lost their minds when they came upon a tattoo parlor and decided to each get one. Iris got a bear on her hip and Barry got an iris on his. They liked the idea that they each had a part of each other on them permanently that nobody else but them would know about.

They spent more days at the beach and sightseeing. They bought little trinkets for the family for when they returned home. They also got their wish of skinny-dipping and having sex on the beach. They had lots of fun trying to wash all the sand away. All in all, they enjoyed their honeymoon in Hawaii and really didn’t want to leave, but knew they had to return to reality. They really didn’t have time to miss the family since they were so engrossed in each other. They soon packed and flew home to Central City.

They were both tired and jetlagged again when they got there. Iris was seriously wishing she had her car, but decided not to call anyone and just take a taxi home. It felt a little different when they got home. Barry again carried her over the threshold. He just got a kick out of doing that.

They were happy to be back home in a place that was familiar to them. They were happy to be back in the place where they shared their lives together and would continue to since they were now married. She smiled when she saw her dress in the bag draped over the couch. But she would deal with putting her wedding dress away at a later date.

Iris and Barry went to their bedroom. She giggled when Barry sprawled out on the bed. “I hope you aren’t too tired.” She says as she looks at his long and lean frame.

“I’m tired, but not so tired that I just want to go to bed and sleep for days. Why?”

“Because we have to christen the bed. We’ve never had sex in it as a married couple.”

Barry sat up and grinned at her. “You’re right. Take off your clothes.”

Iris stood and walked over to him. She stood right in front of him. “I was hoping that you’d do it for me.”

He reached for her dress and stood up to lift it from her head. He unhooked her bra and tossed it to the side. He sat down and leaned forward and kissed her belly button. He tugged on her panties and slid them to her ankles. He leaned forward again and pressed his lips to the tattoo on her hip. He used his knee to spread her legs apart and slipped his hand between them, and pulled one of her erect nipples into his mouth. He got more than into the moment when he grabbed Iris by the waist, leaned back, and pulled her onto his face.

Barry and Iris settled more into their new lives as a married couple. They both returned back to work. They finally got the chance to go through their gifts and send out Thank you cards. They received the wedding photos and video. Iris was in tears when she looked at the portrait of her by herself holding her bouquet, but she really loved the ones of her and Barry together. The picture of
their first kiss, first dance, them cutting the cake all turned out great. She really liked the one of just their hands. The ones with the entire wedding party were great. Barry got a little teary eyed when he saw the ones that actually had his father in them. Iris got a little lost in thought looking at Little Wally in the picture. She loved her nephew more than anything and realized how much she missed him. She missed her father, Wally and Linda as well. Barry did get the chance to see Wally and Joe but Iris hadn’t seen any of them since the wedding.

She and Barry spent so much time being newlyweds that all they seemed to have time for was work and each other. Iris had lots to catch up on at work and had to busy herself with writing stories. Iris knew she had to get back into the groove because the baby was growing up and she was missing it. She hadn’t seen him in about a month and intended to put a stop to it. They had to get back to having their Sunday date nights.

She called Linda that Wednesday evening once she settled down after work.

“Hey, Lin.”

“Hey, stranger.” Linda says.

Iris giggled. “I know, I know. I do have an excuse, you know. I just got married.”

“Over a month ago! The baby is practically walking and you missed it.”

“He is not walking. He’s only 4 months old.”

“Still.”

“You’re acting like I didn’t see you for a long time after you and Wally got married.”

“That’s not the point!” Linda says and they both laugh. “Your nephew misses you.”

“I miss him too. I miss all you guys. That’s why I called. We need to hook up this weekend.”

“That is definitely doable.”

“Great. I get to see the baby and you can see the pictures. They turned out great.”

“I’m sure they did. You were a gorgeous bride and the wedding was perfect. So how was Hawaii?”

“Beautiful, fantastic. I didn’t want to leave. We had so much fun.”

“Fun, huh?”

“Yup. Fun. We had so much sex, I got sore.” Iris says and she and Linda crack up laughing.

“Yeah, honeymoons will do that to you. It’s kind of strange considering we weren’t virgins when we got married.”

“I know! I thought about that too. It’s like things changed now that we’re married. We just never seemed to be able to get enough of each other.”

“I can relate. I started feeling like I felt after my first time with Wally.”

“Speaking of firsts, you won’t believe who we ran into at the airport in Atlanta.”

“Who?”
“Barry’s first girlfriend and his first.”

“Really?”

“Yes. She was looking at Barry like he was a meal and was shocked when I introduced myself.”

“What does she look like?”

“Just like he said she did. A little like Thirstarella. She was about her height, thin, blonde hair, brown eyes. She’s pretty.”

“Whatever.”

Iris burst out laughing at that and Linda joined in. Barry came in and found Iris laughing and wondered what was so funny. He kissed her on the cheek and sat next to her on the sofa.

Little Wally started wailing. That must have been his signal for Linda to tend to him. “I know you have to go.”

“Yeah. He’s probably hungry.”

“Ok. I’ll see you Saturday. Kiss his cheeks for me.”

“I will.” Linda says and hangs up.

“How was your day?” Barry asks.

“Great. And tiring. I really don’t feel like cooking tonight babe. How was your day?”

“Busy. I’m glad you don’t feel like cooking because I want Chinese.”

“Sounds like a plan.” Iris says. She pecked Barry on the lips and stood. “You order, I’m going to lay down until it’s here.”

“Ok.”

Iris went to their bedroom and flopped down on the bed. She just suddenly felt wiped out. She was so tired that she actually dozed off. She felt Barry shaking her arm. “Did I fall asleep?”

“Yes, you did. You must really be tired. Food’s here.”

“Great. I’m starving.” Iris says and gets up. She went to the bathroom and then went into the kitchen. Iris saw all the boxes and had the sudden desire to eat it all. She wondered why she felt like that. Then she just chalked it up to them not having had it in a while.

She and Barry started to eat and Iris pretty much ate like she really wasn’t hungry. She picked at her food. She seriously just wanted a huge brownie and some ice cream. Barry just watched her. “I thought you were starving?” He asked between bites.

“I thought so too. Now I don’t really want it. I want a brownie.”

“How many times do I have to tell you that a brownie isn’t really food?”

“Hush, Bartholomew.” Iris says and continued to pick at her food. She ate it just to shut Barry up. They finished their meal, tidied up and retreated to bed. Iris woke up in the middle of the night horny and starving. She wondered why either one of those things were going on. She had the
sudden urge to leap on Barry. She just watched him for a moment. He looked like a human brownie and she was ready to attack. He seemed dead to the world. She forced herself to go back to sleep. The next morning, she stopped at Jitters and got herself 2 cronuts on her way to work.

She actually slightly dozed off at her desk and was relieved her boss didn’t catch her. She had a huge salad at lunch and was hungry again an hour later. She couldn’t wait to get home and eat some of the leftover Chinese. She got home and ate some straight from the carton while it was still cold. She then laid down on the couch and dozed off. Insane heartburn woke her up as Barry was coming in.

“Remind me to never eat cold Chinese again.”

“Hello to you too, Iris. And why?” He sidled over to her and kissed her on the cheek.

“I ate some while it was still cold and now I have heartburn.”

“What are we eating tonight?”

“Leftover Chinese.” Iris says and smiles widely.

“You actually want more?” Barry asks and slightly chuckles.

“You ordered a lot, Bear. Might as well get rid of it.”

“I sure hope you cook sometime soon then.” Barry says to lay a minor guilt trip on her.

“I will cook you a huge dinner Sunday.”

“Do I get my pan of mac and cheese?”

“Do I get my tickles?” Iris asks.

“You can have that tonight.”

“I’m so happy I married you.”

Saturday rolled around and Iris actually woke up giddy. She was so happy she was seeing the baby. She missed his face more than she wanted to admit. She just loved her nephew to pieces. She wondered what Barry had planned for the day because she planned on spending hers with Linda and the baby.

“What are you doing today?” Iris asks once they get their day going.

“What are you doing today?”

“I’m hanging out with Linda and Little Wally.”

“Then I guess I’m hanging with Wally. Maybe Joe too.”

“Good. Well, I’m going to the grocery store, coming back here, then I’m going to their house.”

“We might as well do that together. Since you’ll be with Linda, you don’t really need your car. Or I won’t need it.”
“That sounds like a plan.”

Barry and Iris got their morning going before heading to the store together. They were back home putting the food and things away and then back out, heading towards Linda and Wally’s house.

Iris walked right past him and went straight to the baby when Wally opened the door. “Um, excuse me. Hello?” He says.

Iris smiled once the baby was in her arms. “Sorry. I missed this little guy. You can wait.” She started to kiss his cheeks and baby Wally lit up being in his aunt’s arms.

“You know, you didn’t used to treat your big brother like this.”

“I’m sorry. But he’s cuter than you and needs my attention.”

Barry just watched the exchange and laughed. He loved seeing how happy Iris was holding little Wally. “So, where are we going?”

“To Dad’s. He said he’s pulling out the grill and then it’s game time.”

“Cool.” Barry says and went to sit down. He watched Iris fawn over the baby and thought it was adorable.

Linda came downstairs and gave Iris a hug. “I missed you. Hey, Barry.”

“I know. I missed you too.”

“Marriage really seems to agree with you. You’re still glowing like you were on your wedding day.”

“Really? Must be all the sex.” Iris says and smiles.

Barry and Wally looked at her. “Hey. I resent that. A little.”

“Bear, the sex is the only reason I married you.”

“That stings.”

Iris laughed. “You know I’m kidding. I’m glowing because I’m happy and still in love with this dork. The sex is great though.”

“Can we leave now and let them have their girl talk?” Wally says to Barry.

“Sure.” Barry says and stands. He walked over to Iris and kissed her. “See you later, babe.”

“Ok.” She grabbed Little Wally’s hand and waved. “Say bye Daddy and Uncle Barry.”

“Don’t try to steal my son.” Wally says when he walks over and kisses Linda goodbye. He kissed the baby on the top of his head.

“No promises.” Iris replied.

Wally and Barry were out the door and Iris just bounced the baby in her arms. Linda happily watched them together. “Where are the pictures? I can look at them while you play with him.”

Iris slightly froze. “I forgot them. I don’t even know how I did.”
“Are we just going to sit here? Or do you want to go out somewhere. Junior here isn’t as demanding as he used to be. He seriously only cries when he’s hungry or needs a diaper change.”

“I guess we can go out. I don’t really care. It’s nice out. We can go to the park. And Dad is pulling out the grill. We can go crash that. It’s our right as their wives to spoil their fun.”

Linda laughed. “Oh, we should definitely do that. We can go over there and really act like we’re staying. Then we can go out.”

“This will be fun.” Iris says and laughs too. She made faces at the baby and he grinned. “He looks so much like Wally.”

“I know. He can never deny him.”

“He most certainly can’t.”

Linda got up and walked towards the kitchen. “Do you want anything while I’m getting his food?”

“Nope. I’m good. I’d like to find me a brownie when we’re out and about though.”

“You and brownies. Which do you love more? Those or Barry.”

Iris playfully thought about it. “I guess I’ll say Barry.” She got up and put the baby back in his swing and went into the bathroom. She saw that the roll was almost empty and knew that without a doubt, Wally was responsible for that. She looked under the sink for more when she saw a box of tampons. For some reason, seeing that hit her with force. She grabbed the roll of toilet paper, closed the door, and stood up. She looked in the mirror. “Oh, shit.” She said out loud.

Iris tried to remember the last time she even used a tampon. It was well before the wedding. About 2 weeks before to be exact. She remembered being happy that it wouldn’t spoil her wedding day and honeymoon. She was so distracted and preoccupied with getting married and the honeymoon that she failed to realize that she hasn’t had a period. “Oh. My. God.” Iris said out loud. She just stood there with her thoughts and almost forgot that she needed to use the bathroom. She did that and still thought about not having a period. She was ridiculously late. But maybe it was just stress and things from the wedding. She happily persuaded herself into believing that. That was the only way to explain it. She couldn’t possibly be pregnant again.

She finished up and went back out into the living room where she found Linda getting the diaper bag ready. She just looked at her and then looked at the baby. No way I’m pregnant, she thought and pushed it aside.

“I need to run upstairs and get him more clothes and then we’ll be ready to go.”

“Ok.” Iris says as she stares at her nephew. She had the sudden urge to pick him up again.

Linda went upstairs and she played with the baby. Yeah, there’s no way I’m pregnant. He’s just making me feel that way. She kept thinking that until Linda broke her train of thought. “Iris!”

She looked at Linda in confusion. “Yeah?”

“I called you like 4 times. Are you ok?”

“Yeah. I think I still have wedding brain.” She joked.

“Well, you are a newlywed.”
“Yup.” Newlywed. We just got married. No way in the world I’m pregnant. Once the newness of this all settles down, things will get back to normal.

“Well, you take him and I’ll get what I need. The stroller is already in my trunk.”

“Ok. Ready to go, nephew?” Iris asked and the baby cooed at her. She got up, grabbed her purse and walked out the door. She buckled him in his car seat and got in the passenger side as Linda got in.

“So, where are we going first?”

“Let’s go to the park first to give them time to get comfortable and settled, then we can crash their party. And we should leave the baby with them.”

“I like the way you think.” Linda says and starts the car up. She drove to the park while Iris distractedly stared out the window. When they got to the park, seeing so many kids hit her again.

Her mind was heavily filled with pregnancy and baby thoughts. Linda watched her carefully and could tell Iris had lots on her mind.

“Are you sure you’re ok?”

“I’m fine. I promise. I didn’t get much sleep last night.”

“Barry kept you up?”

“Yes. He’s like a horny teenager.”

Linda laughed and they strolled over to the swings. She put Wally in the baby one and lightly pushed him. He loved that more than the one at home. He liked to be on the move. Iris just watched her nephew light up and it really warmed her heart. She couldn’t wait until she and Barry had a baby of their own. Then she scolded herself for thinking that. She wanted to unload on Linda but kept it inside. It was silly to bring it up. She wasn’t pregnant.

She put herself back in the moment and didn’t think about it anymore. They finished at the park and then drove to Joe’s house. They smelled the barbecue before they got to his house. They let themselves in and the house seemed to be empty, but Iris saw her car and her father’s so they had to be there. They walked through the house to the backyard where they found their husband’s and Joe talking. Joe noticed them first.

“What a nice surprise.” Joe says.

Barry and Wally looked up at their wives. “What are you three doing here?”

“We came by for barbecue.” Iris says.

“You came by to spoil our fun.” Wally says.

“We did no such thing.” Linda says.

“I don’t care why you came by. I’m happy to see my daughters and my grandson.” Joe says as he gives Iris and Linda hugs and kissed the baby.

“Ok, now you’ve seen them. They can leave.”

“Why are you trying to get rid of us so fast?” Linda asks.
“No reason.”

Iris was again lost in thought. Just laying eyes on Barry made her do that. He smiled at her and patted his lap. Iris went over and sat down. She loved sitting on Barry’s lap.

“You are a whipped sellout.” Wally jokes.

“You can call me what you want. I want my wife to keep me.”

“See, Wallace. That’s why Barry gets special pans of food just for him.” Linda says and smiles. She handed the baby to Wally. “Ok, so we’re off. The diaper bag is in the house and there are bottles and food in there.”

“Where are you two going?” Wally asks.

“To see some strippers.”

“Nope. No, no, no. You’re not doing that. I would love to have my son with me with his uncle and grandpa, but nope.” He handed the baby back to Linda. “Now you can’t go see any strippers.”

“We were just kidding. We just came by for food. You can have your little play date.” Linda says.

Iris and Barry were in their own little world and not paying what was going on any attention.

Joe finished manning the grill and Iris kissed Barry before getting up. She fixed her and Linda plates to go. “Bye.” They say and leave the men.

They drove to Iris and Barry’s place and enjoyed their meal and talked. Linda put the baby down for a nap and she and Iris looked at the wedding pictures and talked. Iris forced herself to not drift into thinking about being pregnant and babies. After Wally’s nap, they went out again for ice cream. Linda dropped Iris off because she really needed to be alone with her thoughts and not have to fake it.

She did all the agonizing she could while she was alone. She went and took an extremely bubbly bubble bath. She stayed in so long the water turned cold. She got out and dressed for bed. She was watching I Love Lucy until she dozed off. She woke up when Barry settled in the bed next to her. He smelled freshly showered and so good. She immediately clung to him like there was a magnet in between them pulling them together. She didn’t want to have sex, she just wanted to be in his arms.

“Did you and Linda have fun?”

“Yes. I missed her. And I got to bond more with the baby. How about you?”

“I had a great time with Wally and Joe. The only thing that would have made it perfect is if my dad was there.”

Iris gave him a light squeeze. “I know, Bear.”

They stayed like that until she dozed off again. Barry continued to watch tv until he too dozed off.

Iris woke up the next day, still with a lot on her mind. But she pushed it aside to not tip off or worry Barry. She wanted to tell him, then again, she was scared of the notion. Scared of what it might mean if she really was pregnant. She just didn’t know how to deal. She was scared to deal with it and she got to the point where she felt like out of sight, out of mind was a good thing for her.
She went about business as usual. She made Barry his mac and cheese, along with fried chicken. She even baked brownies. She put on a lovely show because she didn’t drift into unthinkable territory at all. She just gave her husband her undivided attention.

That went out the window when she went to work that Monday. She seriously sat at her desk and stared at the screen. When she wasn’t doing that, she was running to the bathroom hoping her period made its grand entrance. She got tired of feeling like that and pretended to be sick and left early.

She drove to Walgreens and went where she needed to go. She stood there for the longest time just staring at the pregnancy tests. People walked past her, and the people that worked there asked her if she needed help a few times. She insisted that she was fine, just deciding. She was afraid to pick the test up. She didn’t know how else to feel.

She was so afraid, she didn’t know what to do. She stood there a little while longer and finally picked up three separate boxes and brands. She had to be sure. She wanted to be positive about her life possibly changing in a way she wasn’t sure she was ready for.

For some reason, she felt strange buying pregnancy tests. She had never in her life bought one before. She just hoped it didn’t seem too odd that she bought 3 different kinds. Then she stopped caring because the cashier probably didn’t give a shit about what she was buying. She sat in her car and just stared out the windshield. The bag sitting in her passenger seat was haunting her and she didn’t know what to do about it.

Then she got an idea and started her car up. She needed Lorraine. She pulled out her phone and called her, praying that she answered and she wasn’t busy. She was relieved when she answered.

“Hello?”

“Hey, Lorraine. It’s me.”

“Hi, Iris. It’s good to hear from you. How’s married life?”

“It’s perfect actually. But I was wondering if I could drop by? It’s important.”

“Of course you can.”

“Thanks. I’ll be there soon.” Iris says and ended the call. She drove to Lorraine’s house and had to force herself to grab the bag beside her. She did and walked up to the door. She rang the bell and didn’t think twice about Josh opening the door. She knew that he was still on leave until September. “Hey, Josh.”

“Hey, Iris. How are you?”

“I’m good. How about you?”

“Great.” He says and smiles. He no longer had any lingering feelings for her. It was kind of stupid to since she’s now married and he’s with Danielle. She was just someone from his past that he would always care about because of the awesome person she was.

Lorraine came downstairs and gave Iris a hug. “You still look as radiant as you did the last time I saw you.”

“Thanks. I kind of like being married.” Iris confessed truthfully.
“It shows. So what’s so important?” Lorraine asks.

Iris then got a little teary eyed. She wiped them before the tears had a chance to fall. “Something that I’d really need you for.”

Lorraine and Josh were confused and taken aback by Iris getting emotional. Lorraine searched Iris’ face and knew what it was. “Josh, can you give us a moment?”

“Sure.” He says and heads toward the kitchen. Lorraine just took Iris’ hand and took her upstairs to her bedroom. She shut the door and faced Iris.

“I don’t want to assume, but what’s going on?”

“I think I might be pregnant and I’m afraid to take the test to find out.”

“That’s what I figured. What does Barry say?”

“He has no idea yet. It wasn’t even on my mind until I was at my sister in law’s house and saw a box of tampons and remembered that I haven’t had a period since before the wedding.”

“Ok. I’m here to help you through this.”

“What if I am? We just got married. What if I am and I lose it again?”

“If you are, then you’re just going to have to deal with it. I understand your fears about the other part. I do. But I’ll help you deal with that too, even if I don’t think you have anything to worry about.”

Iris exhaled and wiped her eyes again. “Ok. You’re a lifesaver.”

“You know I’m always here for you. Now, do you need my help with the test? I won’t watch you go to the bathroom or anything.”

“I think I can figure it out.” Iris says and goes into Lorraine’s bathroom. She dumped out all three boxes and read the instructions on all of them. She found the cup she needed and almost lost her mind in what she had to do. But she followed the instructions, washed her hands, and left the bathroom.

Lorraine was waiting for her. “And?”

“They’re sitting on the counter which I’ll clean when this is done.”

“Don’t worry about that. We just have to wait a few minutes.” They sat on Lorraine’s bed in silence. It was deafening to Iris. She was so afraid. “I think it’s time.”

Iris exhaled again. She got even more afraid than she just was. She looked at Lorraine. “I’m scared.”

“Do you want me to look?”

“No.”

“Iris…”

“Yes.”
Lorraine walked into the bathroom and looked at all three tests. They all said the same thing. She came out of the bathroom and looked at Iris.

“They’re all positive. One says pregnant, one has two red and blue lines and the other one has a plus sign.”

Iris immediately started to cry. “I’m pregnant. I’m pregnant. I can’t believe it.”

Lorraine walked over to her and put her arm around her. “It’s ok, Iris. It really is.”

Iris cried some more out of pure fear. She wondered how in the world she’d tell Barry.

She stayed and cried with Lorraine some more before making the drive home. She drove there in a daze. She had all the pregnancy tests with her. She still didn’t know how to tell Barry.

She was a newly married woman and pregnant. And scared as hell.

She went inside and sat on the sofa. She looked at their wedding pictures and how happy they looked. And now she’s pregnant and has no idea how to tell her husband. Well, she did, she was just scared to tell him. Scared to face the reality of being pregnant. Scared to face that she could lose it again and go through what she went through all those years ago. She never wanted to go through that again.

But she was pregnant and undoubtedly wanted it. It was a part of her and the man she vowed before God to love and cherish forever. Barry was her world, her lifeline. Of course she wanted to have babies with him. But she was scared shitless. History could repeat itself. She got through it the last time, but didn’t want to ever go through that again. The kind of pain changed her.

She got up off the sofa and took the bag of tests with her. She went to their bedroom and undressed. The positive tests sitting in the bag on the bed seemed to mock her. She ignored them and went and took a shower. Maybe that would relax her a little. She needed a stuff drink, but knew she couldn’t have one.

She placed her left hand on her abdomen and looked down, her wedding and engagement rings blinking like a huge neon sign. And there was a baby inside of her. A baby that came from love and was put there by the man that put those rings on her finger. She then looked at the teddy bear tattoo she had. She took that as a sign. She started to feel a little happier and optimistic. She had to think the best. She just had to. That extra stress of thinking she might lose it couldn’t be good for her.

She finished her shower and looked at her naked body in the mirror. Her belly did seem to be bigger than usual. Or maybe that was all in her mind because she knew something was in there. She dressed in shorts and tank and got in the bed and watched tv. Everything on the screen went over her head. The tests in the bag that were in her nightstand seemed to beckon to her. She figured she’d just give the bag to Barry and hope that he didn’t have a heart attack.

But she wanted to do something better than that. She owed it to him to do something special when she told him she was pregnant. Something he would remember. Her mind drifted to that and she came up with the perfect plan.

She looked in her closet and found a tiny gift bag and tissue paper. She put the tests in there and put the bag in her nightstand. Then she got back in the bed.

Hours later, Barry came home and Iris was insanely glad to see him. He brightened her day. He gave her a deep kiss as he sat on the bed next to her. “Hello, gorgeous wife of mine. How was your
“Eventful. Learned some things. Which is always a good thing. How was yours?”

“Boring. I spent the whole day analyzing samples. I didn’t go to one crime scene.” Barry says with disappointment that sounded childlike.

Iris giggled. “You sound like a kid that was told he couldn’t go outside and play.”

“Do you know how awesome going to crime scenes are? I love working in the lab, but I love going to do that.”

“Well, hopefully someone will break the law tomorrow and you can do that.” Then Iris thought about how that sounded. “Let me add, as long as no one dies, I hope you get to do that.”

Barry just shrugged. “I’m tired. I think I need a nap.”

“Ok, now you really sound like a kid.”

“You love it.” Barry says and stands. He undressed and Iris found herself staring at him like she hasn’t seen him naked countless times before. Her eyes zeroed in on his crotch, and then she looked at his tattoo. She always got a kick out of how close to his pubic region it was and how she loved to kiss it just like he liked kissing hers.

“I do.”

“I see you looking at me like I’m a brownie or something.” He says and walks into the bathroom.

“I was not!” Iris yelled after him.

He stuck his head out the bathroom door. “Yes, you were.”

Iris blushed. She loved that huge dork. “Alright, you got me. Just be happy that I love brownies.”

“I am.” He says and disappears. She heard the water turn on and heard him start to sing. She loved hearing him sing in the shower. She started getting that feeling. She felt the thump in her crotch. She wanted Barry. She wasn’t even that horny for sex, but she wanted him.

He finished up his shower and walked over to the bed. She was glad that he didn’t stop at the dresser for underwear to put on. Iris again watched him walk over. He got in the bed and she let him make himself comfortable and she nearly attacked him.

She decided to give him a treat before the bombshell she was about to drop on him. She went straight for his crotch and kissed the tattoo she was just thinking about. Seconds later he was in her mouth and he was playing in her hair. She knew she caught him by surprise and the quick little gasp he made turned her on more. Feeling his dick swell inside her mouth really made her hot for him. But blowing him was seriously all she wanted at the moment. It actually had that affect on her like he got when he went down on her. Well, not as much as him because he really seemed to love that and she considered herself a lucky woman.

She finished and then turned away from him and got comfortable on her side of the bed.

“Iris?”

“Yes?”
“Why did you move away?”

She turned towards him. “Because that’s all I wanted.”

“What?”

“Oh please, Bear. Like you have a reason to complain.”

He was pretty much speechless. He really couldn’t argue with her or complain. Iris got back on her side and pretended to go to sleep. She felt him move closer to her. Not long after that, she heard light snoring and knew he was asleep. She let him sleep a little longer then she grabbed her phone. She found the baby crying sound effects that she downloaded and turned her phone all the way up. She started to play it and at first Barry just kept sleeping. She put it closer to his ear and he sat straight up, shook up from being woken up like that.

“What’s happening?!” He says as he looked around the room and then looked at Iris.

“What’s wrong, babe?”

Barry rubbed his eyes. “I heard a baby crying and it woke me up. You didn’t hear a baby crying?”

“You mean this?” Iris says and presses play again. She reached over and got the bag.

“Yes. Why were you playing a baby crying on your phone?” He asks as he looks at her strangely.

She put the bag in his lap. “I figured that we need to get used to that.”

“What?”

“Look in the bag, Bear.”

Barry eyed her strangely again and reached in the bag. He pulled out the tests. He froze when he looked at them. Then he looked over at Iris. “What…You’re…Are you pregnant?”

Iris nervously bit her lip and shook her head yes. She already felt the tears forming in her eyes. She wiped her eyes. “Yeah. I’m pregnant, Bear.”

He had tears form in his eyes as well. He dropped the tests and moved towards her. He took his thumb and wiped her tears, not caring about his own. He pulled Iris into his arms. “You’re pregnant for real?”

“Yup.”

Barry kissed her deeply. Then he let his excitement and happiness show. He placed his hand on her lower belly. “My baby is in there?” He asks as he rubs where his hand is and looks at Iris.

“Yes. And I’m scared, Bear.” Iris says nervously.

“I am too, but we can’t think about that right now. It’s not good for you. You’re really pregnant with our baby?”

“Yes. Are you happy about this?”

“Of course I’m happy. We’re having a baby.”

“But we just got married, Bear.”
“So? We had only just gotten together last time. The timing doesn’t change anything.”

“I can’t go through that again, Bear. I can’t.”

“You won’t. We’re getting a baby this time.” He says happily as he pulled Iris closer and kissed her again.

Barry’s undying support and happiness in Iris being pregnant, made her happy and giddy as well. She had to believe that she wouldn’t lose this one and they would have a baby this time. She had to think positively. Thinking positively would be better for her.

She made an appointment with her gynecologist to confirm the pregnancy and to go through literal hoops. They asked so many questions, she thought her head would spin. She had to bring up the baby she lost and they told her that wasn’t an indication that it would happen again. She got blood drawn and told her everything they’d be testing her for.

She and Barry were shocked and happy when she narrowed their conception date to the day they got married. They gave her a due date of April the 4th and she absolutely loved that because Little Wally’s birthday was April the 12th. Their kids could grow up together and have birthday parties together. Little Wally would only be a year older than their baby. Iris was giddy with excitement.

She was ready to tell the important family members. Lorraine already knew. She had to tell Joe, Linda and Wally. She wondered how they would reveal it to them. Then she got an idea that she sprung on Barry that Friday night while they were settled down and relaxing.

She was glad it was still summer and they could have barbecue’s. She knew Joe loved to grill and set something up for them at the house.

The next day, Iris had to make her trip to the mall to get what she needed. She was happy and on top of the world. Barry was too. He was beyond thrilled to become a father. He was building his own family and that made him a very happy man.

Iris dressed in the cutest sundress ever. She looked at herself in the mirror and realized that she truly was glowing. She and Barry made their way to Joe’s house and was glad that Linda and Wally were already there. Barry always being late added to that. She brought in the way she was revealing that she was pregnant to them. She again made a mad dash directly for the baby. She was happy to hold him because she knew she’d be holding her own soon enough.

Joe was manning the grill, Barry and Wally were talking, and Iris and Linda were talking while she played with her nephew. She wondered if she’d have a boy too.

“Oh, you guys I almost forgot. These are the little trinkets we got for you guys while we were on our honeymoon. I forgot to give them to you guys last week.”

“You didn’t have to get us anything.” Linda says.

“We did. We don’t mind. We had fun picking out things for you guys.”

Barry handed out the extremely small gift bags and sat next to Iris while she still held the baby.

They had gotten them all keychains. Joe pulled out his first. It said “Grandpa”. He loved that because he loved being a grandfather.
Linda pulled hers out and it said “Aunt”. She didn’t think anything of it either because she was an aunt.

Wally pulled his out last that said “Uncle”.

They all looked at their keychains and then looked at Iris and Barry. Linda put it together first.

“Wait…”

Iris and Barry were quiet and didn’t say a word.

“Wait a minute…” Linda says.

Joe and Wally really weren’t fazed.

Linda looked at Iris carefully. “Oh, my god! You’re pregnant!”

“I am.” Iris says and Linda practically jumped up and down.

Wally and Joe were looking at each other and then at Barry and Iris. “You’re having a baby?” Joe asks.

“We are.” Iris says happily.

Joe looked at Barry. “I thought you said it wouldn’t be a shotgun wedding.”

Barry laughed. “It wasn’t.”

“I wasn’t pregnant when we got married, Dad. I got pregnant on our honeymoon. On our wedding night to be exact.”

“You two didn’t waste any time, did you?” Wally asks though he’s happy for them.

“I guess we couldn’t.” Barry says.

Linda gave Iris and Barry hugs and Joe and Wally hugged Iris and shook Barry’s hand.

“Wait. When is your due date?” Linda asks.

“April 4th.” Iris says happily again.

“That’s right before his birthday! Joint birthday parties it will be.” Linda says and is so happy for Iris and Barry.

“I thought of that too. And they can grow up together. They’ll only be a year apart.”

“You two planned this.” Wally jokes.

“We really didn’t.” Iris says. “I wasn’t planning on getting pregnant this soon after we got married, but things happen.”

Joe laughed and looked at Barry. “You really heeded my warning and listened to me, huh?”

“Yeah, I did.”

“What warning?” Iris asks.
“I told him that the next time he got you pregnant, you’d better have a ring on your finger. And that you had to be a married woman before the kid was born.”

“You didn’t.” Iris says.

“He did.” Barry countered.

The West’s and the Allen’s finished with their little mini celebration and had a great time. Iris was really taking her pregnancy in stride. A week later her doctor called her with her test results.

And revealed some truly shocking news.

Chapter End Notes

For the 5 of you that still care and still sticking around, I extend much gratitude to you. I know this story isn't what you expected, but I take pride in the fact that I haven't ruined Barry and Iris the way that the show has. Just wanted to give you guys a little heads up/warning. Everything isn't what it seems. Things get...interesting after this. You might not like me or what I do. But, it's in the script.

Toodles!
"What do you think it is?"

Chapter Summary

A blossoming pregnancy, more wedded bliss, and family moments.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone. Here's the latest installment.

Ishipit87, My hunty D. You are a true gem and I adore you. The true definition of a beautiful woman. Your undying support and encouragement throughout this disaster of a story has made my heart ache. I'm so happy that you love my baby (this story) as much as I did. My only wish is it hadn't been ruined and others loved this story as much as you do. Thank you for making me feel like all this effort and energy hasn't been in vain. Hugs!

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

While Iris was at work, she received the call from her doctor that she was waiting on. The results of the insane amount of tests they ran on her since she was pregnant. She’d been going along growing increasingly happier with each passing day. Barry had really rubbed off on her. The fact that he was becoming a father really did a number on him. He was whistling at work. Most people thought it was just him still being happy because he just got married. And they were absolutely right. He was happy, and always would be about marrying Iris. He really meant it when he said he was lucky. Iris was the best thing to ever happen to him. Now she was helping him become a father. He didn’t take that lightly.

So Barry’s happiness and enthusiasm about them becoming parents rubbed off on her and she was as happy as he was. Maybe even happier. She put the fear of losing the baby out of her mind and her heart. She didn’t need to have those thoughts invade her mind. She believed that the baby could already sense her emotions, and she wanted a happy and healthy baby in nine months.

So when she got the call from her doctor, she wasn’t expecting to hear bad news. She just wasn’t. She was speaking carrying a baby to term and bringing home a bundle of joy out into the universe.

She was still getting the hang of using her hyphenated name. She wondered how long it would take until it just flowed naturally. She had been Iris West for 25 years so becoming Iris West–Allen took some getting used to.

“Iris West…Allen. How may I help you?”

“Iris. It’s Dr. McGhee. How are you feeling?”

“I’m great. A little morning sickness and I’m taking those awful prenatal vitamins, but I’m good.”
“Well, I have your test results.” Dr. McGhee says and pauses.

Iris felt her heart sink. *Please don’t be bad news. Please don’t be bad news.* She chanted to herself. “Ok. Yes. I was waiting for your call.”

“Well, Iris. Your tests came back and they’re great. Everything is fine so far. No abnormalities that we’ve picked up.”

“Ok. That’s great.” Iris says enthusiastically.

“But, your levels weren’t as normal as they should be.”

Iris felt her heart thud in her chest. *Oh, no. Please. I’m not ready to hear bad news. Please don’t give me any bad news.* “Ok, what does that mean?”

“Well, your HCG levels are pretty high.”

“What does that mean?”

“Well, it means that we think you’re carrying twins.”

*What? What?! Twins! What?! “Twins?”*

“Yes.”

“As in two babies?”

“Yes. Two babies.” Dr. McGhee says.

“Oh, my gosh. I’m having two babies.” Iris says. She’d never even given the possibility of twins any thought. She just wanted one baby. But twins? She started thinking of having twins and got a little excited. She hoped they’d have one of each.

“Yes. We really think so. You don’t have to do anything. Just keep taking your vitamins like you’re supposed to and eat healthy and you shouldn’t have any problems. We’ll definitely check the heartbeats on your next visit to really confirm that it is indeed twins.”

“Do I need to eat more since you think there’s more than one?”

“No. You’re in the early stages of your pregnancy. Eating for two babies isn’t that different than eating for one. As long as you eat when you’re hungry, it’s definitely enough to sustain the fetuses.”

“I can’t believe I might be having twins. I never thought…” Iris says and sighs. She giggled just because she really didn’t know what else to do. “I guess I have to find a way to tell my husband. There’s really nothing we can do about it anyway.”

“Well, no. Short of terminating the pregnancy, and I don’t get the feeling you want to do that.”

“No! Not at all. I wasn’t expecting this, but I’m happy about it.”

“That’s great. Well, I just wanted to give you the news. I’ll see you at your next scheduled appointment where we’ll listen to the heartbeats. You’ll probably get your first ultrasound as well.”

“Will you be able to tell the sex then?”
“No. We usually can’t tell until about 20 weeks. You’re only 8. Hopefully the baby or babies are in good position then and we can see.”

“Ok. Thank you Dr. McGhee.” Iris says and ends her phone call. She started thinking of how she’d drop this bombshell on Barry. She just gave him one and had to give him another. She wasn’t going to do anything farfetched or dramatic. Maybe it really isn’t even twins. It could just be one baby, but she still wanted to give him a heads up. All they could do is deal with it.

Iris went home that evening and went straight to the fridge. She had the sudden craving for milk. Why she wanted milk of all things, she had no idea. She drank it straight from the jug, took out what she was cooking for dinner, and then headed to their bedroom. She stripped down and got in the shower. It was late August and she was hot. All she wanted to do was that and get in the bed. She’d been taking a lot of evening naps lately. That should’ve alerted her to being pregnant because she never used to do that. Then Barry was taking naps as well. She remembered Linda telling her that men sometimes slept a lot if they got someone pregnant and Wally definitely did that.

She took a cool shower, got out and put one of Barry’s tee shirts on, and then got in the bed. A quick nap before he got home was what she needed.

About an hour later, she felt Barry get in the bed with her. He didn’t say anything and just sat quietly on his side of the bed. Then he took his hand and rubbed her abdomen. He really loved doing that.

Iris popped her eyes open and just looked at him. “Are you trying to cop a feel, Mr. Allen?”

He grinned at her. “No. If I was copping a feel, I would’ve went lower. Or higher. I just wanted to touch my baby.”

“Speaking of baby, I got my test results back today.”

Barry continued to rub. “Everything ok?”

“Yes. But she told me something.”

“What?”

“That my HCG levels were high and that it might be twins.” Iris says and waits for Barry’s reaction.

“That’s great.” Barry says, not really registering what she said. He stopped rubbing and looked at her. “Wait, what?”

“My HCG levels were high and she thinks it might be twins.”

“What?” He asks. She sees the confused and worried look on his face. She knew all her husband’s ticks and emotions and his non poker face by now. He honestly looked better than she expected, but his appearance mirrored hers.

“It might be twins.”
“Twins?”

“Yes.”

“We could be having twins?”

“Yes, Bear.”

His face lit up and he smiled. Gone was the confusion and worry. He got on board faster than she did. “Twins. How do you feel about that?”

Iris shrugged. “Happy. And scared. It’s two babies, Bear. Two. I only wanted one and we might be having two.”

He started to rub her belly again. “Do you know what this could mean?”

“That we’ll never sleep again after they’re born if it is?”

“Well, yes. But that’s not what I’m talking about. We could get one of each. A boy and a girl.”

Iris grinned. “We could. But it’s not really a guarantee. She just said she thinks it might be twins. We won’t know for sure until the sonogram.”

“Well, we just have to take what we get. We’re going to have to move. You do know that, right?”

“Yes.”

“Then I think we need to start house hunting. I know we said we’d wait a few years to buy a house, but now is the time since we’re starting a family.”

“Can we really afford a house right now? We just paid for the wedding, we have to buy baby stuff, and we’ll lose my income for a while after the baby is born. Is that really practical?”

“I really don’t think you should worry about that Iris. I just want you to focus on you and the baby. Or babies. You don’t need any added stress.”

“No, I don’t. But that shouldn’t be all on you. We’re married now.” Iris says.

“You’re right. We are supposed to make decisions like this together. I’m sorry for trying to keep you out of that.”

“It’s ok, Bear. But we’re a team and in this together. If we can’t move, then we can’t. We’ll make this work.”

“I know. I was just thinking about Wally and Linda. They’ve bought a house and made it work, so we can too. I know things might be a little more expensive for us since we might be having two, but it’s not impossible.”

“I didn’t really think of that, babe. You’re right. So I won’t worry about it anymore. I’m just going to focus on keeping this little Allen safe.”

“Good. We have time to decide on things. We still have months. The baby won’t be born tomorrow.”

“Right. And now, I need to get up because I’m hungry.”
“What’s for dinner?”

“Pepper steak. Is that ok with you?”

“Of course.” He paused and just smiled at Iris.

“What?”

“I just can’t believe it all. We got married, you’re pregnant, and it could be twins. I’m just really happy right now, Iris.”

Iris sat up and leaned forward, pulling him into her arms. “I’m really happy too. I think we deserve a little happiness.”

“I do too. And we are. Even if we’re unsure about the future, we are.” He says as he kissed her.

The next morning, it seemed as if brutal morning sickness came for Iris out of nowhere. She threw up the second she tried to brush her teeth. Barry listened from the bed in almost horror. She had an omelet for breakfast and threw that up as well. Barry felt bad when she stopped at the front door and ran to the bathroom. He knew there wasn’t a thing he could do about it and honestly felt her pain. She stopped at Jitters for a cronut or two. She convinced herself that she did need to eat more since she might be having twins. So there was one cronut for her and one for the babies to share. She was relieved when she didn’t throw that up. She felt like her baby was truly a part of her in not wanting a cronut to go to waste.

She got to work on an unfinished article that she needed to have to her editor before the day was over. She got the writing bug from somewhere because she cranked it out in record time. She got started on a new one about housing and found herself drifting into looking for houses for sale in Central City. She migrated to the area her father and Wally and Linda lived in. It was a great community that she’d be happy to raise her kids in.

She knew that she and Barry needed at least three bedrooms if it was twins. And she had to have a huge kitchen since she loved to cook so much. Then her mind drifted to decorating the nursery. She thought about cribs and baby clothes. Bottles and how and if she’d breastfeed if it was twins. She thought about how huge her belly would get. She remembered Linda’s baby bump and figured hers would be bigger than that. Then she thought about maternity clothes. She’d have to buy a whole new wardrobe. Then she thought, she really didn’t have to. Linda had maternity clothes she sure wasn’t using and they had almost the same style and were almost the same size. They were pregnant at the same time at the same time of year, so it would go great according to the change of the seasons. She picked up her phone and called Linda at work.

“Linda Park West.”

“Hi, Mrs. West. How are you?”

“Hey, Mrs. Allen. I’m great. How are you? Being pregnant and all.”

“I feel great. I threw up twice this morning, then I ate two cronuts and I feel fine. I want some coffee like there’s no tomorrow though.”
“You and coffee. Plus you and cronuts. I’ll never understand how you can eat cronuts and brownies all the time and stay that thin.”

“Sex. That’s my form of exercise.”

Linda and Iris cracked up laughing. “Another thing I’ll never understand. You finding a huge nerd that screws like a porn star.”

“I am a lucky woman.”

“I’ll bet. That’s why you got pregnant on your wedding night.”

“Barry and I don’t beat around the bush. I mean, we got together the first day we met and had sex the next night. It’s hard for us to keep our hands off each other. And I don’t know why you’re acting like you and Wally don’t get it in as well. Little Wally didn’t arrive from the stork.”

“I know. We don’t have as much sex as we had when we first started living together and got married, but we do alright. Just get all yours in as much as you can now before the baby gets here.”

“Way ahead of you, sister in law. And speaking of babies, I was wondering if you wanted to part ways, probably just temporarily, with your maternity clothes?”

“Only if I can raid your closet for the stuff you won’t be able to wear. You’re the best dressed woman in Central City, and I’d like to get in on that.”

Iris giggled. “Of course you can. I want my clothes back though.”

“Of course.”

“What about the maternity clothes. You will want them back, right?”

“Yeah. Wally and I decided that we’ll try for another when he’s 2. He hopes this one is a girl so it’ll be like me and Doug, and you and him.”

“That’s great. I’d love to have a niece that I can spoil rotten too.”

“You and Barry might have a girl that you’ll spoil rotten. I can already see it now. She’ll be the best dressed little girl in Central City.”

“I am already loving that idea. Barry and I are thinking of buying a house.”

“That’s great. I’d love it if you guys came near our neighborhood. I’m looking forward to our kids growing up together.”

“I am too. I can’t believe Wally thinks we planned this.”

“You know how he is. Everything has to have rhyme or reason with him. We weren’t really trying for Junior, but here he is.”

“We definitely weren’t trying. I was just enjoying my wedding night. We weren’t trying the first time either.”

“I’m not paying that bullheaded husband of mine any attention, and you shouldn’t either.”

“You don’t even have to tell me that.” Iris says and they both laugh. “Well, I need to get back to work and I know you do too. I’ll catch up with you guys soon. Kiss my baby for me.”
“I will. Bye.” Linda says and hangs up.

Iris went back to working on her article and looking for homes that would be perfect for her and Barry. Finding a reasonably priced 3 bedroom shouldn’t be that hard. She then drifted into thinking about Barry. She kind of wanted her sexy and dorky husband. She felt like fooling around. She wanted to take the advice Linda gave her. She wanted to put to use the lingerie she got at her bridal shower before she started showing and couldn’t wear it anymore. She started wondering what would happen to their sex life. They had a very healthy and hefty sexual appetite for each other since they started living together. And they’d been having sex pretty much round the clock since they got married. She wanted to keep that going because she loved being with him like that. She just loved being with Barry period. That’s why she married him. And now she had his baby, possibly babies growing inside her.

She looked at the wedding picture she had on her desk and smiled. She couldn’t wait to put a baby picture on there. She wondered what the baby would look like. She looked at the picture of Little Wally and how cute he was and how he just made her smile looking at him. How he looked so much like Wally, but had some of Linda’s features as well. She wondered if their baby would look like that. She remembered seeing pictures of Barry when he was little and he actually had blond hair. It got darker as he got older. Would their baby have blond hair too? She got lost in thinking about that until her phone started to ring. She was a little taken aback at her ability to completely zone out and daydream. She needed the distraction before she got pulled up about not being productive.

“‘Iris West Allen.’

“You’re getting better at that. It comes out naturally now.” Barry says.

Iris lit up at the sound of his voice. “I think so too. I kind of like my new name. I really like the man that gave it to me.”

“Is that so?”

“Yup.”

“So who is this man that you like that gave you your new name?”

“Well, he’s this tall and lean guy that’s very good looking with gorgeous green eyes and the prettiest eyelashes I’ve ever seen on a man. He’s extremely intelligent, he can run really fast, and he can sing. He gives me some amazing sex and he treats me like a queen. He’s the love of my life.” Iris says happily as she looks at their wedding photo on her desk. Barry looked so good in his tux and bow tie. And she could easily admit that she looked gorgeous in her wedding dress. They were a perfect pair and she really loved that picture. She had never been happier in her life. She could tell Barry hadn’t either. His smile really reached his eyes. She never had to question just how much he loved her. She felt the same way.

“Really?” Barry asks.

“Yes.”

“So where did you meet this guy?”

“In my brother’s bed.”

Barry let out a chuckle at that. “That’s an interesting place to meet someone.”
“I know.” Iris says and chuckles along with Barry.

“Well, I’m pretty sure that this guy thinks very highly of you too.”

“You don’t say.”

“Yeah. He told me about you.”

“He did?”

“Yes. He went on and on about you. Wouldn’t shut up about it.” Barry replies.

“What did he say?”

“That you were short, petite actually and that you’re gorgeous. Like traffic stopping gorgeous. He thinks that you have the prettiest lips he’s ever seen on a woman and a body to die for that he loves making love to. That you’re smart, fun loving, loyal and can really cook. That your smile is brighter than the sun. Plus he thinks you placed each star in the sky. That you have a heart of gold and is the best thing to happen to him. He said he has to pinch himself to make sure he isn’t dreaming, and wonders how he got that lucky.”

“Wow. He makes me sound damn near perfect.”

“No, not damn near. He said you are perfect.”

“Bear, it’s things like this that make me fall in love with you all over again.”

“Hey, you brought your A game. I had to step it up. I mean everything that I said.”

Iris felt her heart flutter at that because she knew he really meant it. “I know. I meant everything I said too. I thought about having a perfect husband and I got one.”

Barry’s face lit up and he knows he turned red at hearing that. He looked up and saw Joe walking into the lab. “Babe, hang on a second. What’s up Joe?”

“Robbery/homicide.”

Barry wanted to groan because he wanted to keep talking to Iris, but was excited to go to a crime scene. He put the phone back to his ear. “Babe, I have to go. Your Dad says Hi. I’ll see you at home later. I love you.”

“Ok. I love you too.” Iris says and hangs up and realized she forgot to tell her father Hi back. It really wasn’t a big deal. She got to work and put in a good chunk into the story she was writing before she needed a bathroom break and lunch. She thought about what she’d have and prayed that it wouldn’t make her sick as she walked to the restroom. She hoped nobody noticed her frequent trips to the bathroom just yet. She wasn’t telling anyone about her pregnancy so soon. Only the family and Lorraine knew. She and Barry weren’t telling anyone that it might be twins until they knew for sure. They’d have to do a lot more planning if it was. They’d have to buy two of everything. That thought made her head spin. Two babies. But she loved the thought of having one for her and for him no matter what the sexes were though the prospect of a boy and a girl thrilled her.

Iris went to lunch and finished up her day. She happily drove home after she made a mandatory stop to get brownies. She was craving them more than ever now.
She got home, ate her brownie along with the milk she drank straight from the jug again. She took out the makings for dinner and went to their bedroom. She did what seemed to become her normal routine now and undressed and showered. She started getting that feeling for Barry again. She always wanted her Bear, but it seemed to increase since she got pregnant. She attributed it to the extra hormones running through her body. Plus she wanted to take Linda’s advice and have all the sex they could now before the baby/babies arrived and before she got too pregnant to even have sex.

She walked into her closet and found the ridiculous amount of lingerie she had from her bridal shower that she felt bad in not really using. It kind of was a waste because Barry would have her naked in seconds. But she felt the desire to put it on and surprise him. She wanted to keep it spicy. Which really wasn’t that hard for them to do because she really loved and was hot for her Bear. She never had to wonder if he felt the same about her because she knew he did. How badly he wanted her made her want him even more. They were such opposites, but their passion and love for each other was the same.

Since she was in the mood to keep it spicy, red was the color she picked. It was red lace and incredibly skimpy and Iris thought it was perfect. She then went to Barry’s drawer and got one of his huge tee shirts to cover up what she was wearing. She went and started cooking because she wanted them to get dinner out of the way early so that they could turn in and act like the newlyweds they were. She really couldn’t wait to basically attack Barry.

She got the quick and easy spaghetti started and then retreated to the sofa and got on her laptop. She wanted to finish up on the houses she was looking for earlier. She was putting the finishing touches on their dinner when Barry walked in. He seemed to be in an incredibly good mood and Iris was glad of that. Really, Barry always seemed to be in a good mood lately. He was extremely happy about being a husband and becoming a father.

He walked up behind her and put his arms around her at the stove. He nuzzled his face in her neck before he even spoke to her. “I’ve been waiting to do that all day. That talk we had earlier really made my day.”

Iris smiled. “It made mine too.”

“Dinner smells great.”

“Thanks. It’ll be ready in about 15 minutes.”

“Good. Gives me time to shower and then we can get our evening started.”

Iris was in the mood to say to hell with dinner and follow him, but she needed to eat. It wasn’t just about her anymore. And the way she was feeling, Barry needed fuel.

Thirty minutes later they were eating their dinner. It’s like they sped through it because they were both on the same page. Once that was over, Barry sent Iris to their room while he cleaned up the kitchen.

Iris discarded Barry’s tee shirt and sat on their bed. He stopped in his tracks when he walked in.

“Did you have that on under my shirt the whole time?”

“I sure did, hubby. I was going to attack you tonight.”

“I think I’m the one to do the attacking tonight. You look so good in that, that if you weren’t already pregnant, you would be after tonight.” He says as he just pulls down his boxers and gets in
Iris gave him a naughty giggle at that. She felt that thump to her clit when he pulled his boxers off. She really loved his body. Loved it from the moment she scared him out of his sleep and got the shock of her life.

He literally did attack Iris. She barely had a chance to catch her breath when he pounced on her. “Maybe I should wear skimpy lingerie more often.”

“Yes, you should. All the time. Just wear it under your clothes so that I can fantasize about it while I’m at work.” Barry said between kisses. He laid her down and kissed every piece of exposed skin. The red lace that was seriously see through turned him on. He loved how he could see her dark nipples through it. The panties were even worse. He saw all his wife had to offer and he again thought of how he was a truly lucky man. He took his time removing the soft, red lace from her body. He wanted to rip it off, but he’d like to see her put that on again at a later date.

He slowly and agonizingly paid extra attention to her nipples and Iris immensely loved that. Being pregnant made her nipples more sensitive and seriously just the feel of Barry’s breath on them turned her on. He lightly sucked on them and slid his fingers between her lips. He slowly fingered her and the wetness turned him on more. How wet she was was seriously unheard of. He figured that must be another good side effect of her being pregnant. “You’re really wet, Iris.”

“Is that a bad thing?”

“Hell no. Not at all. You’ve never been this wet before. I think it’s because you’re pregnant.”

“Maybe. I know everything is more sensitive now. It’s like I’m feeling everything more intensely.”

“That’s good to know.” Barry says as he kissed her while still fingering her. Iris felt his erection pressed against her leg and really wanted it inside of her.

But Barry had other things in mind. He wanted to take their lovemaking session slow. The fast and intense sessions they had really served a purpose when necessary. But now he wanted to savor this.

Barry’s tenderness and attention to detail was exquisite yet frustrating. She loved how he took his time and really explored her body to get her off, but she really just wanted to get there and then have him inside of her. She craved his dick a lot now. A whole lot. Maybe she just wanted to feel the closeness of him being inside of her. Whatever it was, she liked it.

He kissed down her body, licked his fingers, and dove in. Iris was instantly at the point of eruption. He worked her up good enough that it didn’t take much at all to get her there. She was grabbing his hair and trying to remember not to go too far and hurt him. Once she felt like she was going to explode, she had to move his head away. That seemed like a first. It was too much for her to handle.

He repositioned himself and easily slipped inside her. He pulled her as close as humanly possible and moved inside her. He linked his fingers with hers, and smiled at the feeling of her wedding rings brushing against his fingers. He appreciated the fact that she proudly word the rings that he put there. He proudly wore the one she put on is finger. Sometimes throughout the day, he found himself fiddling with it. The symbol to let everyone know that he was off the market and completely taken by her. He really got a kick out of that.

Each thrust was deliberate and concise. It hit her spots perfectly. She never wanted him to stop. They sent her dangerously close to the edge of bliss and essentially made her toes curl. She wanted...
more even though it was enough. She felt like being greedy. He felt the same way. The difference in her body made him want it more as well. He never wanted to leave. He was perfectly willing to stay inside of her forever, if his body allowed him to.

Iris saw stars and abandoned the notion of trying to hold it in and prolong she and Barry both having orgasms. Once she cried out and moaned his name in ecstasy, Barry soon followed. Breathless and spent, he kissed Iris deeply throughout his final thrusts. He stayed inside her as long as he could before rolling off her and settling beside her.

“Wow. That was…intense.” Iris says as she tries to catch her breath.

“It was. There’s plenty more where that came from.” Barry replied while trying to get his bearings. After a minor break, he was ready to go again. And again. So much so that their session spilled almost into dawn and they both were almost late for work.

Iris dealt with the highs and the lows of being pregnant with grace and patience. She continued to take her vitamins as prescribed and found out the things she could and couldn’t eat along with that. Eggs seemed to be a hit or miss. Some days she would really enjoy them and keep them down. Others, before she really had a chance to finish them, they were making their way out of her stomach. For some reason milk seemed to be what she wanted to drink all the time. She was eating a lot of cereal as well. She wasn’t eating fish because of the mercury and dangers to pregnant women. Chicken seemed to be a fave so she ate a lot of that, along with potatoes. All vegetables seemed to be a go, so she ate a lot of those as well. Anything involving tomato sauce seemed to be on the ‘do not even attempt to try and eat this’ list. Along with Chinese. All that did was give her heartburn. She was popping Tums like her life depended on it. Her cronuts and brownies were her loyal guilty pleasures. She had at least one of each every day.

She noticed her belly filling out more. Barry noticed it first because he was paying extra attention to her body lately. She had a little pouch that he loved to rub daily. He started the tradition of taking photos of her to document how her belly grew. He loved that more than he could say. Watching his child grown inside his wife gave him feelings he didn’t know he had. Though it’s been happening since the beginning of time, and he knew how science really worked, seeing that they created a person together was truly a miracle to him. The way he felt when he touched her belly could not be science.

She wasn’t really trying to hide it, but she found herself dressing differently. She was no longer wearing form fitting dresses. Since she was so thin, it’d be easier to see. She was happy to be pregnant, but felt it was too early to tell people. So she dressed in looser dresses and tops. She could still fit her old clothes so it wasn’t time for the maternity clothes just yet.

Barry just loved seeing the subtle changes in her body. He couldn’t wait until she was really showing and having his baby growing inside of her be unmistakable. He really couldn’t wait to feel it kick. He knew he was jumping the gun, but he couldn’t wait until Iris had a really noticeable baby bump. He just couldn’t wait until the baby was born even if he was enjoying seeing her be pregnant. They didn’t get that the last time.
Iris came up with the idea of them practicing with Little Wally. In addition to waking Barry up with the surprise of being pregnant and thinking they needed to get used to having a baby wake them up in the middle of the night, they needed practice with an actual baby. She knew the basics because she has babysat in the past, but Barry had never been around a baby except for their nephew. And that was just being in close proximity. He had never fed or changed him, so they needed the practice.

She wondered how Barry and Wally and Linda would feel about that. She sprung it on Barry while they were relaxing one evening after dinner.

“I think we should keep the baby sometime this weekend. You know, for practice.”

Barry’s eyes grew huge as he looked at her. “What?”

“The baby. We should keep Little Wally so that we can used to having a baby around.”

“I really don’t know anything about babies, Iris.”

“That’s precisely the point, Bear.”

“But…what are we supposed to do with a baby? Just look at him all day?”

Iris looked at Barry like he had lost it. She knew her husband was too smart to be that dumb. She figured out what it was just by looking at him and his reservations. “You’re afraid, aren’t you?”

Barry exhaled. “Yeah, a little bit. No, a lot. I’m afraid. I don’t want to do the wrong thing and hurt him. Wally and Linda will kill me. I guess I don’t like the idea of him being a guinea pig for our own baby.”

“I understand that you’re afraid. Babies are scary. Even to people that have experience with him. They’re these little people completely at your mercy. So I understand. You’re not going to do the wrong thing. I’m here to help you. I know how to take care of a baby and you need to learn. I know you wouldn’t do anything to hurt him, but you need to get the feel of taking care of a baby. Especially since we might be having two. And we’re not using him as a guinea pig. It’s just babysitting with a purpose.”

“I still can’t believe it might be twins. Do you really think we can handle twins?” Barry asks earnestly. He knows that they really have no choice but to handle it, but it’s still a shocking thought.

“I can’t either, Bear. That scares and excites me. I know we have to be able to handle it because they’re a packaged deal if it is. We can’t just ship one baby off because we didn’t think we’d get more than one.”

“I know we can’t. I just never thought about it, you know?”

“Yes, I know. I just pictured one baby like Wally and Linda have. It still could turn out that way though, Bear. It’s just speculation.”

“When do we find out for sure?”
“Next month. I’ll be almost 12 weeks then.”

“12 down, 28 to go.” Barry says.

“When you put it that way, it doesn’t seem that long.” Iris replied and then Barry seemed to be somewhere else. He got quiet and Iris wondered what was wrong, or if she said something wrong. “Are you ok, Bear?”

“Yes. I just got a little lost in thought.”

“Lost in thought about what?”

“If it’s twins, it’s like we’re getting back the baby we lost. I know a baby can’t replace another one, but I’m looking at it like that.” Barry says pensively as he at looks at Iris.

“That thought never crossed my mind.” Iris says and starts to tear up.

“Hey, hey. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to make you cry.” Barry says as he pulls her into his arms. “I’m sorry, Iris.”

“I know. But you gave me something to think about. What if this is the universe’s way of making that right?”

“It could be. We weren’t ready for a baby then. We were too young. We weren’t exactly ready for a baby now, but we’re in a better place than we were then. We’re married now, we have our own place, we both have great jobs and can afford a baby. Or two.”

“I was just thinking that this might be too much too soon though, but you changed my mind in that. I thought we needed to really enjoy being married before we started a family.”

“We don’t stop enjoying being married because we add a baby to the mix. I know that’s not what you meant.”

“No, it’s not. But our lives are really going to change.”

“And I’m ok with that. You know that all I ever wanted was a family of my own. I got that when I got with you, but now we’re building our own family. Nothing makes me happier than that. I lost my family when I was young, but that’s not happening this time.”

“No, that’s not happening. You’re stuck with me.” Iris states and kisses him.

The next day, Iris again called Linda at work to set up the whole her and Barry babysitting thing. She was actually excited because she really hasn’t had the baby since he was born. She was too preoccupied with getting married, though she made it her mission to see him whenever she could. Now she was going to be a full on Auntie and she couldn’t wait. She loved that baby like he was her own and wanted to bond more with him. She hoped that her brother and sister in law wanted to part with their son. She needed to give them an offer they couldn’t refuse.

“Linda Park West.”

“Hey Linny Lin. How are you?”
“I’m great. How are you Ri?”

“I’m good. Pregnant and good.”

“How are things going on the pregnant front?” Linda asks.

“Morning sickness, I’m tired and hot more than I ever used to be. Tums and the bathroom are my best friends, and I’m hornier than ever. But I wouldn’t change anything.”

“Just wait until your boobs and nipples start hurting.”

“Hush. They’re already extra sensitive, so I think I’m in for something horrible.”

“Just trying to warn you. I don’t want you to be blindsided.”

“Thanks.”

“Also, sex and going to the bathroom after giving birth are exceptionally fun treats.”

“Linda, I’m going to kill you with all your warnings.”

“Hey, I’m just telling you the part that nobody ever tells you. I won’t even go into what a contraction feels like. So that’s my gift that keeps on giving for the moment.”

“You’re lucky I love you. Hey, the reason I called you is I have a proposition for you. And Wally.”

“What?”

“Well, Barry and I want to keep your little one because we need the practice.” Iris says happily.

“Is that all? You know you’re welcome to keep him whenever you want. Of course I’ll miss him, but I know he’s in good hands with you. I know you love him like he’s your own.”

Iris smiled and glanced at his picture. “Yeah, I do. I love that baby more than I can describe.”

“I know. Just like I’ll love yours. So when are you planning on doing this? And how long?”

“Well, we can do it this Saturday if that’s ok with you. You and Wally can take a day to be alone. We can come to your house so that you don’t have to pack up anything. Unless you guys want to run around your house and bang on every surface.”

Linda laughed. “That sounds like fun, but I’d rather go out. We can go on a date like we did when we were young. Maybe hit up a hotel. Start working on our second child sooner.”

“Hey, whatever floats your boat. You can have our place if you like. Just don’t look in my nightstand.” Iris joked and she and Linda cracked up laughing.

Saturday came and Iris again woke up giddy. She was happy to be spending time with the baby. She was like she was during Christmas time. Barry was eager, but nowhere near as excited as his wife was. He was still afraid, but Iris’ attitude about it all calmed his nerves a bit.

They had breakfast, got dressed and made the drive to Wally and Linda’s house. Barry barely had
time to park before Iris was taking her seat belt off. She practically ran to the house and brushed past Wally like she always did and went straight to the baby.

“I like how you just come in my house and not even greet me.” Wally says.

“I’m sorry, Wallace. I just love seeing my guy. How are you?” Iris says as she kissed the baby’s cheeks.

“I’m good. How are you two?” He asks as he looks from Iris to Barry. He could sense Barry wasn’t himself.

“I’m great.”

“I’m good too, I guess.” Barry says and goes to sit on the sofa.

“He’s nervous.” Iris says.

“I can see that. You’ll get the hang of it. And I’d better get my son back just how he is now.”

“Shut up, Wally. You know he’s in good hands.”

“I know he is. And he’d better be here when we get home. I know you’re not above stealing him.”

“Leave Iris alone.” Linda says as she comes downstairs. She went and sat next to Barry on the sofa and they all just watched Iris. “I see you didn’t even take your jacket off.”

Iris looked down. “I hadn’t even noticed.”

“So what are you guys going to do today?” Barry asks.

“We’re just going to play it by ear. See how long it takes for us to miss our baby and come home.” Linda replies.

“Well, I hope you guys have fun. We are. Right, Barry?”

“Right.” Barry says and tries to keep it together.

Wally looked over at Barry. “You’ll get the hang of it. I didn’t know a thing about babies either.”

“He did not. The first time he changed his diaper, it looked like he did it with his feet.” Linda joked and they all laughed. “Now he can do it with his eyes closed. You’ll do fine when it’s your own and you have no choice but to learn. The good thing is he’s not a newborn anymore and his needs are easily realized and met.”

Iris got up and handed the baby to Linda. “Bathroom.” Iris took her jacket off and nearly shocked Linda and Wally.

“Wow! I didn’t know you were showing that much.” Linda says.

Iris happily rubbed her belly. “Yeah. There’s really a baby in there.”

“Have you told people yet? You’re gonna have to soon.”

“Nope. Only you guys and Dad. Lorraine knows. Barry told Henry. That’s it. I haven’t even told Laurel yet. I’ve kind of been hiding it at work. You know, in case…but yeah, I’m gonna have to tell people soon.” Iris says and walks off.
Linda looked at Barry. “How is she doing? I know she’s scared, but she doesn’t talk about it.”

“She’s doing good, really. We’re both scared but we’re thinking positively. She was really scared when she first told me she was pregnant, but I got her to not dwell on the past. Now I’m scared because it’s really getting real. But it’s the good kind of scared.”

“I know what you mean. Having a baby is huge. I was scared too. Really scared to become a father, but it went away. I’m still scared because becoming a parent makes you care about somebody forever and you always want to keep your kids safe.” Wally says.

“Yeah, I already want to protect my baby.”

Iris came out and sat down. She took in how quiet everyone was. “What?”

“Nothing.”

Iris looked at Barry. “Bartholomew.”

“They were just trying to ease my fears of being afraid, that’s all.” Barry offers the little white lie which really is the truth. He’s scared as hell to become a father. Even if he is happy and excited, he’s still scared.

“You’ll be fine, Bear. He’s just a tiny person. We can handle a tiny person.” Iris says.

“We have a Nanny cam set up so don’t screw in our house.” Wally jokes.

“Shut up, Wallace. You do not and we won’t. We’d at least just go in the bathroom or something. And if you have a camera there, then you’re just a sicko that needs help.”

“How can you insult me in my own house?”

“Because I’m your little sister and I love you and I can also say what I want to say to you.”

“I can still put you out of my house. I am a cop.”

Iris rolled her eyes. “Whatever, Officer Wallace. Now leave so that I can bond with my husband with our nephew.”

“You’re lucky I love you.” Wally says.

“I know I am.” Iris got up and walked over to Linda and took Little Wally from her. She sat down next to Barry.

Linda just got up. “Well, I made a list that’s on the fridge. But you already know what to do. I’m telling you he really only cries when he’s hungry or needs his diaper changed.”

“Got it.” Iris says happily. She sat the baby on her lap and he just seemed to stare at her in awe.

Linda and Wally went upstairs to finish getting ready while Iris just played with the baby. Barry sat there and watched it with a weird grin on his face. He couldn’t wait for their baby to arrive. He really couldn’t. And the fact that it might be two. That just blew his mind.

Linda and Wally were ready to go. Linda gave the baby a hundred kisses that he just enjoyed. Wally kissed his head. Linda got a little teary eyed at leaving her baby for the whole day, but knew he was in good hands. They finally left and Iris and Barry were all alone with the baby.
Fear settled into Barry once Little Wally started to cry. He must have sensed that his parents were gone. He looked at Barry and started wailing. Iris held him close to her chest and he calmed down.

“Awww, it’s ok. Auntie Iris is here.” She rubbed his back and his head.

“It’s nice to see you have the same affect on him like you do on me.”

“I can only hold him in my arms right now, Bear.”

Barry gave her the sad puppy dog face. “What if I start crying?”

“I’d pop a boob in your mouth.”

“Iris! Not in front of the baby.”

“He can’t understand what we’re talking about.”

“Well, that’s a relief. So when do I get my boob?”

Iris just looked at him. “Bartholomew Henry Allen.”

“You’re the one that brought it up. You can’t just mention popping one of your boobs in my mouth and expect me to behave.”

“True. But you know you might have to give them up for a while, right?”

“Why?”

“What if I decide to breastfeed?”

“Oh. Well, I guess I can sacrifice them for the sake of my child.”

“How very noble of you, Bear.” Iris says and laughs. “Want to hold him?”

“Uh…Sure…”

“He’s just a baby, Bear.” Iris handed Little Wally to Barry and he kind of held him out like he was a bomb that was ready to explode. “He’s not going to bite, baby.”

“Right.” He says and pulls him closer to him. Little Wally looked at him strangely, then laid his head on Barry’s chest. That made him feel good. He lit up like a kid that just got out of school for summer break. That instantly made him feel like he couldn’t wait to hold his own baby.

“See? That wasn’t so bad.”

“No, it wasn’t. I know he looks like Wally and Linda, but he could pass for ours.”

“He could. I wonder what our baby will look like too. I wondered the other day about the blond hair you had when you were younger and if our baby would have blond hair too.”

“We’ll find out soon enough.”

Iris and Barry started off slow with trying to take care of baby Wally. He really didn’t cry too much unless he had a specific request. Barry watched what she did, but he left changing his diapers in Iris’ hands. It confused the hell out of him the way she had to lay him down and place the diaper under him perfectly, and the little Velcro straps to secure it in place. It seemed like she was putting
a puzzle together and he didn’t want any parts of that. He didn’t want to be the type of father that didn’t change his child’s diaper, but it seemed too complex to him.

Feeding him was a lot easier because he could hold his own bottle, and could sit up when they spoon fed him in his highchair. Barry made airplane noises when he fed him that both Iris and baby Wally loved. After his meal, Iris put him down for a nap and he and Iris just sat on the sofa and watched a movie. Things seemed to go too well for them. Wally was a really easy baby to take care of.

“This is a piece of cake.” Barry says.

“Oh, because he’s not a newborn. They are very demanding. It won’t be this easy for us in the beginning.”

“I know, but it seems like babies really don’t want too much. Feed them, change them, and pay attention to them. Seems easy.”

“I’m going to hold you to that, babe. And wait for you to eat those words when our baby keeps you up one night.”

“Did I just paint myself into a corner?”

“I think you did. But it’s ok.”

Barry rubbed Iris’ small baby bump. “I still can’t believe we’re having a baby.”

“Or two.”

“Yes. Or two. I’m dying waiting to find out for real. How will we tell everyone when we do find out for sure?”

Iris thought for a moment and came up with nothing. “I really don’t know, Bear. I know it has to be something exciting that will take them completely by surprise.”

“Like when you woke me up with that baby crying on your phone?”

Iris giggled. “Yes. You weren’t expecting that at all.”

Barry laughed too. “No, I was not. Scared the hell out of me. Just like you did when we first met.”

“I think that’s going to be our thing. Me startling you out of your sleep. My water will probably break while we’re sleep and I have to scare the hell out of you again.”

“I’m looking forward to that.”

Barry and Iris settled down and continued to watch their movie until Little Wally woke up, and seemed to want his parents. He cried, yelled really. Iris and Barry were horrified. He seemed inconsolable for a good 20 minutes, and finally calmed down. He seemed to cling to Iris again. After another feeding and diaper change, he really calmed down, still clinging to Iris. He lost it again when she gave him to Barry so that she could use the bathroom. Barry felt like crying too. Then he decided to talk to the baby like he could understand him.

“I know, I know. I feel the same way when she leaves me too. Your aunt is kind of amazing.” The baby rested his head on Barry’s chest like he understood and calmed down. “Did you know your aunt and I are having a baby of our own? It might be two of them. I can’t believe it might be two.
But you’ll have a cousin to play with. If it’s a boy, you two can be close like me and your Dad.”

Iris watched Barry talk to Little Wally and it made her heart soar. She knew Barry would be an awesome father. She couldn’t wait to see him with their baby.

“I see you two are getting along.” Iris says as she sits down.

“I guess we came to an understanding. Right, Wally?” Barry says as he looks down at Wally’s small clone and rubs his head.

“I’m getting hungry. I want a Big Belly Burger.”

“Do you want me to go and get it?”

Iris playfully batted her eyelashes. “Would you, babe?”

“You don’t even have to ask. I’ll go get you anything you want.”

“I knew marrying you was a good idea.”

Barry handed the baby to her and kissed her before standing. Little Wally watched him move. Iris found that to be endearing. “Do you want me to bring you anything else?”

“I can never have enough brownies.”

“Brownies are not food, but I can’t deny you them since you’re pregnant.”

“No, you can’t hubby. I’m obsessed and I think our child will be obsessed too.”

“I’ll be back soon.” Barry walked over to the door and Little Wally followed him with his eyes. He had gotten used to Barry in that little bit of time.

“You like Uncle Barry now? I like him too. He’s kind of amazing.” Iris says as she kisses his forehead. She played with his soft curls and just enjoyed his baby smell. She thought about how their mother would have loved that baby as much as she does and figured she would’ve been an awesome grandmother.

Iris decided to be more interactive with the baby and put him on the floor on his mat. She got a kick out of him sitting up by himself. He truly was growing up before her eyes and she loved every bit of it. She would always be an active part of his life. They played with his toys when she got a call from Linda and Wally.

“How is my baby?”

“He is amazing. We’re sitting on the floor and having an awesome time. Aren’t we nephew?”

“I miss him. I miss him every day while I’m at work.”

“I know you do, but we’re having a ball. He loves his Auntie.”

“How are you and Barry doing?” Linda asks.

“Great. He went out to get me food.”

“He didn’t have to do that. We have food you could’ve eaten, Iris.”
Iris chuckled. “I know that. But I’m pregnant and craved Big Belly Burger. Sue me.”

“I remember those days well.”

“So, are you and Wally enjoying yourselves?”

“Yes. This is the first time we’ve been out alone since he was born. Thank you for giving us this. We’ll have to repay the favor one day when yours gets here.”

“No reason to thank me. You deserve it, and I don’t mind spending time with him. And I’ll appreciate it when you do it for us.”

“Well, I’ll get back to that husband of mine. Kiss him for me.”

“I will. Bye.” Iris says and hangs up. She snapped a picture of him and sent it to Wally and Linda. They went back to playing for a little while and Iris gave him another bottle when Barry came in. He felt like he was coming home to Iris and their kid and it made his heart swell.

“Did you two have fun?”

“We sure did. And I’m so glad you’re back because I was about to eat one of these arms.” She says as she playfully kissed his arm.

“Well, we can’t have that.” He just smiled at how Iris interacted with the baby. He seemed really content.

She waited for him to finish his bottle and she put him in the swing. She was ready to devour the food Barry brought. Big Belly Burger was awesome and they had awesome fries. Potatoes really were her thing now. In any shape or form, she wanted them.

She went to town on her burger and he fries. She reached for Barry’s as well. “Hey. Hands off my fries. Unbelievable.” He joked.

Iris rubbed her belly. “You hear that baby? Daddy won’t share his fries.”

“No why’d you have to go and do that? You and my baby can have all my fries.”

“It’s nice to know that guilt tripping works on you. Be prepared for a storm when I got into labor. I’m blaming all of that on you.”

“I think I was already expecting that. I think all fathers to be expect that.”

Iris shrugged. “I can’t promise I won’t hurt your feelings or you physically too much.”

“I think I can take it.”

“Are you sure about that?” Iris asks.

“Yeah, why?”

“I was just remembering game night. You remember that?”

“Yes, and that wasn’t a fun night. Well, not at first.”

“I gave you the blues!” Iris says and then laughs.
“I remember.” Barry replies with fake sarcasm.

“And that was just from having your little girlfriend there. Imagine how I’ll act when I’m in a lot of pain? Pain that you caused.”

Barry turned red. “She was not my little girlfriend. You’re hitting below the belt.”

“Below the belt. Yes. I need some of that action.”

“Thanks for changing the subject. I’ll really make it up to you when we get home. Pretend it’s Sunday.”

Iris started to beam. “I am such a lucky woman.”

“Yes, you are. I got mad skills.”

“Bartholomew.”

“Yes, Iris.”

“Don’t say that anymore.”

“Yes, Iris.”

They went back to eating, soon finished and Barry cleared away the mess. Iris took Little Wally from the swing and got back on the floor with him. Barry joined them this time. Iris just sat and watched him interact with the baby this time. It almost gave her goosebumps. She was lucky and happy to be starting a family with Barry.

“You’re going to be a great father, Bear.” Iris offers sincerely.

“Thanks. I’m going to do the best that I can. The good thing is I have 3 good examples. My father, your father, and Wally.”

“We do have some great Dad’s in this family, don’t we?”

“Yes. Along with great mothers. My mom was awesome, I know yours was. Linda is great and I know you will be. I knew you’d be a great mom the way I saw you fix breakfast for all of us. You were such a Mother Hen then and I loved that. Plus Lorraine. You were right. She’s an amazing woman.”

“She is. I just really appreciate you being ok with how close I am to her. I know that could have been awkward for you.”

“Yeah, it could have. But I know how you feel about me and how you need her. I don’t have a problem with that. I could never deny you that.”

“Thanks, Bear. I never told you about the talk I had with her years ago, but I felt bad about being close to her and how whomever Josh met would feel about it. I didn’t want her to feel like I was still lingering around because of him. That was eased when I met Danielle. I think everybody could see how madly in love with you I was and not harboring feelings for Josh.”

“I can understand why and how you’d feel that way. If my mother was still alive and had a close relationship with Becky, I could see that causing problems. But I know my mom would’ve loved you and that wouldn’t have had anything to do with Becky. Or me. Everybody loves you. But I also know that your relationship with her has nothing to do with Josh or me. That’s between you
“I know. I know that if something happened to me, I would want my daughter to have a woman she could turn to for motherly love. The good thing is, Linda is around and I know she’d look out for my daughter if she needed to.”

“Nothing is going to happen to you, but I understand. Joe gave me fatherly love that I needed. I know that if something were to happen to me, Wally would be there. You have to think about things like that. Especially since things happened to our mother’s that we weren’t expecting.”

“Yeah. I’m just glad we have so much support, you know?”

“I am too. I think we’ll really need it if there’s more than one Allen baby coming.”

“Yeah, we will. But I can’t wait to find out for sure. And I can’t see our family not being excited if there’s two. I think everybody loves the idea of twins.”

“Yeah, even if I’m scared. We’ll be responsible for two babies. Two. But I’m digging the idea of two.”

Iris smiled and rubbed her stomach. “I am too. Even if I’ll look like a whale.”

“You’re not going to look like a whale, Iris.”

“I could though. My body might not look the same after this.”

“Iris, you’re beautiful and gorgeous. You’ll always be beautiful, and not just to me. Even if it is twins, and your body changes, you’ll still be the most beautiful woman in the world.”

“You’re laying it on pretty thick, Bear.”

“I mean it though. I know people wonder how I got you.”

“Nonsense. My husband is hot and there’s nothing you can say to change that.”

“I love that you think I’m hot.”

“You are. Becky and Patsy think so.” Iris says and laughs.

Barry took one of the soft toys and threw it at Iris. “Not funny.”

“Did you really just throw something at me?! At your pregnant wife?! I’m injured!”

“That thing weighs about 5 ounces and only tapped your arm. You’re going to pay for that later.”

“Do you promise?”

“Oh, I promise.”

Barry and Iris finished bonding with their nephew and trying to take care of him. Barry fed him again with the airplane noises and he actually smiled and laughed at that. That made Barry light up that he could do that with Little Wally.

Iris gave him a bath that he enjoyed. Iris made his bath time seem like a day at the water park. He completely wet her up, but she loved it. She dressed him in a sleeper and she and Barry settled on the couch, watching another movie. Iris and the baby went to sleep snuggled against Barry by the
time Wally and Linda came home.

“Awww, they’re both sleep.” Linda says quietly as she looked at Iris and her little one.

“My house is still intact. What a relief.” Wally says.

“What did you think we would do?” Barry asks.

“Be completely overwhelmed and trash our house.”

“Shut up, Wally.” Iris says as she fully wakes up.

“You’re more evil when you’re pregnant. Good luck, Barry.”

“Only to you. My husband loves me.”

“Yeah, he does. He’s whipped.”

“And proud of it. I’m not ashamed that I want my wife to keep me.”

“Wallace, hush. You’re whipped too.” Linda says as she takes the baby. He opened his eyes when he was in his mother’s arms.

“Everybody doesn’t need to know that, Linda.”

“We already knew, Wallace. You’re not as tough as you act.” Iris says.

“I should arrest you for insulting an officer.”

Iris sat up and rolled her eyes. She completely ignored Wally. “Did you guys have fun?” She asked Linda.

“Yes. Even though I missed my baby.” She says as she kisses him. “So, how was it babysitting?” She was really posing that question to Barry.

“Fun. Easier than I thought it would be. But that’s because he’s a great baby and I had Iris here with me. I would not trust myself alone with him. But I’d better change that tune for when my own baby gets to here.”

“It’s easier when it’s your own.” Wally says.

“Yes, that’s true. You’ll figure it out.”

Iris just got up and went to the bathroom without a word. She was ready for a shower and bed with her husband. Not even sleep, but she was ready to get in the bed with Barry. She came back out and was silently praying that Barry could hear that she wanted to go home. Their bonding with Junior made her feel closer to him and she just wanted to go to her home with her husband and her unborn child. She felt like she fell in love more with him acting like a father.

“Are we doing dinner tomorrow?” Barry asks.

“I guess we can. We haven’t really done it since we got married. Sure.” Iris says. Now she was ready to go.

“Good. Are you going to make mac n cheese?” Wally asks tentatively.
“I make that anyway.”

“Are you going to make enough for everybody? Not just Barry?”

“I can make enough for everybody. You’d just better not touch his pan again.”

“If you weren’t my sister, I’d really be asking Barry exactly what it is he does to get his favorite food fixed just for him every Sunday.” He says while looking from Iris, to Barry, to Linda.

“Maybe you should, then you can get the same thing.” Linda says.

“Ok, Wallace. You really wanna know? He-“ Iris began but Barry cut her off.

“Iris!” He shook his head. “Wally doesn’t need to hear about our sex life.”

“So it’s sex related?” Wally asks incredulously.

Barry got up and grabbed Iris’ hand and pulled her towards the door. “Goodnight, see you guys tomorrow!” Barry says as he opens the door and nearly sprints to their car.

Wally went and locked the door behind them. “What do you think it is?” He actually asks Linda.

Linda just shook her head, and took their baby upstairs.

Iris’ baby bump seemed to almost double in size. She was past the point of hiding it anymore at work. People knew that she was pregnant and she got a kick out of people noticing, but not asking. Until one of her coworkers asked and they all breathed a sigh of relief. One even asked if that’s why she got married. It did seem like that was the case, but Iris just smiled and rubbed her belly and told everybody that the baby was a wedding gift.

Her doctor’s appointment soon approached and she and Barry were more excited than ever. She was not excited about the 7 pounds she gained. She drank the insane amount of water and prayed that they’d call her soon because she needed to go to the bathroom desperately. She was jumpy when they called her. She squeezed Barry’s hand.

When she got on the table and heard the heartbeats, she was already in tears. Barry too. When they applied the warm gel to her belly and moved the wand around, she really didn’t know what she was looking at. It just looked like a fuzzy tv screen. Then something that looked like a huge bubble. Dr. McGhee moved the wand around and smiled at Iris.

“Well, I guess I was right.” She says.

“About what?” Iris asks.

“Well, it is twins.”

“Really?” Iris asks as the tears spill. Barry squeezed her hand harder.

“Yes. Twins. Good thing I prepared you for it. They’re developing well, but one is a little bigger than the other. That’s not uncommon. We just have to watch it to make sure that one doesn’t develop while the other doesn’t. That’s called twin to twin transfusion. But we’ll monitor that
Iris hoped that Barry was paying attention to the sciency stuff, because all she could think about was being pregnant with twins. Two babies. She was on top of the world.

They got their ultrasound pictures and left their appointment. Iris felt like she was floating the whole way home.

They sat on their sofa with her legs draped over his, his hand sporadically rubbing her belly as they stared at the pictures and really couldn’t wait to tell everyone, but wanted it to be special.

Iris looked up at Barry and smiled. He seemed so happy and he was. She was happy just looking at the man she was having babies with. They actually made babies; twins together.

“You were right, Bear.”

“About what?”

“When you said we’re getting our baby back. We are. We actually have two babies coming.” Iris says as she practically cracked her face from smiling

“I know. And I’ve never been happier. We’re having two babies. Sure we have to buy two of everything, but who cares?”

Iris giggled. “I just figured out how we’re going to tell the family.”

Iris immediately got started on the way she was going to surprise the family with the news that she and Barry were having twins. She wondered if she should make a huge production of it all. But she decided that she wanted to tell close family first. Then she and Barry would send out announcements for the baby shower. She also wondered about having a gender reveal party and figured that would just be for family too.

She wanted to invite Lorraine and the close family. She decided to just have Sunday dinner at the house. Then she remembered how busy they were on Sunday’s, so she changed it to Saturday. She thought of an impromptu game night. Nothing too big. They could play cards or something. Watch a movie. She called Laurel as well.

She and Barry were more than excited for their reveal. Barry could not get over the fact that he was going to be the father to twins. Iris couldn’t believe it either. She was having two babies. She was getting her baby back. She loved and lost that little one, but it wasn’t time for him to enter the world. Now it was time.

She got dressed in the cutest eggplant colored sweater dress and leggings. Her baby bump was extremely noticeable. She knew it would shock Joe, Laurel, and Lorraine since they hadn’t seen her, only talked to her on the phone. She was truly glowing and happier than ever.

She and Barry made the drive to Joe’s house and was glad that they got there before everybody. She had the ultrasound photos and her twin reveal gift that she kept in her bag and knew no one would go in.
They walked through the door and Joe was nowhere in sight. “Dad? We’re here.”

Joe came running down the stairs and stopped when he saw Iris. His daughter was really pregnant and it showed. “Iris. You look beautiful.” He says as he gives her a hug.

“Thanks, Dad.”

“Hey, Joe.”

“Hey, Barry.”

Joe touched Iris’ belly. “Wow. My Baby Girl is really having a baby. I’m gonna be a grandfather again.”

“Yup.” Iris says happily, so ready to spill the beans.

Iris went to put music on and then sat down. Wally and Linda arrived about 20 minutes later. Lorraine came right after them, then Laurel made her grand entrance. Lorraine rubbed on her baby bump and cried. She was so happy for Iris. Laurel was just shocked to actually see Iris pregnant after not having seen her since she was in the wedding.

Iris flocked to Wally Junior and never wanted to let him go. She felt selfish because she knew she’d have two babies to hold soon, but she couldn’t get enough of him. She was bursting at the seams, ready to tell everyone.

Everybody made small talk and ate and listened to the music until Iris couldn’t take it anymore. She was ready to explode. She got the surprise and the sonogram from her bag, turned off the music and pulled Barry beside her. She got everyone’s attention.

“Ok, so everyone. I had my first ultrasound about a week ago. Everything went great.”

“Why haven’t I seen any pictures?” Linda asks.

“I’m getting to that, sister in law. Well, you know how I told you guys that they determined that I got pregnant on our wedding night.”

“That’s what you said, but I still think it was a shotgun wedding.” Joe interrupts.

“It was not a shotgun wedding, Joe. Promise.” Barry says.

“It wasn’t. I promise you I was not pregnant when we got married. But, since I did get pregnant on our wedding night, I got something for the baby as a joke that we’ll take a picture of when he or she is born.” Iris dug in her bag and pulled out the two onesies she had made. She passed them around. One said, “I’m a honeymoon baby” the other one said, “Me too”. Iris was bursting at the seams. Everybody passed the onesies around, but nobody put it together.

Linda of course put it together first. She said out loud, “I'm a honeymoon baby.” And then, "Me too.” She looked at Iris. “Why did you buy two?”

“Because I’m having two.” Iris says.

"What?” Linda asks.

“Twins?” Lorraine asks as she looks at Iris and Barry.

“Yes. Barry and I are having twins.”
They all looked at each other and Barry handed out the ultrasound picture. Then Linda started
cheering first. “Oh, my god you’re having twins!”

Joe and Wally looked at each other and had the same dumbfounded expression on their faces.
Lorraine was the first to run up and hug Iris. “I’m so happy for you two.” She gave Barry and hug
too.

Joe looked at Iris and Barry. “Twins?” He asks, just to make sure.

“You’re having two babies, Dad.”

Joe walked over and gave Iris and Barry hugs. Linda gave the baby to Wally and ran over. “I can’t
believe you’re having twins. No wonder your belly popped out so soon.”

“I know. I can’t believe I’m having two either.”

Wally finally got over his shock, a few minutes after Laurel did. She was happy as hell for Iris.
Wally couldn’t believe his baby sister was having two babies. “I can’t wait to see these babies. I
got to be an uncle twice.” He had to hold back his emotions because he was truly happy for Iris.

Lorraine was beyond emotional. Iris gave her another hug. “Thank you for what you told me that
time. You said that Barry and I would have all the beautiful babies we’re supposed to have when
the time is right. I believed you when you told me that. Now I’m having two babies.”

“And you deserve it. I knew in my heart that you would have the babies God planned for you. I
knew it.”

They went on with their little celebration. Iris got many more hugs and rubs to her belly and she
loved every minute of it. The ultrasound pictures were passed around countless times. They all
were blissfully happy.

Iris took her twin pregnancy in stride. She and Barry loved seeing her belly grow and grow. He
rubbed it and talked to it every night. He cried the first time he felt one of them kick. He just
couldn’t get over the fact that Iris has 2 babies that he helped make growing inside of her.

She felt great, continued to eat well, and take her vitamins. She loved telling everyone that she was
having twins. It was the highlight of her day. She loved it when people wanted to touch her belly.
She loved being pregnant. She was over the moon happy. She just couldn’t wait to see her babies.
She really couldn’t wait to find out what they were having.

She approached 20 weeks and it was finally time for them to see if they could see what the babies
were. She and Barry were crossing their fingers for a girl and a boy. It just seemed fitting.

She again had to drink a lot for a full bladder to have good pictures. She couldn’t wait. She hoped
the babies cooperated so they could tell. She was ready to start buying baby clothes. She wasn’t
even upset when she found out she gained almost 20 pounds. It was for her babies.

When the doctor put the warm get on her belly, Barry grabbed her hand. They were beyond
excited.
“I know you can’t wait to see what the twins are.” She moves the wand around and typed in numbers.

“No, we can’t wait. I want one of each.” Iris says happily.

“That’s the most common form of twins.” She says and moves the wand around more. “Oh…” She says.

“What?” Iris says. She felt Barry squeeze her hand.

“Oh, my…” The doctor says and keeps moving the wand around and typing in numbers.

“Is something wrong?” Iris asks frantically. She looked at Barry and the look of shock and fear he had on his face that he was trying to hide. He squeezed her hand tighter.

The doctor looked at Iris, with eyes full of apology.

Iris cried all the way home.

Chapter End Notes

***Runs and hides. Sorry. I'm a terrible person.

I know most of you won't, but to anybody that does review, PLEASE don't guess what you think is going to happen in your review. We all know I'm a whining psycho, but please respect that request.

Thanks again.
"I want a divorce."

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of the ultrasound.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone. Here's an update that I intended to post sooner. Then I wasn't going to post one at all because of people disrespecting my wishes. But I figured that wasn't fair to the people that do respect me and what I do. I Thank you all for that.

I started this chapter as a flashback of the ending of the last chapter. It's pretty much the last paragraph of the last chapter, plus things I should've added last time. Rushing makes me miss things. The part in Italics is the flashback.

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoy.

The author's notes I write are important and shouldn't be disregarded. Read the one at the bottom after you've read the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Iris took her twin pregnancy in stride. She and Barry loved seeing her belly grow and grow. He rubbed it and talked to it every night. He cried the first time he felt one of them kick. He just couldn't get over the fact that Iris has 2 babies that he helped make growing inside of her.

She felt great, continued to eat well, and take her vitamins. She loved telling everyone that she was having twins. It was the highlight of her day. She loved it when people wanted to touch her belly. She loved being pregnant. She was over the moon happy. She just couldn't wait to see her babies. She really couldn’t wait to find out what they were having.

She started taking a prenatal yoga class because it was good for her and the babies. It was good for her to improve her breathing and get her body ready for the birth. Plus, it let her meet up with other women that were pregnant as well. She made a few friends after impressing everyone with her flexibility as a former cheerleader.

She loved watching the ways her body changed. She already had a natural glow because she was always a happy and bubbly woman, but that motherly glow she had really made her shine. She was in love, happy, and becoming a mother. There wasn’t a reason for her not to.

Sometimes she stood in the mirror completely naked and just looked at herself. The dark line that formed down the middle of her abdomen puzzled her until she found out that was normal. Her increased breast, hips, and butt sizes thrilled her and really did something for Barry. He really enjoyed her boobs getting bigger. She cursed the stretch marks that appeared on her sides, but knew there wasn’t really too much she could do about it. Her belly had to stretch for her babies to grow. It seemed like an easy sacrifice. Barry wasn’t complaining so she let it go. She did still
slather cocoa butter everywhere she could, with Barry getting to the areas she couldn’t reach. He called himself just helping, but he got something out of rubbing her naked body down. They both were happy that her pregnancy did nothing to hinder their sex life.

She approached 20 weeks and it was finally time for them to see if they could see what the babies were. She and Barry were crossing their fingers for a girl and a boy. It just seemed fitting.

She again had to drink a lot for a full bladder to have good pictures. She couldn’t wait. She hoped the babies cooperated so they could tell. She was ready to start buying baby clothes. She wasn’t even upset when she found out she gained almost 20 pounds. It was for her babies.

When the doctor put the warm gel on her belly, Barry grabbed her hand. They were beyond excited.

“I know you can’t wait to see what the twins are.” She moves the wand around and typed in numbers.

“No, we can’t wait. I want one of each.” Iris says happily.

“That’s the most common form of twins.” She says and moves the wand around more. “Oh...” She says.

“What?” Iris says. She felt Barry squeeze her hand.

“Oh, my...” The doctor says and keeps moving the wand around and typing in numbers.

“Is something wrong?” Iris asks frantically. She looked at Barry and the look of shock and fear he had on his face that he was trying to hide. He squeezed her hand tighter.

The doctor looked at Iris, with eyes full of apology. “I’m sorry, Iris. Do you want the good news, or the bad news?” Dr. McGhee asks as she looks at Iris, then at Barry.

Iris looked at Barry and tried to read him. She was usually good at that, but this time, it was hard to do. He probably had a hard time reading her as well. She didn’t know what to say. Both answers could be the right one, or the wrong one. Would she rather have good news and then get let down? Or have bad news and then have it brightened with good news?

“What do you think we should do, Bear?”

“I don’t know.”

“Ok, the news isn’t really that bad. It just depends on how you look at it. I feel awful putting you two in this situation.”

“Give us the good news first, and then we’ll just deal with whatever you have to tell us.” Iris says and then looks at Barry. “Is that ok with you?”

“Yes. We just have to handle whatever she tells us.”

“First I should start by saying that doctors are people and sometimes we make mistakes. And sometimes ultrasounds aren’t an exact science.”

“What does that mean?” Iris asks.

“It means that I may have made a mistake with your first ultrasound.”
“So, what does that mean? It isn’t twins?”

Dr. McGhee turned the screen towards Barry and Iris. “It is twins. Actually, it’s triplets.”

“What?!” Iris asks as she almost sits up and looks at the screen.

Barry stared at the screen in shock. He couldn’t say anything.

“I’m sorry, that I didn’t catch this the first time. I think one of the babies was hiding because I didn’t see it.”

“How in the world can it be twins, but it’s triplets?” Iris asks in confusion. She couldn’t believe what the doctor was telling her.

“Well, from the look of the placentas it looks like you have a set of identical twins, plus another baby.”

“What?” Barry asks as he finally speaks. All the smarts and science knowledge he has is doing nothing for him at the moment.

“Originally, you started out with twins from two different eggs. One of those eggs split into twins. So, now you have triplets.”

“How is that even possible?” Iris asks as she stares at the screen at the unmistakable image of three babies. Three.

Barry knew how it was possible, but he stared at the screen in disbelief as well. He was looking at three babies. His three babies. “It’s possible. Not exactly common, but it’s possible.”

“Right. Either way, you would still have a set of twins. If the egg hadn’t split, you would still have a fraternal set of twins. It just really seems like you were supposed to have an extra baby, which sounds strange for me to say as your doctor.”

“So, is this the good news or the bad news?” Iris asks. She didn’t know how to handle knowing she was pregnant with triplets. Three babies. When she thought it was twins. First she thought it was just one baby, now she knows it’s three. She truly was happy. And shocked shitless. She never expected to hear this. Hearing that it was twins was a shock, but she and Barry handled that well. Now, they find out they’re having triplets. Three babies. They’d have to buy three of everything now. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to ask you that. I’m happy, just shocked. That is good news. So I’m afraid to hear the bad news.” She says and finally looks at Barry. He looked how she felt.

“Can you tell what they are?” Barry asks, finally coming to terms with the fact that he’s the father of triplets. Never in a million years did he think that would happen. Who in the world thinks they’ll be the father of triplets? Truth be told, he never thought he’d be the father of twins either.

Dr. McGhee moved the wand around more and started typing in numbers. She did more maneuvering. “Yes, I can tell. You do both want to know, right?”

Iris looked at Barry. He smiled and squeezed her hand. Him smiling made her smile too. She made triplets with this man and she loved him endlessly for that. She loved his enthusiasm. He could be upset and trying to make a run for it, but she knew in her heart that he would never do a thing like that to her.

“Yes. We want to know. That was the purpose of this whole visit.” Iris says.
“Well, you have twin girls and the other baby is a boy.”

Iris started to cry right then and there. She was getting more than one of each. Two girls and a boy. She never imagined that was possible. Well, maybe if she got pregnant a few more times, then yes. But to get two girls and a boy in one shot just amazed and shocked her.

Barry was happy as hell. He was getting little girls and a boy. He wanted little girls and he’s getting them. When they first found out they were having twins, he wanted one of each like Iris did. Now they’re getting more than that.

“Are you really sure? There’s no mistaking that? There’s not another baby hiding or anything?” Iris asks.

“I know I missed the other baby the first time, but I’m pretty sure I’m right about just seeing three babies. I see an unmistakable penis, and that’s the only one I see. The other two are girls.” She says and moves the wand around. “They’re sharing a sac and seem to be hugging each other. I’m printing you many pictures because I know this is overwhelming and you’re handling it like champs.”

Iris and Barry watched their three angels on the screen, while still having their hands joined together. They really couldn’t believe their eyes. They could stare at their babies forever.

Then reality set in.

Dr. McGhee said she had bad news as well. “Ok, Dr. What’s the bad news?” Iris asks.

“Well, with a triplet or multiple pregnancy, there are many risks involved. Since you’re having triplets, your pregnancy is considered high risk. I know that can be very scary, but I have to warn you of what to expect and what to prepare yourselves for.”

“Like what?” Iris asks nervously. She didn’t want to hear it, but knew she had to.

“Well, with a high risk pregnancy, I may have to refer you to a specialist OB. Dr. Caitlin Snow is very good, should you need to be referred. You will have to have more tests than usual to check on your health and the health of the babies. You’ll have to have more ultrasounds as well. Most women carrying multiples have to go on bed rest. Since you’re pregnant with multiples, you’re more likely to have complications, including preterm labor. Preterm labor is labor that happens too early, before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Preterm labor can lead to premature birth. Anemia, gestational diabetes, gestational hypertension or preeclampsia. You’re at risk for Polyhydramnios, this is when you have too much amniotic fluid. And I have to warn you about miscarriage and stillbirth. I know you had one miscarriage in the past and you’re still at risk of that even if it’s called a stillbirth after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Some women pregnant with multiples have a condition called vanishing twin syndrome. This is when one or more babies die in the womb, but one baby survives. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but I want you to have a clear understanding of things.” Dr. McGhee says and Iris’ enthusiasm and happiness started to vanish. It felt like all she heard was bad news with her doctor telling her how much could go wrong and how she could lose one baby, two, or all three. She didn’t like hearing that at all.

She wanted to leave her body, but she couldn’t do that. She just had to heavily rely on the fact that Barry was listening more than she was.

Barry hated hearing how much could go wrong as well. He just had to hope for the best. He had to be strong for Iris and his babies. He could tell by the way Iris clamped down on his hand that she didn’t like hearing the risks any more than he did.
Dr. McGhee paused and smiled. “I know this sounds like a lot, and unfortunately, there’s more. Because you’re pregnant with multiples, your babies are more likely to have health complications including, premature birth. Premature babies may have more health problems or need to stay in the hospital longer than babies born later. They also may have long-term health problems that can affect their whole lives. More than half of twins and nearly all triplets and other higher-order multiples are born prematurely. The earlier in pregnancy your babies are born, the more likely they are to have health problems. Some premature babies have to spend time in a hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit. Multiples are about twice as likely to have birth defects than singleton babies, including spina bifida, cerebral palsy, congenital heart defects, and birth defects that affect the digestive system. Birth defects are the health conditions that are present at birth. They change the shape or function of one or more parts of the body. Birth defects can cause problems in overall health, how the body develops or how the body works. Multiples are usually smaller than singleton babies. When one twin is much smaller than the other, they’re called discordant twins. Discordant twins are more likely to have health problems during pregnancy and after birth. I can already see that the boy is bigger than the girls, but it’s not significant. We will watch that closely. We have to look for low birth weight, and more than half of twins and nearly all higher order multiples are born with low birth weight and that’s anything less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces. Since you have a set of identical twins, you’re at risk for twin to twin transfusion syndrome. This condition happens when identical twins share a placenta and one baby gets too much blood flow, while the other baby doesn’t get enough. And last but certainly not the least and the worst of all, Neonatal death. This is when a baby dies in the first 28 days of life. Premature birth is the most common cause of neonatal death. I know the prospect of hearing all this is awful, but I have to give you these warnings. Despite all these warnings, you can have a healthy pregnancy, birth and babies. There are many sets of multiples that do extremely well and thrive.”

Iris was speechless.

She felt like her whole world was a disaster. Hearing all those risks and warnings was enough to make her lose her mind. She was in the midst of chaos, and looked for a way to find her way out. She wanted to curl into a ball and never come out of it. She wasn’t expecting this news at all. She felt like this was some sort of weird joke that was being played on her and Barry. All she wanted to do was have healthy, beautiful and happy babies with her husband. They just wanted to create life from the love they had for each other. And they did do that, but it just seemed to always be a catch. Now she had three babies growing inside of her that she had to keep safe, but it seems like the odds were against her.

She just wanted a normal pregnancy. That’s all. She lost her first one, now this. It was too much. She knew she needed to be strong, but it felt like all she could do was fall apart about it. She was very thankful for Barry. He was a godsend and again her rock. She wondered what in the world she would do without him and never really wanted to find out.

She finished up her appointment, and was given pamphlets and several ultrasound pictures. Pictures of her three babies. She looked at them and lost it. She wanted to keep her babies safe, and felt like she couldn’t do that. Just like the first time.

Barry grabbed her hand and let her cry. She deserved it.

Iris cried all the way home after their ultrasound.

It was truly the only thing she could think of to do at the moment. She was happy and excited to find out what her twins were, and got the shock of her life. She didn’t even try to handle it well.

Barry felt like she felt, though he didn’t cry. He had to be strong for Iris. As her husband and the
father of her children, he owed that to her. He needed to be her rock again, and that’s what he did.

He drove them home and had to literally pull Iris out of the car. He didn’t want to chance carrying her and dropping her so he urged her to put one foot in front of the other. He called both of their jobs and let them know that they wouldn’t be in. He was supposed to take Iris back to work after the appointment and then go to his job, but that was out of the question. Iris couldn’t function at work right now, and he needed to be there for her.

He took her inside and she went straight to the bathroom because after the news, she forgot that she had a bladder full of water, then she went to their bed and sat down. Barry put his arms around her as she continued to cry. He knew that she didn’t want or need him to say anything, just hold her and that’s what he did. He then wrapped her hair like he knew he should and laid her down. He took her shoes off, did the same and took his own off and laid down with her. She continued to weep, and he let her.

She finally fell asleep and he just held her.

She woke up when she needed to go to the bathroom and Barry pulled her to her feet like the devoted husband he is. She came out and sat on the bed. Barry just looked at her and waited for her next move.

“I’m hungry, Bear.” She says in a childlike voice.

“Is there anything you specifically want?”

“No. But I need to eat.”

“I know. Do you want me to attempt to fix you something? Do you want leftovers? A Big Belly Burger? I’ll get you whatever you want.”

Iris looked at him and smiled. “I don’t want you to leave. I kind of need you by my side. I’ll take a sandwich, and some soup.”

“You’re actually trusting me to make you soup?”

Iris actually laughed at that. “It’s just opening a can and warming it up. I have you spoiled rotten. You do know that, right?”

“I am not spoiled rotten. I was kidding. I can make you soup and a sandwich. Piece of cake.”

“I’d like some cake too.”

“Well I hope we have some here, because you’ll be out of luck if I have to go out and get it.”

“A brownie then.”

“Coming right up.” Barry kissed her on her forehead and disappeared from the bedroom.

Iris sat alone in her silence with thoughts running through her head that made her feel like she was a different person. She felt movement from the babies and placed her hand on her belly. She smiled, wondering which baby it was. Was it one of the girls or their lone boy? She started to feel more movement and it felt wonderful to her. She felt so much kicking and stirring that she could see it moving through her shirt. Were her babies trying to tell her something?

She rubbed more and they moved more. She felt extremely elated and thought that her babies were
giving her a sign that they were ok and she didn’t need to worry about them. As farfetched and illogical as it was, she truly believed that. She had to. She had to think positively about safely carrying her babies as long as she could. Her babies would be born healthy and fine. It wouldn’t be like the last time. The more she thought that, the more they moved and she knew in her heart that she and Barry would bring home three bundles of joy. She was putting that out into the universe. She and Barry were going to be the parents of triplets. She got a kick out of that.

She rubbed her belly and said a prayer for her babies. One to her mother and Barry’s mother to keep their grandchildren safe. “Hey, Mom. I know I don’t talk to you as much as I should, but I need you right now. I’m sure you already know that Barry and I are having babies. Three babies to be exact. That was a huge shock to us, as I’m sure you saw. I know you saw how upset I got. I just couldn’t handle hearing I could lose the babies like I did before. Last time I didn’t know and I was young and nowhere near ready to be a mother, but I’m ready now. Barry is actually my husband now and I know he’s ready to be a father. I can feel my babies moving in me the way I moved in your belly. I truly understand why you loved Wally and I so much. Even though you’re in Heaven, the bond we share has never been broken. I miss you every day, and I wish you were here. Nora too. I know you would have been an amazing Grandma. I know you see how great Dad is with Little Wally. Seeing Wally be a father always warms my heart. So if it’s possible, can you pull some strings up there to make sure I become a mother? I want to be as great a Mom as you were. I’m having two little girls and I want to see them be born and hold them in my arms. I look so much like you and maybe the girls will look like me. That means they’ll look like you as well. Then I’m having a boy too. Can you believe it? I wonder if he’ll look like Barry the same way Junior looks just like Wally. I know Nora would love to see her grandson look like her son. I know you two met and became best friends up there and made sure Barry and I got together. I just really want you two to keep the babies safe. I know that’s asking a lot and I can’t promise that I won’t ask for more, but I’ll only make requests when it comes to the babies. Mine and Wally’s. Give Nora a hug for me and Barry.” Iris finished her little talk with her mother and wiped the tears that spilled. It felt good to talk to her mother. The last time she talked to her freely and openly was right before she got married. She really needed her now. She had babies she needed protected. The babies seemed to be having a party in her womb and it made her giddy. She pulled up her shirt and looked at her belly move. It was awesome to feel and see. She didn’t want Barry to miss it. “Bear! Come here!”

Barry was opening the soup and dropped it when he heard Iris call him and immediately stopped what he was doing and sprinted to their bedroom. “What’s wrong?!”

“Look.” She says as she points to her stomach. You could clearly see her belly moving. Seeing that and the smile on her face made Barry smile as well.

He walked over and sat next to her and just watched it. His three babies. He was soon to be a father of three and that thrilled him. He put his hand on her belly and felt a strong kick. He had a feeling it was because his babies knew it was his hand rubbing them. “Whoa! I think that was one of the girls. I’m already calling it that they’ll be Daddy’s girls.”

Iris happily giggled at that thought. “I’m pretty sure they will be. Then our son will be a Mama’s boy.”

“How can he not be? His mother is awesome.”

“Well I can clearly see why our girls will be Daddy’s girls.”

“Yes, they will be. I’m going to protect them and spoil them rotten.”

“Are you sure this isn’t too much for you?”
“You didn’t get pregnant by yourself, Iris. They might be growing in you, but they’re my babies as well.”

“Bear, I know we got shocking news, some that was horrible to hear, but I’m putting that behind us. I’m taking this as a sign that we’ll have three beautiful and healthy babies. I have to believe that for them and for us.”

“I do too. Yes, it was shocking to find out that it’s three instead of two. But if a woman can have five, six, and that one woman had eight, you can have three. We didn’t expect this, but it’s happening and we have to embrace it. I’m happy as hell, honestly. I know I’m going to hold both of my girls in my arms.”

Iris just smiled and started thinking of the image of seeing Barry hold their girls and her holding their boy, and was hit with a blast from the past. “Bear, I just thought of something. Do you remember the first night we met and we were playing games getting to know each other better?”

“Yeah.”

“Do you remember that I asked you if you knew any triplets?”

Barry thought back and lit up when finally remembered. Iris did ask him that. “Yeah, I remember. I remember saying that I didn’t think so because I thought people would tell you that.”

Iris smiled, happy that he remembered. “Yes. And I think I said that I knew I would and how awesome that would be. That was so many years ago. Before we even knew we’d end up here.”

Barry grabbed her left hand and kissed it near her wedding rings. “And now you’re pregnant with triplets. We were always meant to be, Iris.”

“Yes, we were. That’s why I believe and know that nothing will go wrong and we’ll have our three babies. We’re having three babies. We really did get our baby back.” Iris says as she cries happy tears.

“Yes, we are. She said we were already going to have twins, but we had an extra baby.”

“I just thought of something else.”

“That we now have to buy three of everything instead of two? I’m going to have to get another job.” Barry jokes. He was making a pretty good salary and could afford to provide for his children, and he would get another job if he needed to. Whatever he had to do, he would do it for his family.

“Well, yes. But we were already prepared to buy two. We can probably still get away with buying just two cribs. We are definitely going to have to move now. There’s no way we can live here with three babies coming. No way.”

“Yeah, we do. And I think we should do that sooner than later. Especially if you might have to go on bed rest. Worrying about where we’ll put our babies and where you can rest comfortably should be the least of our worries. So is that what you just thought of?”

“No. I’m thinking a lot about things we said in the past that we never really thought would have much merit now.”

“And that would be…?”

“I thought of that day we drove far away to hang out at the mall and you took me to Build A Bear.
On the ride there we were talking about having babies. We were young and just starting out and we still talked about that. I asked you what you wanted and you said-“

Barry couldn’t help but interrupt her because he remembered exactly what she was talking about. “I said I wanted little girls that looked like you.”

“Yes, you did. And I said I wanted a little boy that looked like you. We don’t know who they’ll look like, but I’m pregnant with two little girls and a boy.”

“I’m confident we’ll get what we wanted. Our dreams will come true Iris. I know they will.”

“I know they will too, Bear. I’m sorry I fell apart earlier. Just hearing all that felt like a punch to my gut.”

Barry pulled Iris closer to him. “You don’t have to apologize for that. It hit me hard too. We weren’t expecting that. I wanted to cry too, but I had to be strong for you. But now that the shock has worn off, I’m happy and excited. Still a little scared, but that’s just in the background.”

“Now we have to give the family another shock and surprise. How in the world will they handle that?”

“I don’t know. But it’s going to be fun to see.” Barry says and kissed Iris on her forehead.

“Should we tell them at Thanksgiving? It is next week.”

“I guess we should. We have even more to be thankful for this year.” Barry says.

“But I want to do something exciting. Thanksgiving really isn’t exciting. It’s just dinner and I know you guys will be watching football.”

“Yeah, we will. If you don’t want to do it then, when else will you do it?”

“I don’t know.” Iris says and sighs. Then she smiled and snapped her fingers. “I just thought of how we’ll tell them.”

“That quick?”

Iris giggled. “Yes, that quick. I think we should have a gender reveal party. We have to do it soon because we’ll have to have a baby shower too.”

“Should we really have a party in the middle of the holidays?”

“The holidays are the perfect time to have a party, silly.”

“You’re right. So what is a gender reveal party?”

“Oh, they’re the cutest things! People will do something like fill a box with pink or blue balloons and open it for everyone to show it’s a girl or boy. Or they’ll have a cake that’s pink or blue in the inside and people see what it is when they cut into it.”

“That sounds cute and I think the family would love that like they did when we told them it was twins. But how do we pull off telling them it’s triplets and that it’s two girls and a boy?”

“I haven’t really thought about that yet. We already did the onesies and now I have to get another one. I think that one should say ‘me three’, but I don’t want to do that again. I want to do something cute and really shocking.”
“We’ll think of something. I can’t wait to tell my Dad that it’s triplets. He’s going to flip.”

“I know he will. It would be nice if he was here to join us in this.”

“Yeah, I know. But the good thing is our kids have an awesome grandfather. I can’t wait to see the look on Joe’s face.”

“I can’t wait to see Wally’s.” Iris got jumpy. “I’m getting excited just thinking about telling everyone. I can’t wait.”

“You think on a way to surprise everyone while I get your food. You have babies to feed.” Barry says as he kisses her hand, then her belly before standing to leave.

Iris rubbed her belly while her active babies calmed down a little. She couldn’t wait to see their faces.

Iris was seriously in much better spirits and was practically floating when she went to work the next day. She wanted to tell everyone that she was having triplets, but she couldn’t reveal it yet. The good thing was people already knew that she was having twins, so the size of her belly really wouldn’t raise suspicion. By the time she was huge, everyone would know. She went online the night before and looked at pictures of women that were pregnant with triplets. She watched a YouTube video one woman did that chronicled her pregnancy week by week. Iris was shocked but also thrilled at seeing someone in her shoes and the size of her belly.

She looked at many pictures of triplets and felt so much better about having her set. That gave her more hope and that’s all she could’ve wished for. She would have healthy babies too. She saw so many different sets: some of all boys, all girls, two boys and a girl, and two girls and a boy like she was having. She got so giddy that she showed Barry. It did nothing but make him happy and give him hope as well. That would be them one day.

Now all Iris wanted to do was buy matching baby clothes. She was going to be one of those mothers that dressed her kids alike. Especially the girls since they were identical twins. She could not wait to dress them in pink and purple. She couldn’t wait to do that. She even wanted to dress Little Wally and her boy alike. They were only going to be a year apart. She was going to make sure they were as close as Barry and Wally are. Even though they’re boys, she wanted them close like she and Linda were.

She got a call from Linda while she was doing some research. She was expecting it since Linda knew about her appointment. She wanted to know what Iris was having just as much as she did. Iris hated that she would have to keep it from her, but only for a little while.

“Hello to you too, Sister in law.” Iris chirped happily into her phone.

“So? What happened and why didn’t you call me?” Linda starts right out.

“Oh, don’t give me that. What are the babies? I want to buy more girl baby clothes like I did with Ashley. I’m hoping I can hand off Junior’s stuff to you and buy girly things since I wasn’t able to with him.”
Iris grinned at the thought. She and Linda would have a ball buying girl baby clothes. She couldn’t wait to do that with her sister.

“Well, Barry and I decided that we’re going to surprise everyone with what the babies are.”

“Are you kidding me?”

Iris chuckled. “No, I’m not kidding you. We’re doing a gender reveal party. Soon. In maybe two weeks. You can wait two weeks.”

“Oh, come on Iris! It’s almost Thanksgiving and we have to do all that cooking. And you want to have a party? Have you lost it? At least give me a hint so I can at least scope out the things I want to buy for the baby shower. You are having two and we have to get you more things. You’ll need two swings, two high chairs, two cribs…We have much to do!”

“Well, there you go. Buy that since you know we need more than one of everything.”

“You are no fun. I’ll get Wally to get it out of Barry.”

“Don’t you dare! I didn’t do that with you when you were pregnant with Junior.”

“That’s because I didn’t know what I was having until he was born. We have to plan early with yours since it’s twins.”

“Two weeks, Linda. That’s all you have to do. I promise it will be worth the wait. I can’t wait for everyone to find out either. I could barely hold it in last time that it was twins, so imagine how I feel. Just trust me, Sissy.”

“Ok. You’ve never steered me wrong. I’ll wait. Two weeks and that’s it. Oh, and I wanted to tell you that I saw a for sale sign on a house a few blocks over from us. I saw it when I was driving to work.”

“Ok, thanks. Yeah, Barry and I will have to move soon. There’s no way we can fit two cribs and everything else we need in our place. That was our first home together and I love it, but we have to get out of there.”

“And, you’ll be making an investment. Paying a mortgage isn’t any worse than paying rent. You and Barry are young, but have good stable careers and good credit. You can easily get a nice loan from the bank.”

“Since you know so much about this, you’re helping us.”

“No problem. I’ll be happy to. And I’ll make sure you don’t get ripped off. You two have more than one mouth to feed.”

Iris laughed at the irony. They had well more than one. Three. They had three mouths to feed.
“Yeah, we do. I often wonder why I got pregnant with more than one baby.”

“That’s because of that nerd/porn star you married.” Linda joked.

“Even though I really don’t want to hear explicit details, I’m sure Wally puts it down as well.”

“I have no complaints. But I also have nothing else to compare it to. I’m satisfied though, believe me. I just find it weird that Barry, King of the nerds Barry, has you sprung.”

“Don’t talk about my husband like that. I love that he’s a nerd. He’s more than a huge dork though.
I do have something to compare it to and Barry is the best I’ve had. He always makes sure I’m satisfied.”

“Of course he does. That’s why he gets reward pans of mac and cheese. Wally is really salty about that.”

Iris laughed out loud. “Well, give him a hint. Or, just blatantly tell him what you want. He’s your husband, he should be happy to do whatever you ask. Let him know that he can be replaced. Barry thinks I can do better and makes sure I’m not going anywhere. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t getting something out of him thinking that even if I have no intentions of ever leaving him.”

“I’ll bet. You got pregnant on your wedding night for goodness sake!”

“Hey, that was just a happy surprise. I wasn’t trying to get pregnant. I was just trying to consummate my marriage. What did everybody expect?”

“We expected for the ink to at least dry one the marriage certificate.”

“Sorry, they called Barry ‘The Flash’ for a reason. He has some fast swimmers.”

“So, that’s all he does fast?”

“Linda Jasmine Park-West.”

“My whole name? Really? Just like you do Bartholomew and Wallace?”

“Yes. I always do that when you’re acting difficult.” Iris says.

“Look, Iris Ann West-Allen, I’m going to adhere to your little waiting to find out what the babies are. Only because you’re pregnant and I can’t hit a pregnant person. But you have 2 weeks for me to find out what those babies are, or I’m calling your doctor and pretending to be you.”

“You wouldn’t.”

“I would.” Linda counters.

“Fine! I promise it will only be 2 weeks. We’ll do something that the house again on a Saturday after Thanksgiving.”

“Good, because I have much shopping to do. It’s Junior’s first Christmas. He has to go take his picture with Santa.”

“I can’t wait to see that! Do you know what he’s going to wear?”

“It’s a surprise. You’ll love it.”

“I’m sure I will.”

“Two weeks. Or there will be hell to pay.”

“Bye Linda.” Iris says and hangs up. She laughed just thinking of how much she loved Linda. She was happy that her children would get to have her in their lives.
After much thought, Iris decided to scrap the idea of having a gender reveal party and came up with the way she was revealing that she was pregnant with triplets. She could barely contain her excitement when Barry came in that evening after work and she told him what she came up with. He too was excited and thought that everyone would love it. Linda would more than likely be ready to kill her, but she would forget all about it in the end.

Iris came up with another idea when she was sitting on their bed looking at the honeymoon photos while Barry was in the shower. She thought about how she was already pregnant then and had no idea. She looked and was so happy and looked great in her bikini’s. Barry looked great in his trunks. After all that time, she was still shocked and turned on by the fact that he had a six pack.

But she then got nostalgic about the fact that those were the first pictures of them as a family. The babies were probably just clusters of cells then, but they were still a part of and growing in her. So she wanted more pictures of them as a family before they were born. She wanted to do the completely cheesy thing and have a pregnancy photo shoot.

Iris lost that train of thought when Barry came out of his shower with the towel wrapped around his waist. She was instantly turned on. She was disappointed when he sat on the bed next to her with his towel still on instead of taking it off, even if he was dripping wet.

She felt like taking advantage of the little remaining the time they had left to have sex while she was pregnant before she had to hang it up until after the babies were born. She wondered how long that would be.

She just looked at him and didn’t say a word. He felt her eyes on him and looked at her. “What?”

Iris continued to look at him. She thought about the last time they had sex and how creative they had to get since she was really showing. Without realizing it, she bit her lip. Then realized Barry was staring at her. “Huh?”

“You were picturing me naked, weren’t you?”

“Yeah, I kinda was Bear.”

“I kept this towel on just to tease you.”

“I thought you were supposed to be a good husband.” Iris says and play pouts.

He opened his towel, but didn’t move. He was already starting to get aroused. “Since you said that, I’m going to sit here completely naked and not even touch you.”

Iris reached her hand over to touch him and he inched away. “That’s not fair.”

“It is fair. You called me a bad husband.”

“I did not!”

“You did. Now this,” Barry says as he gestures toward himself, “is off limits. Wally would be proud.”

Iris tossed the photos aside and moved closer to him. She was pregnant, not immobile. And she knew Barry was still as attracted to her as he always was. She straddled his waist in one quick move. She was proud of herself for being able to pull it off so effortlessly. She rubbed her naked
middle against his erection and was again proud of herself for not having put underwear on under his tee shirt. “What was that?”

He slipped his fingers between her lips and stroked. “Nothing.”

Iris moaned from his touch. “I don’t think you’re a bad husband, baby.”

“You don’t?” He asks as he strokes more.

“Nope. You’re the best husband ever. I’d be jealous if it wasn’t me that you’re married to.”

“Having the best wife ever makes it easy.” He grabbed his length and lined it up to her opening. She was moaning his name as he slid all the way in.

Even though Iris got distracted, she still remembered wanting to take pregnancy photos. She would never look like that again, and she wanted to have a keepsake. Something to show the babies when they were old enough to understand.

She wanted something she could go back and look at some time in the future. Being pregnant was an amazing experience and she wanted to cherish it forever since she wouldn’t be pregnant forever. It still awed her when she thought about the fact that she and Barry would be parents in a few months. A year ago, the babies didn’t even exist. Now they were growing day by day in her belly. She was making people and that thrilled her.

It more than thrilled Barry. He loved watching Iris grow their children. He felt proud looking at the evidence of his and Iris’ love for each other. He was excited to take the pictures as well. Not as excited as Iris, but close.

Iris made a point to dress in white and truly looked like an angel to Barry. Iris made him wear a white shirt and black pants even though the pictures would be in black and white. She thought they would look better that way. Her favorite poses were the ones where Barry’s finger made a heart shape on her belly, and her sneaking in one of them in white shirts and glasses again, just like from their engagement photos. That’s why she wanted to wear a white dress and him wear a white shirt and black slacks like on their wedding day. She felt like they were coming full circle. She couldn’t wait for the family photos when the babies were old enough for that. But she was definitely doing the photo shoot thing when they were newborns like she saw and fell in love with. Images of the twins embraced together and all three of them curled into little balls brought tears to her eyes.

Thanksgiving arrived and she was happy to have the extra days off work. She felt great and was in the mood to cook. She probably wouldn’t be able to for a while, so she wanted to do that with Linda. They insisted on having it at their house and Joe reluctantly agreed after saying that Christmas was at his house like it always was.

She got up a little later than normal and fixed them breakfast while she made Barry’s special pan of mac and cheese. He came in the kitchen practically sniffing like a dog when he smelled the food.

“Is that for dinner? It doesn’t look like enough.” He asks as he sits down at the table after kissing her.

“This is just for you, Silly Bear. I’m making the huge pan at Linda and Wally’s.”
“I get my own pan today too?”

“Yes, because you probably won’t get it Sunday.” Iris says and waits for his reaction.

“What?”

Iris just stared at him trying to mask his disappointment. “I’m going to give birth to three blocks of cheese because of you.”

“I can’t help it if that’s my favorite food. I honestly think you should sell it because it’s that’s good, but I don’t want to give it away. I don’t want anyone other than the family knowing how delicious it is.”

“Are you trying to butter me up so we can fool around before we leave?” Iris asks, silently hoping he says yes.

“I butter you up and want to fool around with you anyway, but is it working?”

“Yes, it’s working. That’s why I’m full of babies. Not one, not two, but three. You couldn’t stop at one?” Iris joked.

“Excuse me, but our babies came from your eggs. All I did was join the party. Then one was so great, it had to split so we’d get double.”

“I really can’t blame this on you, huh?” She smiled as she rubbed her abdomen.

“You can if you want to. If you weren’t so gorgeous, maybe I’d be able to resist you. I couldn’t resist you and your father had a gun. You were worth taking a bullet for.”

“Barry, there is nothing else you can say or do to make me sleep with you some more. I’m already committed. But hearing this turns me on and makes me want to give you the Red Lobster treatment.”

“I say we blow off Thanksgiving and spend the day in bed.”

“As tempting as that sounds, you know we can’t do that. Three people with the last name West will hurt us. Well, not me since I’m pregnant. And I can’t even wrap my mind around something happening to you. You can’t leave me alone with three kids.”

“I know. But I think we should hurry up and finish breakfast. We have a few hours before I make that drive.”

“I still resent you forbidding me to drive anymore.”

“Yes, I forbid it. As your husband, I get one of those.”

“Just one? Then you should have saved that for something else. Something bigger. Like forbidding me from going to see some strippers with Linda and Laurel when I get my body back.”

“That’s ok. I’ll just get Wally to shut that down. He’s not letting Linda do that, and I know you’re not going to do it without her, so I’m good.”

Iris took a sip of her juice. “If Wally has rubbed off on you, then we’re going to have problems.”

Iris and Barry finished their breakfast and mad their way back to bed where they indeed fooled around for a bit. They got dressed and headed for Linda and Wally’s house. Iris looked ridiculously
cute in her gray sweater dress. She was wearing a lot of those. They were comfortable and she could get away with them at work. Her baby bump had gotten bigger. She and Barry really seemed to notice a difference when they compared the photos week by week.

Iris was giddy and happy to see Wally Jr. and play with him. She was dreading telling Linda she changed her mind about the gender reveal party. She promised her two weeks and it wouldn’t happen that way. Linda just had to deal with it.

She answered the door with an apron on. She got a good look at Iris and started grinning. She loved seeing Iris pregnant. “Hey Iris and Barry. Whoa. You have really popped there, haven’t you?” She asks as she gives her a hug.

“Yup. There is absolutely no denying that I’m pregnant.” She says and giggles as she pulls away. Barry smiled and just waved.

“Yeah. Plus, you can tell it’s twins because I was barely showing at this stage.”

“I know. I wonder how huge I’ll get.”

“I do too. So are you ready to help me cook?”

“After I see my baby. Where is he?”

“Upstairs with Wally. He did that on purpose so that you couldn’t just walk past him. Then he just stayed his fathead tail up there. Wally?! Bring Junior.”

Minutes later he came downstairs with the baby. Iris just took him and didn’t say a word to Wally.

“See? This is why I don’t like letting her come over here.”

“I can always go back home with my husband. We have food there. We can eat the mac and cheese I made.” Iris says smartly.

Wally looked at Iris, then Barry. “So he still gets his own pan on Thanksgiving? I can’t get too upset now that you guys are married and obviously have sex. So I’m ignoring the fact that you’re my little sister. I’m just going to pretend you’re one of the cops I work with. Barry, what do you… Uh, never mind. I really don’t want to know.”

“Good. Ready, Lin?” Iris asks as she bounced the baby and kissed him.

“Yup.”

Iris and Linda walked off to the kitchen leaving their husbands standing there. They just looked at each other and then walked over to the sofa. Wally turned on a game and they got lost in that. Iris put the baby in his highchair and pulled him close to her. She put on an apron and washed her hands. She started grating cheese when she started making faces at Wally Jr. She was tickled when he laughed. It was like music to her ears.

“Just imagine hearing that from two babies.’ Linda says as she smiles.

Iris felt horrible not correcting Linda, but they had to keep it under wraps just a little longer. “I really can’t wait. I can’t wait to see what/who they look like?”

“I wonder too. Will they look like you or him or both?”

“I think about that all the time. I wonder if they’ll get Barry’s eyes. That would be cool. I love his
eyes. His eyelashes drive me insane. I hope they get those."

“I wondered what Junior would look like so much, it drove me crazy. I love how he looks exactly like Wally, with some of me in him.”

Iris giggled. “Yeah, he’s like a light skinned version of Wally. But I see you in his features as well. I just can’t wait to look into the faces of my babies.”

“Ok, so how is the planning for this gender reveal thing going? You’ve told me nothing!” Linda exclaims.

Iris bit her lip and looked at her. “About that…”

“What? What about it?”

“Don’t be mad, but we decided not to do that anymore.”

“Ok. So when do we find out? Are you telling us at dinner?”

“No. We’re doing it at Christmas.” Iris says and waits.

Linda paused and just looked at Iris. Then she lost it. “Christmas?! That’s a month away! Why are you making us wait that long?! You promised me two weeks. Two weeks! Now it’ll be a month? Are you kidding me right now?”

“Ok, calm down. I decided to make it fun. You know how much I love Christmas. I thought it would be fun to have ugly sweater day turned into an ugly sweater party. I promise I’ll tell you guys there. I had a special sweater made to tell you what the babies are. I even got Junior a sweater. The babies too. They’ll have it for next year.”

“Ok, that is a cute idea, but I’m not pleased with you for making me wait. I think I’ve driven Wally crazy with speculating. He just thinks it’s a girl and a boy and I should just buy what I want and save my receipts. I want to know for sure though. But now that I’ve heard this idea, I can wait.”

“That time will go by fast. It really will. This is such a busy time of year. We have to go house hunting this weekend. We really have to find a house soon. The babies will be here in about 4 months. I want to get settled in and start on the nursery. I hope we’ll have everything done before January ends.”

“Do not pick a short sale then. They can take forever. Try to find something that’s move in ready. The fact that you’re pregnant is a good thing. They will work harder to get you into a house.”

“Crossing fingers.” Iris says as she makes another face at the baby. He giggled and Iris felt her heart flutter.

Barry and Wally settled on the couch and starting watching college football. Wally periodically looked over at Barry and noticed that he seemed to be miles away. He wondered what that was about. He knew that Barry knew he could talk to him, so he wondered what had him so deep in thought.

“Barry. What’s up?”
Barry looked and Wally and tried to put that goofy expression on his face. “What’s up with what?”

“What’s up with you and why you seem to be a million miles away. You had zero reaction from that touchdown.”

Barry sighed. He looked towards the kitchen and then back at Wally. He was glad when he heard Linda and Iris laughing. “It’s…” He started and sighed again.

“Are you and Iris having problems?” He was afraid to ask that question. He hoped that wasn’t the case. He didn’t want to see that for Iris and Barry, especially when they had babies on the way.

Barry’s eyes grew wide and he started fidgeting. “What? No! What would make you think that?”

“The way you’re acting. The way you looked towards the kitchen like Iris would catch you. I know you’re not stupid enough to cheat on her, so what’s wrong? Is becoming a father overwhelming? I know how that feels. It’s normal.”

“No, I’m not stupid enough to cheat on Iris. I don’t even want to. I don’t want anybody other than her. She deserves better than that. Becoming a father is overwhelming, but I’m happy and excited about that. I can’t wait, honestly. It’s just that…It’s kind of weird talking to you about this.”

Wally looked at his face and knew what it was. “It’s about sex, isn’t it?”

“Yes.”

“Look, I know you two obviously have sex and have been for years. I can’t even have a problem with that since she’s your wife. I don’t want to hear specific details about your sex life, but you can talk to me. I am your brother.”

“Ok. Did you and Linda have sex while she was pregnant?” Barry asks a little awkwardly.

“Yeah. It was different and less frequent, but yeah we did.”

“Did you ever…feel like…you would hurt her? Or the baby?”

“Actually, I did. It felt weird at first. Like we were disrespecting the baby or something, but that’s just ridiculous in itself. Especially when you could feel the baby move or something while you’re touching her. But in the end, it’s your baby that wouldn’t be there if it wasn’t for you. Then I did think about hurting one of them and It freaked me out. I didn’t want to be the cause of her going into labor early or even losing it. So I can see why you feel that way. Iris lost a baby in the past. You can almost see the finish line now because you know and she’s showing. And I know you and know that the last thing you want to do is hurt her and have her go through that again. Have you talked to her?”

“Not really. But since she’s been pregnant, she seems to want it more. And now that we know it’s more than one, it’s riskier, and I don’t want to do anything to cause us to lose our babies. I know how she has gotten a little insecure about her body changing so much and I don’t want her to think I’m less attracted to her when I’m not.”

“Then tell her exactly what you told me. Iris is pretty understanding. I know you know that. Even though I do understand how women are when they’re pregnant. Linda thought I wasn’t attracted to her as much anymore either. I didn’t care that she gained weight because she was pregnant. I wouldn’t care any way. I love my wife and think she’s smoking hot.”

“I can definitely agree with you on that. I’ve never seen a woman more gorgeous than Iris. I would
be a fool to want another woman.”

“Yeah, you would because she did you a solid.” Wally says and laughs. Barry threw a pillow at him and laughed too. “Just talk to your wife when you get home later.”

“I will.”

They went back to watching the game when Joe came over bearing desserts a little while later. They all sat down and watched football while they grew increasingly hungry smelling the food being cooked.

Iris brought very sleep Wally Jr. out of the kitchen and sat down on the sofa with him. “I just needed a break. Back started hurting.”

Wally took the baby and Barry rubbed her back like the awesome husband he is.

Iris returned to the kitchen to finish cooking with Linda. A few hours later they were bringing out the feast. As the man of the house, Wally said grace and carved the turkey. Everyone went around and said what they were thankful for. Everybody’s answers mirrored each other’s. They were all thankful for the family and lives they had, and thankful for the babies Iris was pregnant with. They enjoyed their meal and it was awesome to see baby Wally enjoy his first Thanksgiving meal. He now had 4 teeth and really loved having turkey that Iris ground up for him. Her babies seemed to love turkey as well because they went crazy in her stomach. She had fun letting everyone touch her belly and feel the babies move around.

They returned home that evening with plenty of food and settled in bed and watched The Breakfast Club. Barry took Wally’s advice and was open and honest with Iris about the nature of their sex life. He was happy and glad when Iris was understanding and on the same page. She had already had it in her mind that their sex life would take a huge hit. The fun part was discovering that they could still be extremely sexual and intimate without having actual intercourse. So they wouldn’t be going completely without and then it would be amazing when they returned to it full force once the babies were born.

That Saturday, Barry and Iris met with their realtor, Cisco Ramon. Iris thought he looked to be about 14, and she loved his spirit. He seemed to always be chewing candy and she didn’t have a problem with it. She actually wanted some, and was almost not above asking.

She had already talked to him and told him what they were looking for. When she and Barry met him at the first house he had to show them, her reaction to seeing him was funny.

“I know I look 12, but I’m legal. I promise.”

Iris giggled. “Hey, Black doesn’t crack and beige don’t age.”

Cisco chuckled. “I like you.” They both started laughing again and then looked at Barry.

“Sorry, honey. But you already know the deal.”
“Yes, I do. I’ll look like a raisin when you look like a teenager. I already know.”

“Oh, babe. Cheer up. You look good with your boyish face. I’ll still love it when it wrinkles.”

“I know how lucky I am. I married a goddess.”

“I like you too.” Cisco says.

“Thanks.”

“So, from the looks of things, I need to get you two into a house immediately. When are you due to have the baby?”

“April.” Iris says happily and rubs her belly. “And it’s babies. So they’ll be born earlier than that.”

“Babies? It’s twins?”

“Triplets.” Barry says.

Cisco started coughing. “WOW! I’ve never met anyone that had triplets before. I’ve seen families with twins and families with three kids, but never triplets. That’s kind of awesome.”

“You’re the first person we’ve told. We’re surprising our family and friends. But we need a house today because there’s no way we can fit three babies in our 1 bedroom.”

“Well, I’m your man. I know you said you wanted at least three bedrooms and a huge kitchen. I think you’ll really like this one.” He says and they walk in.

Iris immediately loved the house and thought that was weird and unheard of since it’s the first house they looked at. But it was gorgeous. It had a huge living room with a bay window. It opened into a dining room that had crown molding. It had the dark cherry hardwood floors that she wanted. The kitchen was amazing. She had an island that had stools. She had her double ovens and it had a pantry. It had a large picture window over the sink. She looked out and saw that they had a playground in the backyard. Perfect for the babies when they got older. The basement looked a lot like Joe’s and had a separate laundry room. The kids could have a huge playroom. The upstairs was amazing as well. The master bedroom was huge and they had their own bathroom with a huge soaker tub and his and her closets. The other two rooms were almost the same size with one slightly bigger that had a Jack and Jill bathroom. They figured that would be perfect for the twins to have the biggest room and their boy to have the other and they would just have to share a bathroom. There was another bathroom in the hallway and a half bath in the basement. The house was perfect.

Barry and Iris smiled and looked at each other. They couldn’t believe they found the perfect house on their first look.

“Ok, so what’s the catch?” Iris asks once they finished the tour.

“Catch?” Cisco asks in confusion.

“How is this house perfect and it’s the first one we looked at? Is It way over our budget? Is it haunted? Did people get murdered here? Is it termite or bat or spider infested or something?” Iris fires rapidly.

“Ok. Feelings.” Cisco says and Barry just laughed.
“I’m sorry, but this house is amazing! I want to move in now. So, what’s the catch? People usually look at dozens of homes until they find the right one.”

“I wasn’t their realtor. I told you I was your man.”

“You are the man if you found us our dream house.” Iris says.

“Well, it’s only $10,000 over your budget which will only amount to a slightly larger mortgage. Nothing else is true. This house belonged to a family that had to move because of a promotion. They had just remodeled a few months ago. They’re willing to help with closing costs. I think you two should write a letter to give yourselves an edge. Tell them about the triplets. I think you’ll get it. I wouldn’t sit on this though. You can put in an offer and still look. You might find something you love more than this one.”

“I think we should do that, Iris.” Barry says. The house was perfect. He didn’t care if it was a little over budget. He still had his trust fund that he didn’t spend a lot of. They only used a little of it for the wedding since Joe helped a lot.

“I think so too.”

“So, you’re going to write them a letter too, right?”

“Yes, of course we are. I’m a journalist. I’m going to write a kick ass letter. This will be our house.” Iris says happily.

Iris figured it was time for her and Barry to start thinking about names. They had three babies to think of nice names for. She didn’t want to take that lightly since she wanted to give them names they could live with. She didn’t want them to hate their names and want to change them later in life. Even though Barry kind of hated his name, he could still live with being named Bartholomew.

They were sitting in their usual position on the sofa with her legs thrown over his, with him massaging her legs and feet. He would sometimes accidently go higher and Iris loved it.

They were watching Modern Family and the minivan got to Iris. She wondered why she hadn’t thought of it before. “You know we have to get one of those, right?”

“What?”

“A minivan. We’ll have three car seats.”

“You’re right. I don’t think we should trade yours in though. One of us will need it when we don’t have the kids.”

“You’re right. I think it’s silly to trade it in when it’s paid for. The thought of a car payment makes me want to scream, but we have to put our babies somewhere.”

“That’s the sacrifice we have to make since we’re married adults becoming parents. Even though
that doesn’t feel like a sacrifice.”

“It will when you’re driving that minivan full of kids.”

“I can’t wait. I have to perfect my dad yell. I know at least one of our kids will be a lot to handle.”

Iris giggled. “I think that’s a fair assumption. We’re having three. I have a feeling it will be one of the girls. And her name will probably match her personality.”

“I agree.”

“So, we need to discuss names, Mr. Allen.”

“Lacey, Stacy, and Casey. Done.” Barry says.

“Is Casey supposed to be for the boy? Because I hate that.”

“Dawn, Donna, and Donald.”

Iris looked at Barry like he lost it. “Ok, Dawn is a very pretty name. Not that crazy about Donna. And Donald? No. What would we call him? Don? When that’s just like Dawn? Donny? Nope.”

“Fine. Forget I said anything.”

“How about Erica and Erin? Eric for the boy.”

“I actually like that.” Barry says.

“What would their nicknames be though?”

“Are you seriously questioning names because of nicknames?”

“I like your nickname better than your name, Bartholomew.”

Barry looked at her and realized she had a point. “You’re right. Bart, Lisa, and Maggie.” Barry joked.

Iris stared at him for several seconds before speaking. “Have you lost your mind? Bart, Lisa, and Maggie? Like The Simpsons? Are you mad?”

“I was just kidding. Jeez.” Barry says and squeezed her leg lightly.

“Nicole, Nicholas, and Nicola.” Iris suggested.

“I don’t like Nicola. How about Nichelle? Like Nichelle Nichols that played Uhura on Star Trek?”

Iris thought it over. “Ok, say we go with that. Then it will be Nicki, Nick, and what?”

“Shelly.”

“Nope.” Iris says and shakes her head. “We don’t have to make all their names match. We can just match the girls since they’re twins. Chloe and Zoey.”

“Or, Chloe and Chelsea.” Barry says and smiles. “How about Kristina and Katrina? You know name one of them after your mother.”

Iris smiled at the thought. “That is so wonderful Barry and it makes me want to cry. What about
your mom? We can’t leave Nora out.”

Barry then was the one to think. “That can be their middle names then. How about Amber and Jade?”

“That’s pretty, but I think we should stay away from ‘a’ names. Olivia and Octavia. No, scratch that.” Iris says.

“Lily and Jasmine. Flower names like yours.” Barry offers.

“I like that, but Jasmine is Linda’s middle name. I don’t want to just name one of them after someone.”

“Michelle, Michaela, and Michael.” Barry says.

“You’re doing a better job than I am, Bear. Tiana and Tiara. For the Black Disney princess.”

“I like Tiana and Tiara. I just don’t think they go with our Mom’s names.”


“We can work on the boy for a while and then come back.”

“Kanye.”

Barry scoffed and rolled his eyes. “We are not naming my son Kanye.”


“Or we can give the girls ‘b’ names and give the boy ‘I’ name.”

“This is so hard! We should’ve started thinking of names as soon as we found out we’re having three.”

“I like Isaiah. Then Brooke and Bree maybe?”

“I like that, Bear.” Iris smiled and then thought of something. “I just thought of something cute.”

“What?”

“Since you want the girls to have ‘b’ names, how about Becky?”

Barry looked at her and deadpanned her. “You are not funny.”


“Two can play that game.”

“What did you come up with?” Iris asks.

“Petunia and Begonia.” Barry says with a straight face.

The babies actually started kicking. Iris thought it was in protest for those awful names. She looked at him with daggers in her eyes. “I want a divorce.” She took her legs off his and sat up.

“What?” Barry asks incredulously.
“Yeah, I want a divorce. And I want you to leave.”

“I’m not going anywhere. You can’t have a divorce. You took vows, Iris Ann West Allen. You took vows.”

“Those vows are broken. I still want a divorce. Even the babies hate those names because they’re kicking like crazy.”

“They’re kicking because you said you want a divorce.”

“No, they’re not. They started kicking after you said Petunia and Begonia. How dare you?!” Iris asks as she rubs her belly and continues to throw daggers at him.

“You said Becky and Patty! Are we supposed to name the boy Josh?”

“Over my dead body will there be a Becky Allen and Patty Allen in the world that came from me. I rebuke that. That’s a sin and you know I was joking.”

“Just like I was joking about Petunia and Begonia.”

“Fair enough.”

“Now take back saying you want a divorce.” Barry says.

“Alright. I take it back. I don’t want a divorce.”

“Good.” Barry says and pulls her legs back into his lap. He kissed her ring finger.

After much debate and going back and forth and back to names they previously mentioned, Barry and Iris had the names for their triplets.

Those few weeks flew by. Barry and Iris did look at other houses, but none of them wowed them like the first house they looked at. Iris was in tears when she got the call from Cisco telling her that they got it. Barry was ecstatic as well.

Christmas was fast approaching and Iris’ belly got bigger. She was glowing and eternally happy. She was so excited for the ugly Christmas sweater party that she couldn’t keep still. She got the specially ordered sweater and actually couldn’t wait to put it on. Then the one for Junior and the triplets. She got the girls matching ones that were extravagant that had tulle at the bottom like tutus and had tulle on the wrists. The one for the boy was just a gingerbread man. Wally jr.’s was a Rudolph with a red nose just like his father has.

She invited more than she did the last time, but they were still close family and friends. She again invited Lorraine because she would always want her as a part of her life. Lorraine asked if it was alright if she brought Big John and iris of course said yes. She invited a few coworkers and a few women from her prenatal yoga class. She invited Cisco and Laurel. Cisco was the only person besides them that knew and he was sworn to secrecy until it was revealed.

Iris was giddy the whole way as Barry drove to Joe’s house. Iris got a cake that said triplets on the top and was pink, blue, and pink in the middle. She had them triple layer it with white icing.

She and Barry walked into the house and Barry hid the cake. He didn’t want anyone to see it before they were ready. Joe already had Christmas music playing. He had already pulled out the sweater
collection and put by the door. Iris thought he looked dapper in his Santa Claus sweater.

“I know you’re pregnant, but I’m dying for some nog.” Joe says.

“I’ll have to make a small batch just for me and maybe the others that don’t drink, but coming right up.” She says and almost waddled to the kitchen.

“She really looks like she’s glowing and happy. You’re part of the reason for that. I can’t wait to see my baby girl be a mother.” Joe says.

“Thanks, Joe. We are happy. I can’t wait to see her be a mother either. I know she’ll be amazing.”

“Iris was born to be an amazing mother. She’s so much like her mother that it makes me smile.”

“Thanks, Joe. I’m gonna go help Iris.” Barry says and walks into the kitchen.

“Where did you put the cake?”

“In my old room.”

“Great. Now I just have to fix this, and set out the rest of the food. I’m so glad Dad went a little bananas buying chicken. He has fried, buffalo wings, and barbecue. I want some of all of it.”

“Are you ready to eat now?”

“No, but the babies are.” Iris says and winks.

More people started to arrive. Their neighbors got there first. Lorraine and Big John got there and she was tickled at the ugly sweater collection. She loved the one iris had on. She just loved seeing Iris’ belly continue to grow. She couldn’t wait to hold those babies herself, so she knew Iris was anxious.

Wally and Linda got there and Iris had to resist holding the baby because he would ruin the surprise. She hoped nobody rubbed her belly too vigorously. She did run and grab the one she bought for him. Wally just shook his head. He knew how his sister was.

Iris was full of tears when Linda gave her her copy of Wally Junior sitting on Santa’s lap. She wondered how that would work with her three, but she couldn’t wait.

“He looks so cute!”

“He grabbed the beard.” Linda says.

“That is awesome.”

More people arrived. Cisco and Laurel arrived within minutes of each other. He migrated towards her. He thought she was stunning and wanted to get to know her better.

Laurel pulled Iris up and asked about him. “Who’s the guy? Please tell me he’s over 21. Because if he’s not, the flirting just got awkward.”

Iris laughed. “He is. He’s our age believe it or not. He’s our realtor and he’s a great guy. Go for it.”

“I will.” Laurel says and makes her way back over to Cisco.

Everybody mingled, ate, and made small talk until Linda was chomping at the bit. She was ready
to get this show on the road. “Alright. I’ve waited long enough. It’s time you let us know what those babies are.”

“Yes, it is.” Joe says.

“I agree.” Lorraine says.

“Me too.” Wally added.

“Alright. We’ll put you out of your misery.” Barry helped Iris to her feet and ran and got the cake and the bag with the sweaters. He handed the bag to her and just stood there with the cake.

“What’s going on?” Laurel asked.

“So you still decided to do a gender reveal cake?” Linda asks.

“Yes. That’s why it’s hidden. Dad, can you turn off the music?”

Joe did as he was told and sat back down.

“Ok, so you know we found out we’re having twins, and I’ve been harassed. Here’s looking at you Linda, about what the babies are.”

“Hey! I had to harass you! You wouldn’t tell me anything!”

“Well, your suffering is over.”

“Who thinks it’s two boys?” Barry asks.

Big John and their neighbors raised their hands.

“Who thinks it’s two girls?” Iris asks and looks around.

Lorraine, two of Iris’ coworkers, and Laurel raised their hands.

“Alright. Who thinks it’s a boy and a girl?” Barry asks this time and the rest of the hands went up. Most people thought they were having one of each.

“Ok, Well, everybody that said it was…. Iris paused, smiled widely and looked around. “…two… girls is right!”

She heard many cheers from everyone. They all were happy and excited no matter what.

“And a boy!” Barry said and everybody stopped.

“WHAT?!” Linda yelled first.

“Yeah, what?” Joe asks.

Iris pulled away the snap on Santa beard on her sweater and it said. “IT’S TRIPLETS!”

“TRIPLETS! ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!” Linda yelled when she got up. She looked at Iris’ sweater and her belly in disbelief.

“No, we’re not kidding.” Barry tore away the covering on the cake and showed it to them.

“You’re having triplets?” Lorraine asked.
“Yes. It’s triplets.”

“How in the hell did that happen?” Joe asks. He was dumbfounded as he looked at Barry and Iris. He seriously looked like he was looking at Barry in disgust. So much so Barry got uncomfortable.

“I thought it was twins?” Linda asks.

“What did you to my sister?” Wally asks Barry.

Iris rolled her eyes at Wally. “It was twins. Then one of the eggs split and now we have identical twin girls and a boy. Triplets.”


Barry looked at him and Joe and wondered if he needed to ask them if they were upset with him with the way they were looking at him.

Lorraine got on board faster than everybody. She jumped up and hugged Iris. Linda did too. She rubbed her belly. “Wow. I can’t believe you’re having triplets.”

“I can’t either.” She dug in the bag and took out the ultrasound photos and showed them to them. And clear as day they saw three babies.

Barry took the cake to the table and came back and stood next to Iris.

“What else is in the bag?” Linda asks.

“Oh, just sweaters for the babies next year.” Iris says happily and pulls them out. She was then met with a barrage of cheers and claps. Everybody hugged her and rubbed her belly.

Joe finally came out of his coma and walked up to Iris and Barry. “My baby is having three babies. Three. I can’t believe it.”

“You’ll have 2 of each grandchild like you have 2 of each kids. Until Linda and Wally have more, that is.” Iris says.

“I can’t wait to spoil those babies.” Joe says.

Wally came out of his stupor much later. He walked up to Barry and Iris. “Triplets. You two just had to outdo Linda and me, didn’t you? This means war. We’re having five next time.”

Linda’s eyes almost bugged out of her head. “No, we are not. I’m totally willing to let Barry and Iris win this contest.” She jokes.

“Hey, it wasn’t a contest. We’re just as shocked as you are. I cried the whole way home. The doctor apologized for missing one of the babies the first time. Then she told us the risks. But we’re not dwelling on that. Just the fact that we’re getting the baby back that we lost.” Iris says.

“Is she sure there isn’t another one hiding?” Wally asks.

“There better not be.” Iris says. “I’m already turning into a blimp. I’ll float away with another baby inside me.”

Everybody laughed and they all went for cake. They loved how the cake was triple layered. The party went on and Barry and Iris were met with more well wishes. People couldn’t wait to see the babies.
Joe just looked at Barry and Iris. “I like how you two are looking at it like you’re getting the baby back that you lost. That’s a wonderful way to look at it.”

“Thanks. We’re scared, but we have to embrace it. It’s the biggest surprise of our lives. We were not expecting this.” Barry says.

“You two don’t have any more surprises, do you? I’m an old man now. I don’t need to have a heart attack.” Joe joked.

“No.” Iris says, knowing she was lying.

She had one more surprise for everyone that had to wait until after the babies were born.

Chapter End Notes

Ok, so I know the triplets is OTT, but I really don't care. I did stick to comic canon and they are having twins. They just have an extra baby. At least I know that if/when it gets stolen, It won't be a "coincidence".

I laid out the ground work for the triplets as you've read with the clues I brought up. That's why she lost the first baby, and why I needed to give them their baby back. That was always in the script. Seeing that in a review blew my mind, and made me want to throw things. That's why I hate it when people guess in their reviews. Had I not already laid the foundation, I would have changed it. But I came this far, I don't like it when people guess in their reviews. Sue me. There are other writers that don't mind. I DO. If you have a problem with that, don't review or just don't read at all. It's that simple. If anybody didn't understand that, read this again. Then read it again. I know I sound awful, but I'm an awful person.

I'm one of those writers that actually puts a lot of time and effort into writing these stories. I don't care if it's just fanfiction to you. This story is my baby and I'm protective over my baby.

I vent. It is what it is. I love all of you that are in my corner.
Barry and Iris finished up their little triplet and gender reveal party a little on the late side. They were happy that their friends and family were so happy for them, and they finally got it out in the open that they were having triplets. They got so many well wishes and requests to hold those babies when they were born. Everyone that was there promised them that they’d be at the baby shower with many gifts.

Iris was dead tired by the time the last guest left. She and Little Wally were ready to call it a night. Even the babies had settled down. This was seriously one of those times when she wished that she still lived at Joe’s house. All she wanted to do was get in the bed because she was exhausted. The good thing was that she wouldn’t have to drive them. She was a little thankful for the fact that Barry forbid her to drive anymore. All she had to do was let him guide her to the car, and sit pretty until they got home.

She was thinking of taking a shower with Barry, since he almost forbid her from taking one alone in case she fell, though Iris knew he was just using that as an excuse to touch her and she didn’t mind one bit, when Linda and Wally sat down after helping Joe and Barry clean up. They both just looked at her as she sat with their baby at her side with his head resting on her stomach as he slept. Linda couldn’t resist taking a picture. It was literally the cutest image she had of them, after her holding him and dancing at the wedding of course.

“I wonder if he’ll feel it if one of the babies kicks.” Linda says.

Iris giggled and it made her stomach jump lightly. “Probably. Barry feels it when he has his head on my belly and they kick. But I think they’re sleep now. They’ve settled down a lot.”

“I can’t imagine what it feels like to have three babies kicking you. One is awesome and weird, but three? What does it feel like?”
“It just feels like kicking actually, but it’s a lot, and in different areas. They don’t move around that much because there isn’t much room. Sometimes I’ll feel them turn just a little, but mostly it’s like they’re just having a kicking contest sometimes.”

“I still can’t believe you’re having triplets.” Wally says.

“I really can’t believe it either. I never in a million years thought I’d be having triplets.”

“Me neither.” Barry says when he sits down next to Iris. He put his arm around her and she rested her head on his chest.

“I’m not trying to scare you, but what are you two going to do with three babies? One is hard work, but you’re having three.” Linda says.

Barry and Iris looked at each other and then back at Linda. “Thanks, Linda. We hadn’t thought about that at all. We haven’t gotten afraid that we’re outnumbered and really have no idea how we’re going to handle three babies.” She answers sarcastically, though she meant it with love.

“I’m sorry. I know I stuck my foot in my mouth. I know it’s scary.”

“Yeah, it is. But I know what you meant.” Iris replies.

“I’m scared to death, but also excited. I know it will probably kill us, but they’re our babies and we just have to accept this huge curve ball that was thrown at us.” Barry adds.

“That’s a huge curve ball though. I’m not trying to add to it but, man. The good thing is, you guys are getting your kids out of the way in one shot. And they’ll grow up together. Junior is only a year older. Linda and I should start on our next baby now.” Wally says.

Linda looked at Wally like he lost it. “Really? I thought you said when he’s 2.”

Wally just shrugged. “That’s only over a year from now.”

“We will discuss this later. Right now, Iris needs to go to bed, because I see she’s struggling, and we need to put our first born to bed.” Linda says.

“You’re right. I am struggling. I’m ready to go, Bear.”

Linda grabbed the baby and Barry pulled Iris to her feet. After many hugs and kisses and goodbye’s, they all made their way home. Iris dozed off on the way home. Barry just looked over at her when he parked. He rubbed her belly and took off her seat belt and got out of the car. She didn’t wake up until he was opening her door to pull her out.

“I thought I was going to have to carry you in.”

“You aren’t that strong Bear. I’m a bus full of babies.” She joked.

“You’re my bus full of babies. That’s precious cargo.”

Once Iris was out of the car, they walked up to their door arm in arm. “I wish I could take a nice hot bubble bath.”

“Like we did on our honeymoon?” Barry asks and winks.

“I can’t wait for us to have another night like that. It’ll take months. Probably even longer. I have to drop this load first. Good thing the house has a huge tub.”
“Yes, it is. I can’t wait until we move in.”

“It’s a shame we can’t properly christen the place.” Iris says and winks at him this time.

“Oh, we still can. Just not hardcore like we would if you weren’t pregnant.”

“I’m looking forward to it.”

Minutes later they were inside and undressing. An hour later they were snuggled in bed with Iris using Barry as her human pillow. He enjoyed every bit of it.

Christmas came two days later and Iris woke up giddy like a child. Her love for Christmas would never escape her. She just loved the fact that next Christmas, their babies would be there and she could go all out. Even if they didn’t understand, she still was. She already had ideas of what she would do.

She woke Barry up so that they could exchange gifts. It was their first Christmas as husband and wife and she was ready for that. She hated that she had to settle for a small artificial tree. Another thing she was looking forward to. The huge tree they would get the next year. They even had a fireplace in their house. They would all have stockings. She couldn’t wait.

“Bear! Bear! Wake up! It’s Christmas!” She says as she rustles him awake.

Barry playfully groaned and opened his eyes. He had to laugh at the Santa hat Iris had on her head. He already knew and loved how she was about Christmas.

“I’m up, I’m up.” Barry says and sits up.

“Great! Because it’s Christmas and we need to eat and open presents. This is our first Christmas since we got married. So, hurry!”

“Can I at least go to the bathroom first?” He asks as he turns towards her.

“Sure. I’ll be waiting.” Iris says and gets out the bed. She wasn’t moving as fast as she normally would, but she was eager.

Barry just chuckled and went to the bathroom. He came out minutes later and Iris popped a Santa hat on his head and kissed him. “I married Mrs. Claus.”

“You sure did, Santa. Do you want to eat first, or open gifts?”

“Eat first. You need to eat and feed our children.”

“Good answer because I’m famished.”

They sat down and ate the quick meal Iris prepared. They then went to their small tree and Barry grabbed their gifts. He handed Iris the first of hers which was only an envelope. She looked at it suspiciously.

“Just open it.” Barry says.

Iris did as was told and smiled at her gift. It was a card for her to have a pregnancy belly painting done. She absolutely loved the idea of that. “This is cute. I love it.”
“I’m glad you do because I agonized over what to get you. I actually Googled gifts for your pregnant wife. I saw the do it yourself kit for the plaster one and then saw the paining and thought you’d like that more and figured we should do it that way. Really have a reminder of the babies being in there.”

“Oh, I’m reminded. All the time. You pumped me full of babies, Bear. But this is thoughtful and sweet. Thank you. Open yours.”

Barry opened his box and found a watch. The one he wanted. He was a watch kind of guy.

“Thanks, babe. It’s the one I wanted.”

“I’m glad. I wanted to keep with the tradition of our first Christmas as husband and wife the same way I did with our first Christmas together ever by getting you a watch.”

Barry smiled at that. “You have another.” He says and hands her the box. “I think we were on the same page.”

Iris smiled and opened her gift and found a locket. One of the ones you could put a picture in. “I guess we were. You got me a bear holding a flower necklace for our first Christmas. I’m going to put a picture of the babies in here.”

“That’s why I got it.” Barry says and smiles, feeling insanely proud of himself. He looked at his watch and realized how truly lucky he was. He looked back up at Iris. “Promise me we’ll stay this happy.”

“I can’t, Bear.”

Barry’s face fell. “Why…why not?”

“Come here, Barry.” He slid closer to her on the couch. She put her arms around him. “I can’t promise we’ll stay this happy, because I think we’ll only get happier. We’re about to become parents.”

He lit up again. “I think so too. I think I’ll love you even more after you officially become the mother of my children.”

“I know you’re going to be an awesome father.”

“I’ll try. Our kids deserve what we have.”

“Better.”

Iris set on her mission to fix her Christmas cookies. She made some just for Little Wally. She and Barry dressed in matching red sweaters, though hers was a dress with leggings. It was the most comfortable outfit she could imagine wearing. She could be comfortable and still be stylish. She wasn’t going to let herself go because she was pregnant and huge.

She couldn’t wait to get to the house and give her nephew his gift. She knew he would love the dancing Elmo she got him. Plus, she wanted Christmas dinner. The babies loved the turkey at Thanksgiving and she hoped they liked the ham she baked. She felt a little, just a little sorry for Barry with all the trips he had to make, but he forbid her from carrying anything that was heavy. He treated her like delicate glass and she honestly got a kick out of it. Barry always treated her good. More than good. She had the perfect husband and she loved him to death. She was a very lucky woman.
She just sat and watched him make several trips. She looked at her wedding and engagement rings and rubbed her left hand on her belly. “I did good with Daddy, didn’t I?” She asks the babies. One of them moved and she got a kick out of that. She knew her children knew how much she loved their father. They had to know. She felt it and hoped they felt it too. She giggled and they moved more.

Barry just stood there and watched it. It amazed him how his three babies were growing in his wife. Something that they made together and nobody could take that away from them. He had his other family taken from him, but nobody was taking his wife and kids without a fight. “Are the babies having a party?”

Iris looked up at the sound of his voice. “I think so. Just a mini one. They know it’s Christmas. And I was just talking to them about you.”

“Is that so?”

“Yup.”

“What did you say to them?”

“Ummm, something along the lines of, ‘I did good with Daddy, didn’t I?’ Something like that.”

Barry felt his heart swell at that. “You’re right you did good. I did better than you did.”

“Are you ready to go?”

“Yes.” Barry walked over to Iris and pulled her to her feet. He loved being able to help her. He didn’t take lightly the fact that her body changed drastically from carrying his children. They had more time to grow, but he just wanted it to be over so that Iris wouldn’t be uncomfortable anymore and they could actually hold them. No matter how hard it was, that’s all they wanted. He gave her a quick kiss before guiding her to the door. He slipped her coat on and his and they were off.

The drive to Joe’s house was quick and Iris was in the kitchen making Grandma Esther’s egg nog while Barry was still getting everything. He almost didn’t want to share the pan of mac and cheese that she made. It was still warm. He wanted to dig in it badly.

He was putting the gifts under the tree when Wally walked in with a huge bag. “Hey, Barry. Merry Christmas.’

“Merry Christmas, Wally.”

Linda came in with the same greeting a made her way to the kitchen to see Iris. She knew she wanted to see the baby. They had dinner a little while later and exchanged gifts. They all watched in awe as Wally Junior laughed and played with the toy Iris got him. They just looked forward to the fact that they would have four babies sitting around the tree next year and they all couldn’t wait for that.

Two weeks later, it was Barry’s birthday. He told Iris not to make a big fuss over it, but that’s how Iris is. She liked the holidays and birthdays. He really didn’t need anything. He changed that tune when he opened his gift.
Iris got him a fresh pair of J’s. The Westbrook’s. Another thing he wanted. He almost wanted to cry.

Iris watched the expression on his face change and it was seriously almost like the first time he saw her boobs. She was married to the world’s biggest dork, and she loved that dork immensely.

“You…you got me J’s. Fresh J’s. The ones I wanted. How did you know I wanted these?” He asks as he finally looks up at her. He was acting like she gave him a surprise blow job or something. It was entertaining to watch.

“I know how you are about kicks, and I know all men like J’s. But I took a chance on that pair. Once I found out those were called Westbrook’s, I was sold.”

“Why? Because your last name is West?”

“My last name is West-Allen. And yes.”

“I love them. I can’t wait to wear them.”

“Aren’t you glad you have a job where you can wear them? And not have to parade around in a suit and loafers.”

“Yes. I might sleep in these tonight.” Barry says.

“Oh, no you will not. Wait. That could work. You’re due for some birthday sex tonight.”

“I can wear just these and my glasses.”

Iris got turned on. “Yes. You’re on babe.”

And that’s exactly what they did after she fixed his favorite meal for dinner. Iris felt like she was getting a treat too with him being naked with his glasses on. She wasn’t about to point that out to him though.

Two weeks later, Barry and Iris went to close on their house. Iris was in tears when Cisco held out the keys. Barry suggested she take them since she was the one that found Cisco and he found their perfect house.

They had their dream house. Their own place to raise their babies in. They couldn’t wait to officially move in.

Iris gave Cisco a hug. “Thank you so much, Cisco. We wouldn’t have our dream house if it wasn’t for you.” She says.

“Hey. I told you I was your man. Did you doubt me?”

“No, we didn’t doubt you. It’s just amazing, that’s all. That will be the first home our babies live in. We have to invite you over for dinner. You’re our friend now. You can come to the baby shower. I’m pretty sure Laurel will be there.” Iris says and waits for his reaction. She already knew that he and Laurel hit it off and had been on a few dates.

Cisco lit up like someone just gave him candy. “Yeah, that would be nice. Laurel is great. Thanks for inviting me to that little party you had.”
Barry decided to join in. “So, there’s something going on with you and Laurel?” He asks.

“Yeah, we’ve been on a few dates. We’re not official yet, but hopefully soon. I found a woman that’s into comics as much as I am. Then she’s smart and beautiful.”

“So she told you about the Black Canary thing?” Iris asks, knowing she did. Laurel was still into that after all that time. He was really into this character named Vibe from the comics.

Cisco blushed. “Yeah, she did. She’s looks great in leather.” He says as he leaves for a bit just thinking about it.

Iris and Barry exchanged glances. “She looks great in that blonde wig too. She let me borrow it once.”

Cisco came out of his trance. “Huh?”

“Yeah. She let me borrow her blonde wig so that Barry and I could role play one day.” She jokes.

“Oh, I didn’t need to hear that.” He says.

Iris laughed and patted his shoulder. “Ask her to do the canary cry for you.” She says and walks away. Barry grabbed her hand and they walked hand in hand to their car, laughing at Cisco.

Days later, Iris and Barry were packed. Not completely, but they made a lot of progress. Iris did most of the small stuff. They honestly didn’t really have a lot in their one-bedroom apartment. There were boxes everywhere and they were really ready to move.

They woke up early and went to the dealership and looked for the minivan they knew they needed. Iris did research and found the best one for them. She found that the 2014 Honda Odyssey was really the best one for them since they had to fit in three car seats. She wanted her babies safe. The salesman had that same shocked face everyone had when she told them she was pregnant with triplets.

The salesman liked how she did her research and had proof of her research. He just laughed when she told him she was a journalist. Her fast talking got them a really good deal. She really got them to lower the price since it was a 2014. They still managed to get a brand new one. Iris insisted that it be red. Barry barely talked and just followed her lead. He figured that was best. When the salesman handed them the keys, Barry just looked at Iris and decided to leave their car there and drive the minivan.

“I guess I’ll drive the van…?” Iris suggested.

“Nice try. You’re not driving. Not until you deliver the babies.”

“I’m only pregnant, Bear. Not disabled.”

“I know you’re not disabled. You’re still not driving. I don’t even think you can fit behind the wheel. I told you as your husband I get one of these and I’m putting my foot down. You are not driving and that’s final.”

Iris was a little impressed at Barry’s take charge attitude. She did want to drive the van, but he was right. She didn’t think she could fit her belly behind the wheel either. And she was not going to
smash her babies.

“Ok, hubby. So, what are we going to do?”

“Call someone. I don’t want to call Wally and Linda since they have the baby. Joe. I’ll call Joe.” Barry says and is instantly on the phone. He was happy that Joe was available. They sat in the van and listened to music and checked out the features until he got there.

“I can’t believe it. You two bought a minivan. You’re really turning into a little family, aren’t you?” Joe asks when he walk up.

“We have no choice. Got to put our kids somewhere.” Barry says.

“I know. I love seeing you two embrace this and become full-fledged adults. First Wally and Linda, now you two. I feel proud.”

“Thanks, Dad. Happy we could make you proud.”

“I like the van. It’s cute. Not even surprised you picked red.” Iris laughed. “Yeah, the triplets have to ride in style.”

“So, how are we doing this?” Joe asks.

“I’m going to take her home and you drive the car to the house. Might as well park it there so we won’t have to worry about moving it again. And I’ll meet you there and bring you back here for your car. How’s that?”

“That’s fine with me.” Joe replies. Barry handed him the keys and he got in Iris’ car and pulled off while Barry did the same and headed to their home. Iris was glad he wanted to take her home because she really wanted to rest and eat. She wanted to sit her huge bowl of mint chocolate chip ice cream on her belly and then fall asleep.

Forty minutes later, she was doing that. The bowl rested on her belly while she watched House of Cards. She got under the covers and went to sleep for a good while. She woke up after one of the babies was resting on her bladder. She went to the bathroom and saw that Barry still wasn’t back yet. She got her phone and called him.

“Hello?”

“Where are you?”

“You won’t believe this, but the car turned off on Joe and wouldn’t come back on. We had to wait for a tow. I’m on my way home now.”

“Ok. See you soon.” Iris says and was hit with the gut feeling that Barry was lying to her. Why she felt that way she didn’t know. She hoped Barry wasn’t cheating on her. She had no idea why she immediately went to that, but that’s where her mind was.

She called Linda and didn’t get an answer. She figured she was busy with the baby. Iris was really hungry now and was looking in the freezer when Barry came home.

She looked at him and could tell he had been up to something. Dread and sorrow filled her. She wondered if it was because she was pregnant and gained weight. Or was it the diminished sex? She and Barry used to have sex all the time. All the time. He used to push up on her while she was
washing dishes. She would slide her hand down his pants or climb in his lap while they were watching tv. So she got that he probably missed how much sex they had. She missed it too. But this was unacceptable. And heartbreaking.

“Hey babe. I’m sorry I had you worry. I should have called.” Barry says. He fidgeted and did that thing with his face that let her know he wasn’t being totally honest. He was acting weird. He had this nervous energy that Iris wanted to question.

“You’re acting weird.” She simply says.

Barry paused and scoffed. “What?”

“I said, you’re acting weird.” She says and turns back towards the freezer.

Barry ran his hand through his hair and sighed internally. He should have known that he couldn’t hide things from Iris. He should have known that she would pick up on his strange behavior. He hoped she didn’t know he lied to her. “Iris-“

She cut him off. “What do you want for dinner? I’m thinking turkey burgers.” She continued to look through the freezer. He was lying to her. Now he was acting guilty. She didn’t want to cry. She felt like she needed to though. That’s how instantly hurt she was. She could feel herself getting upset and she didn’t want to do that. She didn’t want to stress herself out and definitely not the babies. She could feel Barry’s eyes on her and didn’t want to turn around. But she wanted to get away from him.

He walked over to her. He wrapped his arms around her and his heart broke when she flinched from his touch. He hated that she felt like that. And he was the cause. “How about we go out for dinner? You can get a lobster tail and eat some of my steak. How does that sound?” He kissed her on the cheek and hugged her tighter.

She perked up at the thought of going out to eat. She would never pass up a meal. She was still mad at him though. “Ok.”

“Ok?”

“Yeah.” She says and lightly pushed him back to close the freezer door. She moved forward and he had no choice but he to release his grasp on her. He hated how he felt and how he made her feel. “We should get ready.” She just walked to their bedroom. She started looking through her closet. She wanted to find something that would make her feel beautiful, even if he didn’t think so anymore. She wondered what changed. She resented him for how he made her feel. She found a red dress that she wanted to pair with a black blazer. She just pulled it out without a word. She laid it on the bed and looked at it. It would have to do. And even though the regular 3 and 4 inch heels she wore before she became a bus full of babies were out of the question, she could still wear heels. They just had to be shorter pumps.

Barry came into their bedroom and saw her staring at her clothes. He knew that he had hurt his wife and he hated it. But he had to, even if he didn’t mean to. She just knew him too well and knew when he was up to something. “That’s nice. You’ll look great.”

“Thanks.” Iris answered shortly. She needed to get undressed but knew she didn’t want to do that in front of Barry. And that hurt her severely because she never ever felt like she couldn’t get undressed in front of him. She needed a drink and she couldn’t. She wanted to cry. She felt one baby move and another one kick. Then he or she kicked again and it took her breath away. “Whoa.” She says and immediately sat on the bed and rubbed her belly.
That scared the shit out of Barry. “Are you ok?”

“I guess. I just think the babies let me know that they’re in charge. I feel attacked.”

Barry knew there was a hidden meaning in what Iris said, and he didn’t want to address it. He knew Iris was pissed with him. She had a right to be. He lied to her. And she knew it. She just didn’t confront him about it and he knows it’s because of the babies.

“Are you sure you’re ok?”

“Yes. I can handle anything. I know they don’t mean to hurt me.” Iris says bitterly as she rubs her belly more.

Barry just looked at her and felt his heart sink. This was pure torture. “Ok, do you want to go to bed? I can order in.”

“No. I’m fine. We can go out.” Iris replied, thinking that staying in wouldn’t be such a good idea. She needed a change of scenery. Kind of needed a distraction instead of just being confined to their apartment with him.

“Are you sure?”

“I’m positive. I just need you to help me. Can you do that?” Iris asks knowing it sounded weird for her to ask him that. He always helped her even when she didn’t ask.

“Of course. You know you don’t even have to ask me that.”

“I just didn’t want to assume and commit you to something. That’s all.”

“You can commit me to whatever you want, Iris. I’m your husband and those are my babies. I’m here for all four of you.”

Iris smiled despite herself. Well, she really couldn’t help it because Barry was acting like himself again. “I know, Bear. You’re an amazing husband. Never forget that.”

He knew there was a hidden meaning behind that as well, but he brushed it aside. He was never going to stop being an amazing husband. Never. “As long as I have you as my wife, I won’t have to. Let’s get ready. I’ll wear my glasses tonight.”

“Thanks. You know I love you in them.”

Barry and Iris showered and got dressed. He put on his usual attire of a white button down, black blazer and dark jeans and his J’s, complete with his glasses and Iris thought he looked good. She looked amazing in her red dress. She was truly glowing. They were in the minivan, heading towards wherever Barry was taking them for dinner when he dropped a surprise on her. “I have to stop past Wally and Linda’s real quick. He has something for me. Do you mind?”

“No, not at all. I can see the baby. I miss him.”

Barry made the drive to their house and helped Iris out of the van. The house seemed so dark and quiet, but Iris saw their car so she thought nothing of it. Wally opened the door and let them in. Iris walked further into the house and heard, “SURPRISE!” and almost jumped out of her skin. She saw all her family and friends. Then she noticed the decorations. She now knew what was going on. It was her baby shower and she was tickled. The babies seemed to kick with excitement as well. They fed off her emotions it seemed.
She looked at Barry with tears in her eyes. He gave her a hug and kissed her. “This is why you lied and was acting weird earlier.”

“Yes. I felt bad lying, but I had to. We wanted to surprise you.”

“I’m sorry, Bear. I thought the worst.”

“I’m sorry too. I knew you were upset with me. I hated that you were hurt. I had to take it until we got here. I almost told you, because I could barely handle the way you were acting.”

“I’m glad you didn’t. I love the surprise. And you owe me a lobster tail.”

“We’ll have it tomorrow. Now it’s time for you to enjoy our baby shower.” He kissed her again and grabbed her hand. Iris was met with many hugs and kisses. She found what was only her throne and sat in it.

“Please tell me you were surprised.” Linda says.

“I really was. I was about to kill Barry for lying to me earlier. I had no idea what was going on.”

“I’m so happy! I worked hard to keep this as a surprise.” She says and hands her the baby. Iris hugged and kissed him. She missed her nephew every day. Once she finally got through filling his face with kisses, she really looked around. So many wonderful pink and blue decorations and balloons. There were a lot of gifts for the babies. A lot. She was overwhelmed with how much stuff people got them and was overcome with emotion at people really wanting to help them. They appreciated it more than the people in the room would understand.

“I’m so glad you did. This is a wonderful surprise. Next to finding out it’s triplets, this is one of the best surprises ever.”

“Good. It felt good keeping something from you for a change.”

“Below the belt, Sister in law. Below the belt.” Iris says and they both laugh.

They all settled into eating and mingling while Iris got her Mom to be sash put on her. She loved it to death. She got so many rubs to her belly. Most people had never seen someone pregnant with triplets before and just wanted to get a feel for it and ask her questions. Iris loved sharing and telling people about the greatest experience in her life.

Then they started playing the baby shower games which were a lot of fun. Iris got a kick out the men trying to put a diaper on a doll with a blindfold on. The guessing the baby food, and the pin the diaper on the baby were fun too. Her favorite was the guessing her measurement one. Most folks were generous and only cut a small piece of ribbon off. Cisco cut the piece off perfectly and that was awesome to her. Iris noticed how chummy he and Laurel were and she just loved that she helped her friend find a great guy. Laurel was an awesome woman and friend and deserved greatness. Cisco was great too and was instantly their friend.

Lorraine came and was just a ball of sunshine along with Iris. She was just so happy for her. She told her she was going to have all the beautiful babies she was supposed to have when the time was right, and she was correct in that assumption.

Iris ate like she eating for five babies instead of three. She was eyeing the cake and wanted a huge piece of it. Then it came time for her and Barry to open gifts and that was an amazing experience. They got so many onesies, sleepers, bibs, bottles, blankets, and socks. Iris loved the matching pink dresses that they got a lot of. They got a lot of baby clothes. Enough for five babies. They got a lot
of diapers, baby wash, lotion, and shampoo as well.

Joe gave them their gift like the proud grandpa he was. He gave them a triplet stroller. It had a foldable base that you sat the three car seats on. Iris was in tears from that. Linda and Wally bought them three swings. Linda already told her that they were a godsend and she would love them. They also got them a triplet feeding table. Linda did her research and found that that was more practical than getting three separate high chairs. Lorraine and Big John got them three bassinets/play pens. Their neighbors got them a changing table and a diaper genie. Cisco, Laurel, and some of Barry’s coworkers got them lots of toys it seemed. They got other practical items like a bottle warmer, a baby monitor, and a breast pump.

Iris’ boss was there along with several of her coworkers. She was happy to see them there. She then got the gift of a lifetime that she never expected.

Her boss just handed her an envelope with a bow on it. “Well, since we are Picture News, we do advertisements during our news segments. And corporations pay for those spots. Very handsomely, mind you. Well, Pampers made a deal with us for some advertising space at a discount. I told them about one of our employees having triplets and they wanted to help. So, they’re giving you pampers and wipes for the first two years. They figured you’d go through a lot with three babies.”

Iris was floored and in tears. She really couldn’t believe that. Barry was floored as well. That would be a great help to them because they knew they would go through a lot with three babies in the first year. And they were getting them for two. Hopefully, they’d be potty trained soon after their second birthdays.

Iris was tickled when Lorraine made her and Barry hats from the paper plates and ribbons and gift wrap from the presents. Barry cut the cake and made sure to give Iris a huge piece before she lost it. She just sat and reflected and thought about how loved and blessed she and Barry were. People really helped them out a lot. All they really needed to buy was the cribs out of the big things. That was such a huge relief. They had mostly everything that they needed for their babies.

Once the baby shower was over, the men packed up the minivan, Wally’s, Joe’s, Cisco’s, and Big John’s cars and they all took the stuff to the new house. There was no point in taking it home since they’d be moving the next weekend. Luckily Barry already had a security system put in, even if it was a nice neighborhood. He was keeping his family safe at all costs.

He was proud when he got to show off the house to everyone else that hadn’t seen it besides Cisco and Joe. He was happy to show off the house he bought with his wife that they would raise their children in. He was like Iris and couldn’t wait to move in either. One more week, and they’d be sleeping there.

He opened the doors and everyone came in carrying things. Barry directed them to the babies’ rooms and where to put things. They of course kept the feeding table and the stroller and other things downstairs. Once they were finished, he showed them around.

“I can’t believe you already have a playground. The kids will love that when they get older. Junior will too.”

“I know. It was one of the many selling points. But really, this house is perfect. Cisco, you did a good job.” Barry says.

"Thanks. I tried my best."
“Are you turning that room in the basement into a man cave?” Wally asks.

“I really hadn’t thought about it.”

“I think you should.” Wally says, hoping he will so that they will have somewhere to chill.

“I have to check with Iris first.” Barry replies.

“Yeah, I forgot you’re whipped.” Wally taunts.

Barry scoffed. “Yeah, I am. So whipped that I get my favorite food fixed just for me every Sunday.”

Wally frowned and the other men laughed. “Iris fixes your favorite food just for you every Sunday?” Big John asks.

“Yes.” Barry answers a little proudly. He could feel Joe eyeing him.

“Lorraine cooks what I like, but not just for me. Only on special occasions.”

“He’s not telling you what he does to get that though. I want to know, but then again I don’t since it’s my sister.”

“It’s my daughter, and I don’t want to know.”

“You should have seen the way she fussed me out when I ate some of his food. As little as she is, I was afraid she was going to hurt me.”

Joe and Big John started laughing. It was like an older man laugh that none of the young guys knew about. Cisco, Wally, and Barry just looked at them and wondered what was so funny.

“I don’t think you should have eaten Barry’s food then, Wally.” Joe says and he and Big John laugh again.

“Ok, what’s so funny?” Wally asks.

“Yeah, I don’t get it either.” Cisco says.

Joe and Big John looked at each other. “It’s kind of like the big piece of chicken thing that happens with Black people.”

“I think I know what you’re talking about. I saw that on Everybody Loves Chris. The mother flipped out because one of the kids ate the father’s chicken.” Wally says.

They laughed again. “That’s exactly it.”

“Barry isn’t even Black though.”

“No, but his wife is.” Joe says. “Back me up, John.”

“He’s right. Black women are just built like that. And that’s not to talk badly about women of other races, but Black women are just really the queens of the world. I adore my wife. She’s like my grandmother, my mother, aunts and sisters. They just have this way of taking care of their loved ones. Barry isn’t a Black man, but he knows what I’m talking about since he’s married to a Black woman.” John says.
“Yeah, I do. Even when I first met her. Just the way she always made sure all of us ate no matter what. We were pretending to hate each other then, but she still did. None of my other girlfriends cared about me like she did. That’s one of the reasons I married her. She is a queen and I treat her like one.”

“So, I’m just doomed?” Wally asks in a joking tone and all the men laugh.

“Me too if I get serious with Laurel.” Cisco says.

“You are not doomed. Linda is a good wife to you.” Joe says to Wally.

“She is. I can’t imagine being married to another woman. But I don’t get special pans of my favorite food just for me.”

“Maybe you should have gotten yourself a Black wife.” Barry joked and all the men except Wally laughed.

“You know, It’s not too late for me to throw my big brother clause in. That’s still my little sister.”

“And she’s my wife. Husband trumps brother. Now can we change the subject?” Barry asks.

“Sure. Let’s talk about how we’ll get Iris to let you have that room as your man cave.” Wally says.

Barry gave him a sly smile. “It’s ok, we don’t have to talk about that. I’ve got this. Iris will agree to it. No problem.”

Wally looked at him strangely. “How are you so sure she’ll agree to it?”

“Because I know my wife. If she’s happy, I’m happy.”

“It has to do with that mac and cheese, doesn’t it?”

“Are you guys ready to go?” Barry asks after ignoring Wally.

Minutes later, Barry was locking up the house and getting in his van, still laughing at his brother in law.

Back at the house, Iris, Linda, and Lorraine just sat around talking while they waited for their husband’s to return.

“So, what are you going to do about work? When are you stopping?” Linda asks.

“Soon. I need to rest. My boss told me I could work from home. That’s the great thing about being a journalist.”

“What about after they’re born? Is Barry taking time off? That will be a lot to handle.” Lorraine states.

“We’ve talked about it. He gets 2 weeks of paternity leave. I’ll most likely have a C-section, so I’ll really need help until I’m up and able to move around. My doctor told me I might have to go on bed rest before I deliver. If I do, I don’t know what I’ll do because Barry needs to work, unless I’ll
be in the hospital and hopefully it won’t go that far, but my pregnancy is high risk. I just wonder how Barry will take care of me and three babies.”

The wheels started spinning in Lorraine’s mind. She hoped she wasn’t insulting Iris or overstepping her bounds. “Iris, I hope I’m not offending you or crossing any lines, but I can help you, if you’d like.”

Iris smiled and looked at her. “What do you mean?”

“Well, I come over the house and help you if you want. I know you need the help. If you go on bed rest, I can help you while Barry is at work, and when he goes back. I can help you with the babies.”

“I can’t ask you to do that.” Iris says, though she loves her for offering. Lorraine was such an amazing woman. It warmed her heart that she wanted to do that for her.

“You didn’t ask, I offered. I don’t work, and I really can do it. You’re my daughter, Iris. I would love to help you with those babies. I know your mother would if she were still alive. You know I’d never disrespect her or her memory, or Barry’s mother’s either. But if you’ll have me, I’ll be your surrogate Nana.”

Iris started to cry. Her mother wasn’t there to help, but she knew she would. And she needed the help. She already knew how amazing Lorraine was. She loved that woman dearly, and loved her more for offering her that. She had the best help she could possibly have for her babies. “I would like that very much. Thank you for offering. I really didn’t know what I was going to do.”

“You’re welcome. I couldn’t leave you out here struggling to take care of three babies. I already love them and can’t wait for them to be here. Just call me when you need me to start coming over the house. It will be our daily thing until you go back to work and they go to day care. I can come over in the morning when he goes to work. How’s that?”

“That’s perfect.”

Linda was really touched. Lorraine wasn’t Iris’ mother in law or her mother, but her offer was amazing. She was happy Iris had that kind of support. “I think this is so amazing. Such a selfless and wonderful thing to do for someone. I’m glad she has help because I was really worried about how she’d take care of three babies by herself.”

“It’s honestly my pleasure. It’s a little bit selfish because I love babies. Now you don’t have to worry about spending money you need on a Nanny or something.”

“Lorraine, we have to pay you something for your time.”

“Nonsense, Iris. Don’t insult me like that.” Lorraine says and smiles.

Iris knew she meant it because of the kind of woman she is. Despite her not ending up with Josh, she still treated Iris kindly and she loved that about her. She knew Barry would love it as well because she knew he worried about what they would do. She couldn’t wait to share that with him.

A few days later, Iris had a doctor’s appointment. She was scheduled for another ultrasound and couldn’t wait. Barry couldn’t wait either. He wanted to see how his babies grew for real.

One of them kicked when the warm gel was applied to her and the wand was moved around. Barry
and Iris were both in tears looking at their babies. The girls were literally hugging. Their boy was pretty much just hanging out at the bottom. He waved to them.

The doctor told them that they were growing fine and that the girls were a little over 2 pounds apiece, and the boy was over 3. He was still a little bigger than them, but it was no concern. They were all growing naturally and having him be a little bigger was normal. The girls weren’t conjoined in any way and showed no signs of twin to twin transfusion. It was music to their ears to hear that their babies were doing ok. That made them feel good. The doctor gave them a new due date after they found out it was triplets. That was fast approaching and scared them since triplets had a gestation period of 33 weeks. That was in three weeks and Iris and Barry were scared as hell. They didn’t tell the family to worry them. But she was 30 weeks and was expecting to have 10 more to go. Their doctor told them that 35 was really their goal because no woman ever goes 40 weeks with triplets. They really couldn’t imagine having three babies in three weeks, but they had to be realistic. The doctor then warned them that they might not be able to take the babies right home after they were born, and that they would probably have to stay in the hospital until their due date. Iris didn’t even want to think about that though she had to.

They really had to get ready. They took their ultrasound pictures and went to buy the cribs. Iris wanted the convertible ones that turned into beds, so that’s what they got. Barry took her back home to rest. After hearing that, she told her boss that she would be working from home from then on. Barry went back to work and came home that evening to Iris making memory boxes for the babies. She smiled when she saw him.

“Do you know that it just occurred to me that I took three pregnancy tests. It’s like I took one for each baby.”

Barry kissed her and sat down. “I never thought about it like that. Even if the girls are twins, you did. So what are you putting in there?”

“Just their ultrasound pictures and the pregnancy test right now. After they’re born, I’ll put their hospital bracelets, their first tee shirt, hat, socks, you know. Things like that.”

“I can’t wait to see them. Even though I know they need more time to grow. I can’t wait to see what they look like.”

“I wonder if the girls will have a birthmark or your freckles or something so that we can tell them apart.”

“That would be cool. If one had a freckle on her right cheek and the other had one on her left.”

One of the babies kicked and Iris giggled. “One of them just kicked. Maybe that’s a yes.”

Barry then laid his head in her lap and rubbed her belly. “How are Daddy’s girls? How’s my boy?”

One of them kicked again. He looked up at Iris and smiled. “I don’t care what they say, my babies can hear and understand me.”

He then started to sing to them. Iris loved it when he sang to the babies. She loved it when Barry sang period.

Birds flying high you know how I feel
Sun in the sky you know how I feel
Breeze driftin’ on by you know how I feel.

It's a new dawn
It's a new day
It's a new life for me yeah

It's a new dawn, it's a new day, it's a new life for me
ouh
And I'm feeling good

Fish in the sea you know how I feel
River running free you know how I feel
Blossom on the tree you know how I feel

It's a new dawn
It's a new day
It's a new life
For me
And I'm feeling good

Dragonfly out in the sun you know what I mean, don't you know
Butterflies all havin' fun you know what I mean
Sleep in peace when day is done that's what I mean
And this old world is a new world
And a bold world for me

Stars when you shine you know how I feel
Scent of the pine you know how I feel
Oh freedom is mine
And I know how I feel

It's a new dawn
It's a new day
It's a new life
For me

And I'm feeling good

“Our son is going to get upset you leave him out. I know he’ll feel like the third wheel since they’re twins.”

“We can have another boy right after.” Barry says. "And I'm not leaving him out. My girls are princesses though."

Iris looked down at him. “We can have another boy right after if you get pregnant with him.”

“Never mind.” Barry says and goes back to singing to the babies.

Saturday morning rolled around and it was moving day. Iris was excited. She wouldn’t be doing a thing, but she was still excited. Barry took her to the house early. She was glad that Wally, Joe and Barry had already painted the babies’ rooms and it was completely dried and aired out. She had her
snacks and her laptop. She was glad she had her rocking chair there already. She just sat and put her feet up on the ottoman and watched shows on Netflix. She fell asleep and was giddy when the moving truck pulled up. She stood in the window and watched Barry, Wally, and their police friends start unloading the truck. Seeing so many cops out of uniform was cute to her. Joe told them he was too old and they were on their own. She wished she had her bullhorn, but she did a good job supervising and telling them where everything went. With eight guys there, they got the truck unpacked and the house loaded up pretty quickly. They didn’t really have that much furniture. Just their kitchen table, their bedroom and living room set. They had to get a dining room set that was the same cherry wood as the floors. Barry actually picked it out. It was just sitting there unused amongst the many baby things.

Wally drove the truck back with Barry following. They were back in an hour. Iris was back sitting in her rocking chair with her feet up when they walked in and collapsed on the sofa.

“You guys did a good job.”

“Thank, babe.”

“Now before you get too comfortable, me and your unborn children want a Big Belly Burger.” Iris says and smiles.

“Coming right up.” Barry says and stands. “Do you want anything?”

“Sure. Get me whatever you have.” Wally replied.

Barry was out the door in seconds after kissing Iris.

Wally just looked at iris for a moment. He understood why Iris and Barry got along so well and had such a happy marriage. They never argued it seemed. He figured they got that out of their system when they pretended to hate each other. He really had to admit that he loved that they got along and were going to last. “Do you two ever not get along this well?”

Iris looked at him. “No, not really. The only time we were even close to not getting along was when Barry lied the day of the baby shower and I thought he was having an affair. Other than that, nope.”

Wally was incredulous. “You thought he was having an affair?”

“For a hot minute, yes I did. I’m pregnant and huge. We don’t have sex nearly as much as we used to. So yeah, I thought that he stepped out for a minute.”

“You though Barry was having an affair?”

“Yes, Wallace.”

“Really? Barry having an affair? Barry Allen cheating on you?”

“Why are you saying it like he can’t? What the hell?”

“Barry is not ever going to have an affair. I’d put money on that. No, I’ll bet my son on it.”

“How can you be so sure? Sometimes people do things they never thought they would. People make mistakes. Affairs happen.”

“Yeah, but Barry isn’t that kind of guy. He practically worships you. He knows how lucky he is
and he loves the hell out of you. Not only that, he knows I’ll kill him.”

“You are not killing my husband and the father of my children.”

“I will if he hurts you. And I say that with conviction because I really mean it, but I know I won’t have to. Honestly, I think you’d hurt him before he hurt you.” He said that just to see what she would say.

Iris’ eyes almost bugged out of her head. “I am not going to hurt Barry. I love him. Why do you think I married him and have parts of him growing in my body?”

“I know that. I was just messing with you. I know you love that huge dork. You light up like a Christmas tree when he comes around. And he’s so wide open and in love, I think a woman as fine as Halle Berry, or Salma Hayek could get naked in front of him and he’d walk past them.”

“You would too. If you cheat on Linda, I’m killing you with your own gun.” Iris says.

“I’m not cheating on Linda. I love my wife and I’m very happy. I can’t see myself betraying her like that. I’d ask for a divorce before I hurt her in that way.”

“I know you mean that. You’re an asshole, but you’re a good man.”

“Gee, thanks.”

“You know what I mean.”

“Yeah, I do.” They sat quietly for a moment. “Are you scared?”

Iris looked at him. “Yes. Because so much could still go wrong. But I’m not dwelling on that. I can’t. My babies will be fine.” She says and smiles. She felt a kick and thought one of her little angels was agreeing with her. “Come and feel. One of them just kicked.”

Wally got up and put his hand on her belly. He felt the kick that felt like it did when Junior kicked. He was happy his sister got to experience that. “Hey nieces and nephew. It’s your only Uncle Wally. You guys have a big cousin waiting to play with you.”

Iris and Wally both couldn’t wait for their kids to all be together. “I hope they’re close like we are.” She says.

Wally looked down at her. “They will be. They have no choice. The girls will probably naturally be close since they’re twins, and little man and Junior will be since they’re the boys and only a year apart. Look at us.”

“Yeah. I’m letting you know now that I’m dressing him and Junior alike.”

Wally sighed and sat down. “That doesn’t surprise me. Just as long as it isn’t anything cheesy. I will buy them matching clothes to make sure it isn’t.”

“That’s fine with me. Then Linda and I can just focus on buying the girls’ clothes.”

“Don’t remind me. She shopped and bought girl clothes like we have a daughter.”

“Hey. I’m having two. They need a lot of clothes. They’re my daughters. What did you expect?”

“Exactly this. They’ll have more clothes than you do. I can see them getting voted best dressed in school like you always did.”
“I love clothes. What can I say?”

“So, what are you and Barry naming these babies? Will he be Barry Jr.?”

“Not Barry Jr., but Bart. The girls will be Petunia and Begonia.” Iris says with a straight face and waits for his reaction.

Wally looked at Iris like she had truly lost it. “Hold up. You’re joking, right?”

“Nope. We thought it would be cute to name them the names he called me when we were pretending to hate each other.”

“Petunia and Begonia? I’m not even mad at Bart, because it’s kind of cute since his name will be Bartholomew like his father. But Petunia and Begonia? Really?”

“Yes, really. We think it’s cute. Guess what their nicknames will be.”

He again looked at her like she lost it. “I can’t even begin to guess.”

“Petty and Beggy. Isn’t that adorable?” Iris asks as she smiles widely.

“I have no comment.” Wally says and just stares at his sister with her huge and happy grin on her face. “No, Iris. You can’t do that to my nieces. Please don’t. I know they’ll be gorgeous, but they have to live with those names.”

Iris sighed. “Fine. I was joking anyway.” She says and laughs.

“Thank God. I was about to call Dad and Linda and have an intervention.”

“Do you really think I would do that to my children? Petunia and Begonia? I know Barry and I were just pretending, but I really hated those names. They’re awful!”

“Yes, they are.”

“Barry suggesting them to get back at me after I said to name them Becky and Patty. He asked if we should name the boy Josh. I asked for a divorce.” Iris says and laughs.

“You two are weirdos and perfect for each other.”

“Yes, we are.”

“So, I’m guessing Bart was a joke too?”

“Yes. We kinda named the baby we lost Bart.”

“Did that make it easier?”

“Yeah, it did.”

“So, I’m guessing the names are a surprise. Just like having triplets was.”

“Yes. You will all find out when they’re born.”

“I still can’t believe you’re having triplets, Iris. I have never in my life met anyone with triplets or known any.”

“Wanna hear something funny?” Iris asks as she smiles widely.
“Sure.”

“The first night Barry and I met, we talked to get to know each other just by asking dumb questions. I asked him if he knew any triplets.”

“Really?” He asks and chuckles.

“Yup.”

“That’s kind of crazy, but in a good way. Not only do you now know some, you made your own.”

“I know. I think I jinxed myself.” She says and they both laughed.

A week later, Barry and Iris celebrated their first Valentine’s Day as a married couple. Barry got Iris flowers, a teddy bear, a huge box of chocolates, and a pair of earrings. She got him a jersey that had Allen and 3 on it and he loved it. They had pretty much gotten the house completely unpacked and ready. All of the babies’ things were put away and their rooms were ready. Iris’ bag was packed and sitting in the living room just in case.

They had effectively christened their house and fooled around in every room, except for the babies’ rooms. They thought that would be disrespectful. It was hard to do, and they had fun figuring it out. Iris was now the size of a woman that was nine months pregnant and was getting uncomfortable, but she still moved around with Barry’s help. He really just had to help her out of bed and insisted on helping her up and down the stairs. He was too afraid she would fall.

They decided to go to Red Lobster because it was fitting. They weren’t getting it in like they used to, but Iris wanted some cheddar bake biscuits. It was fairly busy because it was a lover’s holiday. Iris put on a white dress and looked like a doll with her huge belly. She was truly glowing and loved being pregnant. When they saw the line waiting for tables, people insisted that she and Barry go first because she was pregnant. People asked when she was due and really thought it’d be any minute. When she told them it was triplets, she loved seeing the shocked looks on people’s faces. She just loved telling people she was having triplets and that it was identical twin girls and a boy. Barry got a kick out of Iris talking about it and joining in on the conversation. He loved how happy Iris was about the babies and how interested people were about their unborn babies.

Iris was again giddy when their waitress remembered them from the night they got engaged.

“I remember you two. I remember I was your waitress when you got engaged. I know that’s weird considering it was almost two years ago, but I have a photographic memory. I remember you being so happy and telling everyone that you just got engaged. I see things are going well.” Abby says.

“Yes! I remember you too. You were so nice to us. Yes, things are going well.” Iris says as she rubs her belly.

“Wow. Congratulations! When are you due?”

“That’s kind of complicated because it’s triplets.” Iris says.

Abby looks shocked. She looked at Barry and he smiled and shook his head. “Triplets?”

“Yup. We really did it up.”
“That is so amazing. I’ve never met anyone with triplets. Do you know what they are?”

“Two girls and a boy.” Barry says happily.

“Well, the triplets are getting a dessert on the house.”

Iris ate her meal and some of Barry’s and he seriously didn’t mind. He didn’t even mind when she didn’t share her chocolate wave with him. They retreated home where they got in bed and ate chocolates. Iris did share that time.

Barry was in the mood to give her the treat he usually gave her on Sunday. Iris watched him a little oddly as he got out of the bed and got on his knees on the side of the bed. She was wondering what the hell he was doing when he lightly grabbed her by her thighs and pulled her over to the side of the bed.

"Bear, what are you doing?"

"Pretending it's Sunday." He says before he opened her legs and put them over his shoulders and went to town.

The following Saturday, Barry woke up early because of errands he needed to run. He also needed a haircut and wanted to get it out of the way. Iris said she was too tired to budge and just stayed in bed. A few hours later, Iris was up sitting on the couch on her laptop when Barry came in.

“Hey babe.” Barry says.

“Hey, Bear.” Iris says and looks up briefly and smiles at him. She went back to her laptop until something spoke to her. She looked back up at Barry. He seemed to be standing there waiting for her reaction.

Barry got his haircut alright. It was totally different from the way he usually got his haircut. It was shaved on the sides, and it looked really, really good on him. He turned his head to the side and then to the other side and wiggled his eyebrows at her and smiled.

Iris was awestruck and dumbfounded.

Her husband looked damn good.

Then she took in the rest of his appearance. He had on a gray shirt that he looked really good in. She now thought that gray was his color and he needed to wear it always. She could see his white tee shirt peeking out from under the hem of the shirt and he had on black jeans and his J’s.

And he had on his glasses.

She continued to stare at him and licked her lips. Barry was waiting for her to say something. He figured she didn’t like his new haircut.

“You don’t like it, do you?” He asks and waits. He was really starting to feel bad. “Iris?”

Iris finally registered that he was talking to her. “Huh?”

“You don’t like my new haircut, do you? I put on my glasses thinking it would help you like it, and you don’t.” He says in a disappointed tone.
“You are so fucking rude, Bear. So rude.”

“Huh? I didn’t think you’d take me wanting to change things up as rude, Iris.”

“That’s not what I meant.”

“Then what do you mean?”

“I mean, I love your new haircut. I really do. You look so good.”

“Then why did you call me rude?”

“Because you look that good and I’m too pregnant to attack you like I want to.”

Barry grinned. “Really?”

“Yes, really. What brought this on?” Iris asks.

Barry shrugged that cute way that she loved. He smiled. “I don’t know. Just wanted to try something different.”

She licked her lips again and looked him up and down. “Come here.”

He walked over to her and she grabbed him by his hips. She quickly undid his pants. They were down around his ankles along with his underwear when she placed the first kiss to his tattoo before slowly pulling him into her mouth.

That following Monday, Iris used her pregnancy belly gift that Barry got her. The woman was actually extremely accommodating and came to the house. She understood that Iris was pregnant and couldn’t drive. Iris was giddy when she looked through the book for what she wanted. She couldn’t wait to surprise Barry with it. She decided on two girl bears hugging and a boy bear sitting under them waving. She took that from the last ultrasound they had and thought Barry would love it.

She revealed it to him when he got home from work. He was in tears. It was literally the cutest thing he had ever saw. The artist took pictures that she would have for Iris when she developed it, but Barry took pictures with his phone. He and Iris got the idea to use that as a before and the actual babies when they were born for the birth announcements.

Iris went to the doctor the next day and was told she did have to go on bed rest, but she could do it at home. She wasn’t so shocked because the doctor prepared them for it. She called Lorraine and told her and she promised her she would be there the next day.

Iris really wasn’t supposed to get out of bed unless she was going to the bathroom, and really light moving around the house, so having Lorraine coming to help her was a huge relief.

She got there early the next day before Barry even left. He was actually running late since he really didn’t have Iris out of the bed to push him. She just watched him attempt to get himself ready and tried not to laugh at him.

Lorraine fixed them breakfast and she also tried not to laugh at Barry.

“Does Iris usually help you in the morning?”
“Yes. She’s the reason I’m not late. She gives me the push I need.”

“I guess that’s my job now, right?” Lorraine asks and tries not to laugh again.

“What? No. That’s not your job. I’m happy you’re here to help her though. Just focus on her. I’ll be alright.”

“So, what are you going to do about dinner?” Lorraine asks.

“I have no idea. I’ll probably stop and get something on my way home.”

“Are you going to do that every night?”

“I haven’t thought about it that far.” Barry replies.

“You don’t know how to cook, do you?” She asks.

“Nope. Not good enough to satisfy Iris.”

“She has you spoiled.”

“You sound like her.”

“She does. But I know that’s because she loves and cares about you.”

“I know. Iris is the best thing to happen to me.” Barry says.

“I love that you feel that way.”

“I do. She really is. She’s having my children. She actually married me.”

“All of that was supposed to happen, Barry.”

He smiled at her. “I appreciate that because I know you wanted her with your son.”

“I did, because of how much I love Iris. I selfishly wanted her in my life. But she belongs with you. Josh is nothing but her high school boyfriend. You had girlfriends in high school, didn’t you?”

“One. I was a huge nerd.”

Lorraine laughed. “Does she matter now though?”

“No. We actually ran into her at the airport on our way to our honeymoon. It was just like seeing someone from my past.”

“That’s the same thing here. I’m just around. I’m Josh’s mother, but I’m more than that.”

“You’re an angel and a lifesaver.” Barry says and gives her a hug.

Lorraine and Iris seemed to bond more while she was at the house with her. It really was like having a surrogate mother. She wished that she could share being pregnant and becoming a mother with her mother, but she knew she was watching from above and keeping her babies safe. She loved having Lorraine around and didn’t feel like she was betraying or disrespecting her mother. She knew that she would want someone to do the same for her girls if she wasn’t around.
They just watched a lot of tv together. They actually played games and talked. The little arrangement they had was going really well. Iris appreciated her cooking their meals for them more than she could tell her. Lorraine just felt like it was something she should do for people she cared about. After getting to know Barry, she felt like he was like a son to her too. They really had a ball the day Linda called frantic because she couldn’t take Junior to day care and had nowhere else to take him.

He added a nice dynamic to their routine. They both couldn’t wait for the babies to be born because they were truly the most precious things in the world. Little Wally just lit up the house with light. Iris started putting in her mind about wanting him over the house all the time. She wouldn’t commit to it until she knew how it was with her three infants. But her nephew really was easy to take care of and not at all demanding. As long as he was clean and dry, fed, and either paid attention to or had a toy to play with, he was good.

Barry came home one evening to Iris and Lorraine looking at live birth videos. That kind of blew Barry’s mind.

“Babe, we saw a woman deliver triplets naturally. Isn’t that amazing?”

“Uh…I guess.” He says and shrugs.

Iris and Lorraine just looked at each other. “Men.” Iris says and they started laughing.

They went along with that arrangement for weeks. Lorraine even went to her doctor’s appointments so that she could be with her after while Barry when back to work. She had to take her one week when Barry couldn’t get away from a crime scene.

Iris’ levels were a bit abnormal and she was hit with the bomb of being told she had to go on bed rest in the hospital until she delivered. Her amniotic fluid was low and since it was triplets, they thought it would be better to monitor it in the hospital. The could replenish it with I.V. fluids and give her steroids to help the babies’ lungs to mature. She was 34 weeks and that was a week after the usual gestation for triplets, though she was told that getting to 35 was better for the babies. They were fully developed and now all over 4 pounds, the boy was still bigger than them. He was actually close to 5 pounds. All Iris could think was that she had 13 pounds of baby inside her. Most women gave birth to full term babies that were usually between 7 and 9. She just felt huge. But it was for her babies.

She dreaded the idea of having to be in the hospital for at least a week, but she knew she had to do it for the babies. She had to keep them safe. She tried to keep it together as best she could when she called Barry and told him.

“Bear, I’m going on bed rest in the hospital. They said my fluid was a little low and I needed to stay here.”

Barry almost dropped the test tube he was holding. “What?”

“Yes. So, I’m here until they’re born. At least that gives you and Lorraine a break.”

“I don’t need a break. I like taking care of you. I can’t imagine us just being apart like this. How am I supposed to sleep at night without you in the bed next to me?”

“I know you’ll hate this idea, but you can stay here. Fathers of the babies can stay even after you give birth. But that’s at least a week. You will not want to stay here that long. I don’t even want to, but I have no choice.”
“Then I have no choice either.” Barry says.

Barry finished up his day at the lab and walked down the stairs to leave. He ran into Wally and Joe talking. He walked up to them. “Hey, guys.”

“Hey.” They both said.

“Well, I have news. You know Iris had a doctor’s appointment today. They told her that her fluid was low and she had to go into the hospital.”

“Is she ok?” Joe asks.

“Yes. She’s ok. They say it’s safer for the babies and her. I just didn’t think it would happen this soon, you know? Even if we are having three. Now, I have to live out of a hospital.”

“You’re staying there with her?” Wally asks.

“Yes. I can’t leave her alone. Lorraine is with her now. I’ll just be there in the evenings and at night. It sucks, but we have to do it.”

“You want me to come with you?” Joe asks.

“No. Not today. We should get settled first. I’m gonna go pack and head over there. Later.” Barry says and walks off.

Once he was in the van, he just sat there for a minute. He said a prayer to keep his wife and children safe before he pulled off. He went home and packed his bag and got Iris’. He drove to the hospital and stopped at the gift shop and got her flowers before he went to her room. He saw her in the bed hooked up to monitors and it reminded him of the time she lost the baby. He quickly pushed that away and walked in. He was happy to see that she was in good spirits and that she was laughing with Lorraine. He walked in, dropped their bags, put the vase of flowers down and kissed her and kissed her belly. He just smiled at Lorraine.

“Well, I’m gonna go. I’ll be here tomorrow.” She says and stands. She gave Iris and Barry both hugs and left them alone.

Iris did her best to move over in the bed and he sat down. “So, how are you?”

“I hate hospitals.” Iris replies.

“I know you do, but how do you feel?”

“I’m good, so far. I’ve only been here a few hours. I’ll probably lose my mind in a few days.”

“Don’t say that.”

“Ok. Sorry, babe. I’ve got to stay positive to get through this. This is for them.”

“If I could do this for you, I would.” Barry says sincerely.

“I know you would. One of the many reasons I love you. Having your babies is worth going through anything for.”
Barry got teary eyed and rubbed her belly. He leaned forward and pressed his forehead to hers and kissed her deeply. “No other woman could have my babies. I couldn’t imagine looking at my children and not see you.” He says after he breaks the kiss. He kicked off his shoes and slid in the bed next to her.

“That was really good, Bear. You should’ve put that in your vows.” Iris says.

“I should have. But you managed to get babies in yours.”

“I did. We’re getting babies soon. We’re almost there. Then we’ll finally see them.”

“I can’t wait. I picture them in my mind all the time.”

Iris felt kicking. “They know we’re talking about them.” She says as she puts his hand on her belly.

“That’s both of the girls.”

Iris giggled. “How can you tell?”

“They’re Daddy’s girls.”

“They already have you wrapped around their finger.” Iris states surely.

“Of course they do. Their mother did the second I laid eyes on her. They’re just mini versions of her.”

Iris' nurse knocked and came in. "Hi, I'm Darlene. I'll be your nurse today."

"Hi. I'm Iris. This is my husband Barry.”

Barry smiled. "Nice to meet you Darlene."

"Likewise." She says and checks Iris’ vitals and fluids. She smiled when she saw Barry rub Iris' belly. "How long have you been married?"

Iris perked up. "Almost 8 months, but we've been together over 5 years. These were our honeymoon babies." She says and they all laughed.

Being in the hospital constantly took some getting used to. The good thing was Lorraine came by every day and brought her food so that she wouldn’t be stuck with disgusting hospital food. And having Barry there helped a lot too. They had a chair there that flipped out to a full size bed. It was weird with them not sleeping beside each other, but being in the same room was ok. Barry would get in her hospital bed with her when he could, but it was just too small for both of them and he didn’t want to accidentally poke her in the stomach or something.

Lorraine did motherly things like wash her hair. She really was a godsend and didn’t know what she would do without her. She had her clothes there so she wouldn’t just be sitting in a hospital gown all day. She wanted it to feel as less like being in the hospital as possible. She and Lorraine still played games, and Iris sat on her laptop and watched tv. They would let her get out of bed and be pushed around in a wheelchair to get out of the room. Iris made it through that first week like a champ.

She received visits from Joe, Wally, and Linda. Iris hated the fact that they couldn’t bring the baby.
She missed him terribly and just wanted to kiss his cheeks. But she was there to get her babies to come into the world safely. She’d see Little Wally when she came home with her bundles of joy.

They did scans on her and her fluid returned to normal, but she was now 35 weeks and it really was best if she stayed in the hospital. She was getting cabin fever, but she knew she had to be strong and deal with it.

Barry came to the hospital like he normally would after work. He did the absolutely cute thing of painting her toenails. He felt like that was a nice thing he could do to make her feel better. He knew she was uncomfortable; he could see it in her eyes. Her stomach was literally huge. As tiny as Iris was, her huge baby belly seemed like it was too much for her body.

The next day, Lorraine had her own doctor’s appointment and wouldn’t be at the hospital until later. It seemed like that was the opportunity for Iris to let that wall down. Her nurse, who was seriously the sweetest and kindest woman she ever met, Darlene was a godsend just like Lorraine was. Iris clicked with her the first time she met her. She came into the room all sunshine and roses and reminded Iris of herself before she became trapped.

Darlene seriously got a kick out of the fact that Iris was having triplets because she’s the first mother she ever had as a patient that was having three. She adored Iris and Lorraine both. She would sit and talk with them when she came in to check on her. She was used to seeing Lorraine there and naturally thought that Lorraine was Iris’ mother. When they told her they weren’t really mother and daughter, but shared a bond like they were, Darlene was really touched by that. It seemed to make her drawn to Iris. She was really her favorite patient because she never complained, whined, was rude, nothing. She knew how it was to deal with hormonal pregnant women and tried to not let it get to her, but sometimes it was hard considering she was a glass half full kind of person and was an absolute joy to be around.

So when she came in to check up on Iris and found her alone, she was concerned. Iris wasn’t as giddy and chipper as she usually was and that tugged at Darlene’s heart strings. She hated to see her favorite patient be upset because Iris was such a light. She made her job easier.

“Good morning, Iris. How are you?” Darlene asks.

Iris put on a fake smile. “I’m fine.” She replies. She wanted it to sound more convincing than it actually did.

Darlene stopped and looked at her. “Are you sure?”

“Yes.” Iris lies. She knew she had to. She couldn’t complain. She had no right to.

“Iris, It’s ok if you aren’t completely ok.” Darlene says sincerely.

Iris sighed and gave her a genuine smile. She adored Darlene so much. She was such a beautiful woman and person and wished she had in her life for more than just being her nurse. “No, it’s not.”

Darlene walked over to her. “Yes, it is. It’s ok if you feel anxious, depressed, sad, angry, whatever. You’re entitled to have those feelings.”

“I really can’t, Darlene. I feel like I’ll jinx things if I complain. I have to suffer in silence. My babies need me.”

“They also need you in good spirits. You don’t want them to come into the world stressed out. I think it will be better if you let it out. I’ll listen and not say a word. Unless you want me to.” Darlene says.
“I can’t. I feel like if I talk about how miserable I am, it might hurt the babies. And I can’t think that way. I have to keep my babies safe.”

“You have every right to be miserable Iris. You’re going through a challenging time. I know it must be hard to have to stay here and not sleep in your own bed. You can’t go outside or have a drink or anything. So, it’s fine you feel that way. You won’t jinx anything. You’re almost 36 weeks and that’s very good for triplets. So I’m here if you want to let it out.”

Iris looked at Darlene again and smiled. She was so nice and Iris knew she meant what she said. She exhaled and wiped her tears. “I’m just so tired of being trapped in here. I hate hospitals. I’m so uncomfortable even if I love my babies more than anything and I would give up my life right now to keep them safe. But I’m exhausted and tired of this. I miss my family. I miss my husband so much. I miss having sex, being in my own house with him. I know I can take whatever gets thrown at me, but I’m just tired. But I have to do this for them. I have to.” She says and honestly feels much better.

Darlene walked over to her and gave her a hug. “See? That wasn’t so bad, was it?”

“No, not at all. It felt good.”

“Because you needed it. Nobody can blame you for being tired. You’re the one dealing with it. It’s ok to be human for a change. You have that right. And I’m not just yanking your chain, but you’re doing great. The longer they stay inside you, the better. Some people have their triplets way earlier than this and you’ve come a long way. I know this is taking a toll on your body and mind, and it’s ok to voice that.”

“Thank you so much, Darlene. I needed that. I think I just needed to have this moment. You are an angel.”

Darlene just smiled at her. “I’m glad I could help.”

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Iris actually made it to 37 weeks. She was spent and seriously didn’t know how she made it. Dr’s McGhee and Snow came in one day. They both had stern looks on their faces. Iris looked over at Lorraine. She hoped nothing was wrong.

“How are you feeling, Iris?” Dr. McGhee asks.

“Tired, but fine.”

“Well, we came to give you some news. It’s time. There just isn’t any more room for the babies to grow. I feel like you’ll be in danger and so will the babies if you stay pregnant any longer.” Dr. Snow says.

“What?” Iris asks nervously.

“We need to deliver the babies today. Now, actually.”

“What?” Iris asks again.

“You’re becoming a mother today. You made it to 37 weeks. That’s awesome for triplets. Unheard of really. But you can’t go any longer. Your uterus will explode.” Dr. Snow says.
Iris’ eyes got wide. Reality was settling in. She was about to have her babies. “Ok.”

“So, we need to get in scrubs for the OR. You need to have an epidural put in for it. I’ll call an anesthesia now for that. I’d say, you’ll be a mother in a little over an hour.”

“An hour?!?”

“Yes.”

“I need to have my husband here. I can’t have these babies without him.” Iris says frantically as she reaches for her phone.

“Well, get him here. He’ll have to get into scrubs too. We’ll take you in first and come and get him.” Dr. McGhee says and she and Dr. Snow are off.

Iris was busy calling Barry. He picked up right at the second ring. “Hello?”

“Bear. You need to get over here now.”

“Is something wrong?”

“They’re about to deliver the babies. You need to get here now.”

Barry looked around his lab. He had to leave. “Ok. I’ll be there.” He says and hangs up. He grabbed what he needed and ran down the stairs. He was glad he found Joe at his desk. “Joe, I have to leave. Iris is about to have the babies.”

Joe had to look at Barry for a moment before he understood him. He stood up. “I’ll drive you with the siren on.”

“Ok, great. Because she told me to get over there now.” Barry says and walks toward the entrance.

“Barry. You need to let Captain Singh know first.”

Barry stopped dead in his tracks. “Right.” He made a bee line for his office and poked his head in. “Captain. I have to leave. My wife is about to have the babies.”

“Congratulations, Allen. You won’t be back for two weeks, right?”

“Yes. Thanks.” Barry says and then he’s off. He and Joe got in his car and they were off. Joe drove like a cop responding to a call. They got there in 15 minutes. Barry practically left Joe and ran to Iris’ room. She was still in the bed, talking to Lorraine when he got there. “Hey, babe. I got here as fast as I could.” He gave her a kiss and tried to catch his breath. He sat down on the bed when Joe walked in.

“Thank for leaving me.” Joe says. He spoke to Lorraine and went over and kissed Iris on her forehead.

“Sorry. I was just trying to make sure I didn’t miss this.”

“Did you two fly over here?” Iris asks.

“No, but I put my siren on and ran through many red lights. That’s the perks of being a cop.”

Iris giggled. “Did you guys see Wally?”
“No. I’ll call him.” Joe replies.

“Call Linda too. I know they can’t come right over, but maybe later? They can’t bring the baby here though.”

“I’ll stay and keep an eye on him in the lobby or something so that they can visit you if you’d like.” Lorraine offers. “I’d just really like to see the babies if I can.”

“That would be great, Lorraine. I know they would appreciate that.” Iris says.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door, and Darlene entered. “I’m sorry to interrupt, but I have to prep you for your Cesarean and anesthesia. It won’t take long.”

Lorraine and Joe left the room. Barry gave her another kiss and stood to leave. “I’ll be right outside.”

“Oh, no you can stay. I know she needs you.” Darlene says and smiles.

Barry sat in the adjoining chair and let Darlene do what she needed to do. She left them alone and Barry sat on the bed with her again. “Are you ok?”

“Yes. But I’m scared, Bear.”

He grabbed her hand. “I am too. But it’s the good kind of scared. We’re about to become parents.”

Darlene was back with a pair of scrubs for Barry and he put the on right before anesthesia came in to put her epidural in. He helped her sit on the side of the bed as they put it in. They were done in about 20 minutes and Darlene had somebody to help them move Iris to the OR. Barry was aimed with his camera as they made that walk. He gave Joe and Lorraine a thumbs up as they made their way there.

She saw Dr’s McGhee and Snow scrubbing in and extra nurses in the room. They already told her that each baby got their own nurse. Iris was numbed up and ready for her babies to be born. She started to get nervous when they started putting all the drapes in front of her. She saw everyone with masks and scrubs on. Barry looked like them. She couldn’t see his whole face, but she could tell from his eyes that he was happy. He sat at her head and grabbed her hand. Darlene took the camera from Barry and started taking pictures.

Iris seriously felt nothing but what felt like tugging on her. It didn’t hurt at all, but it felt surreal. What seemed like hours passed by and she heard a baby cry.

“Boy’s out.” Dr. McGhee says.

Iris heard more crying and she was now crying too. She and Barry were both goners when they held him up so they could see him.

He was literally the spitting image of Barry and that thrilled them both.

He was still crying and was handed off. Then a few minutes later, they heard more crying. “First girl’s out.” Dr. Snow said and they did the same as they did with her brother.

She was gorgeous. The prettiest baby girl either of them had ever seen.

Iris felt like she was about to lose it. She already had two babies, and they were beautiful babies. Barry had tears in his eyes too. He could barely contain himself.
Another few minutes passed by and they heard a strong set of lungs wailing. “Second girl is out.” Dr. McGhee says.

The same process was repeated. This baby girl had a pair of lungs on her loud enough to wake the dead. She too was gorgeous and looked just like her sister.

Barry and Iris were puddles of emotions at seeing their triplets come into the world.

“That’s it for babies.” Dr. Snow says.

Barry almost lost his shit when they handed his wrapped up son to him. His little twin. He looked into his face and saw his eyes and did lose it. He put him close to Iris so that she could see him and that was truly it for them. They wanted their girls too, but they settled for just holding their first born son.

“He looks just like you.” Iris says.

“Yeah, he does.” Barry replies proudly.

They finished what they had to do, and put three hospital bands on Iris and Barry’s wrists. They showed them the girls wrapped up and in an incubator together and took the babies to the nursery. Iris was wheeled to recovery. Barry went out into the hallway, so happy he thought he would float away. Joe pulled him into a bear hug.

“Congratulations, son.”

“Thanks, Dad.”

Lorraine gave him a hug too. “How Is Iris?”

“They took her to recovery. The babies are in the nursery. I’m going to check on all four of them.”

“Who do they look like?” Joe asks.

Barry grinned. “The boy looks like me, the girls look like Iris. They are gorgeous. They look exactly alike.”

“That’s great. I can’t wait to see them.”

Barry left Joe and Lorraine and made his way to Iris. They let them know they could see the babies after they got weighed and cleaned up and had their shots which would take about an hour. Long enough for Iris to be monitored before being moved back to her room.

An hour later, that’s what happened. Iris was on top of the world and in no pain. She was happy she wasn’t pregnant anymore and her babies were here. She actually got to hear them cry and see their faces. Barry was as happy as she was. He bathed her face in kisses.

“We actually had three babies, Bear.”

“I know. I still can’t believe it.”

“I want to see them.” Iris says happily.

“Me too. They’re the most beautiful babies I’ve ever laid eyes on.”

About 20 minutes later, they wheeled the boy in. They wanted to know where their girls were.
Then the nurse hit them with news that they didn’t expect to hear.

“We don’t want to worry you, but Baby Girl A was having a little trouble breathing so we had to give her oxygen. We put her with B, and she started doing a lot better.”

Iris looked at Barry. “Is she going to be ok?” She asks nervously, though she wasn’t accepting anything other than yes.

“Yes. She just needed a little help. That happens a lot with multiples and with C-section babies. They don’t come through the birth canal, and it sometimes takes a little time to get all that fluid out of their lungs. They are both breathing on their own, so don’t worry. We just had to give her a little more suction and oxygen.” She says as she takes the baby from the bassinet and hands him to Iris.

She broke down and cried when he was in her arms. She kissed his face more times than she could count. She was holding her baby. She and Barry passed him between each other, both crying like crazy.

They wheeled the girls in a little later and it was truly a chore with managing holding all of them. Barry put the boy back, and gave Iris one of the girls. He picked up the other one and held her. They both were instantly in love.

Barry switched babies with her and it seriously blew their minds just how identical they were. They didn’t know who they were holding and they didn’t care. Barry gave Iris the other girl and she was again about to lose it holding both of her girls while he held their boy. They think they stayed like that for hours, and it really was that long. They were lost in bonding with their babies and forgot about the rest of the world. They had nurses in and out of their room, and they fed them.

They finally faced reality when they got a knock on the door. It was Lorraine and Joe, whom both fell apart at seeing those gorgeous babies. Joe got a good look at his granddaughters and thought they looked just like Iris did. “They look just like you when you were first born.”

“Thanks, Dad. I think they’re prettier.” Iris says happily.

“They are the most gorgeous baby girls I have ever seen in my life.” Lorraine says.

“Would you like to hold one?”

“Absolutely.”

Lorraine fell apart again with the baby in her arms. Joe held his grandson and found it funny how he looked just like Barry. “He looks just like you, Barry.”

“Thanks. I know.”

Joe and Lorraine passed the babies around until they needed to be fed and changed again. They finally figured out that Baby Girl A had on a pink hat, and the other girl had on a striped hat. That would make it easier for them to tell them apart right away. They knew whose name was what.

Wally and Linda got there shortly after, but they didn’t have Wally Junior with them. They dropped him off to Linda’s brother so that they could meet the babies. They had a ton of balloons. Linda fell apart like everybody else did at seeing them. Wally unsuccessfully tried to keep his cool.

“They are absolutely gorgeous, you guys.” Linda says happily as she holds one of the girls.

Wally held the boy and he had the same reaction Joe did. “He looks just like you, Barry. Wow.”
They passed the babies around too and Joe came back. Lorraine left them to bond as a family. She got her wish, she just got to hold them and would be back the next day. She could wait to find out their names.

“So, what are their names?” Linda asks, never taking her eyes off the babies.

Iris grinned when she looked at Barry. “Well…

“Ok, Barry. We really need to come up with names for our children.”


“I actually kind of like that, but let’s put more out there.” Iris says.

“Lily and Ivy.” Barry suggests.

“Nope.” Iris says.

“How about something traditional like Elizabeth and Charlotte?”

“I am not naming one of my babies Elizabeth.”

"Jennifer and Jessica. We can call them Jen and Jess."

Iris grinned. “Beyonce and Blue Ivy.”

Barry looked at her strangely. “Now I want a divorce.” He says.

“No, you don’t.” Iris says and thinks. This was so hard. “Adriana and Ariana. No, scratch that. It doesn’t go with Allen.”

“Destiny and Serenity.” Barry says.

“I don’t like Serenity.” She replies.

“Diamond and Pearl.” Barry jokes. This was harder than it had to be.

Iris looked at him like he lost it again. “I’m going back to my divorce stance.” Iris says. “You’re just trying to name our children anything.”

“Do I have to remind you that you took vows?”

“I’m about to forget all about those vows.”

Barry stared at her for a moment. He took her legs off him and stood up. He walked to the tv and put their wedding dvd in and pressed play. “Pay attention.”

“What are you doing?”

“Reminding you of your wedding vows.”

They both sat there and watched their wedding which was truly beautiful. They got to the vows part, and Iris felt like she had been hit. She figured out their babies’ names.

“I’ve got it.” Iris says.
“Got what?”

“Our kids’ names. I’ve got it.” Iris says happily. “It’s cheesy and I love it because we are a cheesy couple.”

“You’re right about that. We got engaged in Build A Bear.”

“That was the cheesiest thing ever, and I love it.”

“So, what did you come up with? It seemed to hit you out of left field.”

Iris rewound their wedding video and got to her vows again. She played the line, “I knew I had met the man I was supposed to marry and have babies with. I met the man that looked at me like I placed each star in the sky and it almost killed me that I was going to have to give you up.”

She just looked at Barry. “What? I love your vows Iris, but I don’t get it.”

She played it again, and it finally clicked for Barry…

…”this is Star and you’re holding Skye.” Iris says.

“What?” Linda asks.

“Their names are Star and Skye.” Iris says again.

“Really?” Wally asks.

“Yes, really. It came from our wedding vows.”

“Oh, my God that is so cute!” Linda exclaims.

Joe thought it was cute too. “Only you two can get away with that.” He says.

“How is that from your wedding vows?” Wally asks.

“Because I said, ‘I met the man that looked at me like I placed each star in the sky’.”

Wally finally got on board. He liked it and agreed with Joe. “Yeah, only you two can get away with that.”

“I love it!” Linda says. “Star Allen and Skye Allen. What are their middle names?”

“Well, it’s Star Kristina and Skye Nora.”

Joe and Wally were really touched by that. “I love it.” Joe says.

“So, what’s the boy’s name? Don’t tell me it’s Moon or Sun or something.” Wally jokes.

“No, it’s not. His name is Jace.” Iris says.

“Jace? What is that from?” Linda asks.

Iris looked at Barry and smiled. “Well, we took the ‘J’ from your name Dad. And the ‘ace’ from Wally’s name and combined it. His name is Jace Henry.”

Wally and Joe looked at each other and were deeply touched. “You guys really named your son after us?” Wally asks.
“Yes. We love you guys. And I had to put my Dad in the mix since he’s not really here, and we named the girls after our moms.” Barry says.

“I’m flattered.” Joe says. “Both of my grandsons are named after me.”

“I never expected to have my nephew named after me. I don’t know what to say.”

“We’re glad that you guys like it.” Barry says.

“I’m jealous. I want a baby named after me too.” Linda jokes. “It’s awesome that he’s named after you two and looks just like Barry.”

“He does look just like Barry. He even has green eyes.” Joe says.

“That’s why he’s my little Bear cub. I’ve already decided that ‘Cub’ is his nickname.” Iris says happily.

“Yup. Only the cheesiest couple in the world can get away with naming their kids Star, Skye and Cub.” Wally says and they all laugh.

Chapter End Notes

Ok, first, I'd like to apologize to the people I offended with the author's note on my last chapter. I know most of you have left, but I still need to apologize for that.

Ok, so I know the names are cheesy and I don't care. Barry and Iris are a cheesy couple and I've done it before. There was no way I was naming those babies Dawn and Don. No way. I did however, stick to comic canon with the twins, and with Jace. There is a Jace Allen that's a speedster, even if the reason I explained it in the story is different.

And just for the sake of things, I know that triplet pregnancies and births aren't usually this cut and dry with the way the risks were explained. But I just couldn't hurt Barry and Iris anymore and I certainly wasn't going to hurt those precious babies. I like to stick to realism, but I had to take certain liberties with making sure they had happy, healthy, and beautiful babies. I'm not apologizing for that, just explaining.

I think this is the last chapter. There's more I could do, but I just don't think that many people care anymore, and my time is valuable. I get it, even if I didn't mean to turn people away. No harm, no foul.

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