# The Happiest Place on Earth (Trademarked)

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## Summary

It's the grand opening of Flashland, Central City's latest and greatest tribute to its resident hero, and Hartley's scored an invite that he's using for some reason.

## Notes

Another late fill for [13 Nights of Hartmon](http://archiveofourown.org/works/8406994), this time for "amusement parks." IDC what Disney says, this is the theme park I want to go to.

Hartley held the Grand Opening invitation in his hand and squinted up at the skyline. So many people were headed inside, there was no way anyone would miss him if he just turned around and went home right now.

"Hartley, man, glad you could make it!" Barry said, looping his arm around Hartley's shoulders before he had a chance to turn tail and run. "Are you ready to check out the Happiest Place on Earth?"

"I think that name's already taken," Hartley mumbled as Barry laughed and gently shoved him through the gates. Flashland, Central City's newest and only amusement park, was officially opening today and just for the day the place was invite only. Hartley recognized children of his parents' associates, officers from CCPD, and every media outlet Central City had to offer. Truthfully, Hartley...
didn't fully understand how he'd scored an invite; sure, his parents were the cream of Central City society and that might explain it, but while he was on okay terms with them now, he didn't really run with their circles anymore. And while the Pied Piper was a known Flash associate, Hartley Rathaway wasn't.

Hartley went to ask Barry how his name got on the list, but Barry was already gone. Damn speedsters. And damn Hartley for coming alone. What the hell was he meant to do in an amusement park alone? Take selfies by himself on the carousel and label them Hartley Rathaway: Saddest Man Alive? The invitation had been a plus-one, but Hartley didn't have a plus-one he wanted to take along. That was the inconvenient thing about developing a crush on someone unavailable. Unrequited crush was truly Schrödinger's relationship status.

Inside was a barrage of color and sound, so much so that Hartley had to cover his ears with his hands and run inside a gift shop for some blessed quiet. His dampeners didn't act up in the day-to-day, but it seemed like Flashland’s sensory overload was about their limit. Well. He'd tried his best, but sometimes a failed experiment couldn't be salvaged and it was best to move on. Hartley would buy something Flash-related that he could pull down over his ears before leaving, just to prove he could be a team player as long as it was in a very small, specific way completely within his control.

"Hartley, hey," a familiar voice said and Hartley felt an anticipatory shiver down his spine just at the sound of it. This simultaneously showed how screwed Hartley was and how not screwed Hartley was. See? Schrödinger at work.

Hartley turned around. Cisco was standing at a pretty impressive Flash-themed candy display, a red licorice whip dangling from his mouth. It was hard not to stare, but Hartley managed it.

"Cisco," Hartley said evenly. It was a little bit funny that Hartley had gotten so much practice not being happy to see Cisco back when they hated each other that he could still slip into neutrality now. Inside, though, the ringing in his ears had been replaced by a swooping in his stomach. "I see you're already chasing a sugar high."

"My priorities are the best." Cisco grinned and offered Hartley some licorice, which Hartley reached out and took even though he didn't even like the flavor of artificial cherry. But, well, their fingers brushed when he did so, and Hartley was completely and entirely pathetic. "So what are you doing in here?" Cisco asked. "I wouldn't have taken you for someone who stockpiles Flash merch and candy."

Hartley put on a bright red trucker hat with a yellow lightning bolt across the front, twisting the brim to the side like the worst frat bros he knew in college. "You don't think this is me?"

"Oh, very nice," Cisco said and shot Hartley another smile. "I take it back. Clearly you're a huge Flash groupie."

"Thank you for recognizing my life's calling," said Hartley solemnly. He sighed and carefully placed the hat back on the shelf. "But really, if you must know, I made a mistake in coming here. I thought this might be... fun, but unfortunately I overestimated my own technical abilities." Hartley tapped one ear. "I've been modifying the hearing aids you made for me down in the Pipeline. They're very good, but —"

"Are you praising my work?" Cisco interrupted.

Hartley wanted to tell him he'd happily to praise him all night, but settled for, "Look, I know I was a terrible team lead, but you know I think your work is solid."
"It's still nice to hear." Cisco tucked his hair behind his ears, and looked down sort of shyly. Damn it. This bordered on torture worse than Rick Astley on loop.

"Well, I mean it," Hartley said. "But no matter how good your work, and no matter how much I've tweaked them, I just didn't count on Flashland being as overwhelming as it is. I hid in here to escape, but I really don't know how I'm meant to stay, so I'm heading back home."

Cisco grabbed Hartley's wrist; Hartley glanced down. "No, don't do that! At least, don't do that without letting me try to help." He led Hartley through to the back of the store and to a door marked Private. Hartley raised his eyebrows. "Have Flash, will travel," Cisco said importantly, and opened the door.

Inside was kind of a mobile Cortex, monitors and a workstation and a stand for Barry's costume. It made sense, once Hartley gave it some thought; if Barry was going to make frequent appearances at his own theme park, he should also have all the comforts of home close by, including a place for his team. Cisco's workstation was shrunk down, but still impressive. He had Hartley hand over his hearing aids and switched on some music to counter Hartley's tinnitus, though thankfully not anything that would earworm him for the better part of a year. It might have been Rihanna, though Hartley wasn't totally sure. Pop music wasn't his area of expertise, but whatever it was wasn't unpleasant.

"I think we can add a setting to ramp up or ramp down the aids' sensitivity, depending on context and the average decibels of the surrounding sound. Like, just because your hearing aids aren't used to muffling things outside the typical Hertz ranges doesn't mean —"

"— They can't be taught." Hartley nodded. "Of course. I might have worked that out myself, if I'd known you had a hidden lab here and I had a minute to think straight."

Cisco murmured something that sounded like, "Don't ever want you doing that," but he was bent over working on Hartley's hearing aids and if there was anyone whose ears were bound to play tricks on him, it was Hartley. About ten minutes later, Cisco sat up again and said, "Enjoy the world's smallest, most tricked-out set of noise-cancelling headphones. Dre ought to put me on the payroll."

"Thanks," Hartley said and put them back in. "Really. I don't know why you let me waste your time like this."

"You're not wasting anything. We're friends," Cisco said. Friends. Right. Yes. That was good and, frankly, more than Hartley deserved. "But since I came here under Joe's invitation, and he and Barry and Iris are all too busy working, you owe me a roller coaster ride. I hear Flash of Lightning reaches top speeds of 150 miles per hour."

"Barry's ridden it already and complained it was too slow, the jerk."

"I don't know," Hartley said reluctantly.

"You have to," Cisco said, and grabbed Hartley's hand to tug him back into the main part of the gift shop; Hartley was so surprised that he just let him. "I want to show off what a genius I am when you take the new ear tech out for a spin."

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Flash of Lightning was in equal measures exhilarating and terrifying. Cisco laughed delightedly when Hartley yelled going down the big drop and again when it turned out there were three upside-down loops. It was also the first time Hartley had been exposed to G-forces since the particle accelerator explosion where he didn't feel the least bit dizzy. Whatever Cisco had done to his hearing
aids was just plain genius, and Hartley had no idea how to express his gratitude properly. He settled for paying for Cisco's cotton candy before Cisco had a chance to get out his wallet, which meant that Cisco insisted on sharing. Hartley liked cotton candy about as much as he liked cherry licorice, but now he had the excuse to reach into the bag and touch Cisco's fingers with his while they walked through the park. He had it bad and he knew it.

The thing was, Hartley didn't really do relationships. He didn't really do crushes, or feelings, or closeness of any kind, at least not anymore. Having your heart broken so many times over kind of killed your trust in other people. But when it came to Cisco, it was like the rational part of his brain didn't care. All it kept telling him was even though they'd started out as enemies and learned to work together under duress, Hartley kept on helping whenever Cisco let him and he liked it. Liked him.

Talk about a roller coaster ride.

"Ah, here we are," Cisco said, stopping suddenly. "This is how you know you've really made it."

A gigantic signboard was propped up next to the opening to a ride. 'Ride the Vibe!' it declared in six-foot tall letters.

"Uh," Hartley said.

"Impressed into speechlessness, I see," Cisco said proudly. "I'm a real superhero."

"Sure," said Hartley lightly. "Or maybe I just noticed that that slogan could be taken another way."

Cisco squinted and read the sign again, then gasped. "Hartley Rathaway, you have a dirty, dirty mind." Hartley felt his cheeks heat up, but Cisco was laughing. "I guess I got what I deserved for calling myself Vibe. You know, Barry came up with that one, so I can actually blame him for this."

Hartley laughed, too. "That sounds like a good idea."

Riding the Vibe was something of an experience, innuendo aside. The whole thing was sort of an earthquake simulator with everyone strapped to the wall and being jerked back and forth while vibrations rattled the floor and ran up everyone's legs.

"Needed more vibrational blasts," Cisco concluded when they stumbled back outside.

"Did it really?" Hartley said, stooping over to rub at his thighs. "Jesus, after that, my legs feel like they're made of rubber."

Cisco waggled his eyebrows. "That's just like real life."

Hartley glanced over at Cisco with an amused smile playing at the corners of his mouth. "Now who has a dirty mind?"

The grin that split across Cisco's face was wide and pleased. He opened his mouth to say something else when Hartley heard a girl's voice call out, "Cisco!" They both spun around.

"Jesse!" Cisco said happily. Jesse Wells was headed over to them, along with her father and Iris's brother. Hartley looked away from the other Wells. Logically, he knew this wasn't his Wells — or rather, he knew that there'd never been a his Wells at all — but he never spent time with Harry the way Cisco had and so he never got over another person wearing the same face as someone who'd lifted him up so high before thoroughly ruining his life.

"We just rode the Ferris Wheel and got to be sharpshooters in The Rogues Gallery," Jesse said,
making fingerguns for emphasis. She looked at Hartley and grinned. "I took you down and everything!"

"Excuse me?" Hartley said.

"You didn't know? You get to fight all of the Flash's enemies in the laser tag battle to end all laser tag battles. Pied Piper is one of the bad guys you have to take down. Honestly, the guy's costume was bizarre; I don't know why it had so many polka-dots." Hartley actually felt a tiny bit proud of that, even though polka dots weren't his thing. "Though Wally and I were just joking about how if they'd used Cisco's method of taking down Rogues instead of lasers, the whole thing wouldn't go down so well with parents."

"Jesse," Wells said gruffly, a note of warning in his voice.

"What does that mean?" Hartley asked.

"You know, the whole being attracted to danger thing!" Jesse gestured grandly at Hartley. "First Golden Glider, and now y—"

"Oooohokay!" Cisco said, suddenly cutting Jesse off by clapping a hand over her mouth. "Hartley doesn't need to hear your conspiracy theories." Hartley didn't even know he had been hearing conspiracy theories, let alone that he didn't want to hear them. But Cisco's cheeks had darkened a shade and, whatever it was, Hartley didn't want to pry no matter how much his curiosity had been piqued. "What are you all up to now?" Cisco asked the newcomers.

"Bumper cars," Wally said.

"Then that Weather Wizard log flume," Jesse said. "I hear they dump a ton of water on you during the hurricane drop."

Harry laughed. He was looking at his daughter fondly, and the expression on his face was so familiar that Hartley looked away, only to meet Cisco's eyes. "Meanwhile, I'll be sitting on a bench and not moving," Harry said. "I'm definitely too old for this now."

"Spoil sport," Jesse said. "Do you want to come with us, Cisco?"

Hartley forced a smile onto his face. "Go with your friends," Hartley said. "You've gone way above and beyond entertaining me. Remember, I was heading home over an hour ago."

Cisco stared at Hartley for a beat, then turned back to Jesse. "You guys go on without me. I promised I'd take Hartley on the Ferris Wheel," Cisco said, even though he'd done no such thing. "You've already been on it."

Jesse shrugged, then they all waved goodbye and went their separate ways. Just before the three others walked away, Jesse grabbed Wally's hand and squeezed. It was very cute, though Hartley was thrilled about the pang of jealousy he felt at the sight.

"What was that all about?" Hartley asked, once everyone else was out of earshot.

"Nothing," Cisco said. "They're all great, but I see them all the time. Plus, the two of us were having a good time together, and I don't want it to end yet. Is that okay?"

Hartley swallowed hard. "Of course. Honestly, I don't really want to go home yet."

"Well, don't turn me into a liar then. There's a giant metal wheel of death with our names on it."
"I hope this doesn't go around as many times as Barry and Zoom did," Cisco said, gazing up at The Magnetar, right before they climbed into their gondola. He settled on one side and Hartley sat across from him. The car rocked a little when the park worker slammed the door shut, and Hartley didn't miss how Cisco grabbed his seat.

"Well, given that the only two possibilities would be us being stuck on the ride for several days, or the ride shaking apart, all the cars flying off into the air as we reached the appropriate speed, I don't think we have to worry about that. Impressive that they even managed to make a Ferris Wheel Flash-themed, though, isn't it?"

Cisco didn't answer, but Hartley was too busy looking out of the windows as they climbed up and up. From their vantage point, he could see the entire theme park and even the rest of Central City beyond. It had been years since he'd ridden a Ferris Wheel, but he remembered his father taking him on one when he was small; it was a nice memory, one of the few he had where his father wasn't busy with work or saying goodbye to him from a room in a boarding school. A fair had come to Central City and when they reached the top of the wheel, his dad pointed out all of the city's landmarks.

"Did you know George Ferris invented the Ferris wheel in order to compete with the Eiffel Tower?" Hartley asked, still staring out of the car as the ride went around. "Alec Eiffel had created the tower for the Paris Exposition in 1889, and Chicago wanted something to compete with that, so Ferris thought something moving might do the trick. Neat, right?"

Again, Cisco didn't say anything, which was a surprise; Hartley had been expecting Cisco to at least tease him for his specialized nerd knowledge. He finally looked over, and found Cisco wide-eyed with rigid posture. "You know, as it turns out," Cisco said, "I don't like Ferris wheels very much."

Just as the words were out of his mouth, there was a scraping noise and the ride stopped. Hartley and Cisco were stuck near the top of the wheel. A booming voice amplified by a megaphone announced, "Hold tight, folks! There's been a minor mechanical issue, but it'll be fixed in a jiffy. Meanwhile, enjoy the view."

Cisco, if possible, looked even more stressed out and his grip on his seat had turned white-knuckled. Hartley moved to Cisco's side of the car to try to help. "Don't rock it," Cisco said in a panicked voice.

"It's okay," Hartley said awkwardly, even though he wasn't sure it was. There had to be at least twenty people that Cisco knew who were better in a crisis, but facts were facts and Hartley had to make the most of it. "Are you acrophobic? Agoraphobic?"

"No," Cisco said. "Heights and small spaces are usually okay. But height and a small space and motion and being trapped all at one time is kind of a lot. Right now I'm considering blasting a hole in the side of this thing and seeing if I can somehow bend reality to get back down to the ground."

Hartley knew Cisco was pretty powerful, so he didn't doubt he could do it. He also didn't think it was the greatest idea, what with it being in the middle of the day in a crowded area and Cisco had nothing to disguise his identity. Plus, the megaphone man had said it was only going to be a little while. The most logical thing to do was to just wait it out. "Let's hold off on breaking a ride on opening day, okay?"

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"What are you doing?" Cisco asked, but Hartley noticed he was shaking less and staring curiously at their joined hands.

"When I was little, I was left home alone a lot." Hartley turned Cisco's hands over and began tracing the lines of his palms. He tried not to get distracted, but Cisco's hands were really nice and that was making everything difficult. But right now, Cisco needed him and Hartley wanted to be someone that people could depend on. He cleared his throat. "There were nannies and drivers and other servants, but my parents were never home and there were no other children my own age around. I spent so much time on my own that my imagination got me through a lot."

Hartley paused and took a second to listen. Cisco's breathing patterns had already become more even.

"Right now, I'm picturing us on a beach somewhere. The ocean is lapping against the shore, and we're digging our toes into the sand, feet firmly on the ground. If you're into fruity drinks with umbrellas, you have one of those."

Cisco laughed. "I am."

"Good," Hartley said. He stretched out Cisco's hands and ran his own fingers up and down Cisco's thumb, his index finger, his middle finger and so on, continuing on the other hand. Cisco drew in a deep breath and let it out slowly. "The sun is out, but it's not desperately hot and there's just enough cloud cover to provide shade every once in a while. You spend so much time trying to convince me that I want to go into the water that I eventually give in, and it's actually fun until you dunk me when I'm not expecting it, so I'm forced to get seaweed-shaped revenge."

"And what is seaweed-shaped revenge?" Cisco sounded like his normal self again. No. That wasn't quite right, either. But he was calmer.

"It's when I bide my time until you think I've gotten over you dunking me and then I throw a bunch of seaweed in your face. It's a lot of fun for me."

"I bet," Cisco said. "And then what?"

"We go back on shore and dry off."

"Is that it?" Cisco asked.

Hartley paused. He knew what he wanted to happen after that, but he didn't know if he could say it out loud. As it was, he was getting too carried away and he knew it, but when he looked up, Cisco was watching him intently. They stared at each other for a beat. "No," Hartley admitted.

The ride suddenly moved then because of course it did. Cisco gasped and grabbed the front Hartley's shirt, making Hartley lurch forward and wind up even closer to Cisco. It was no wonder they warned people with heart conditions not to go on rides. And of course the ride immediately stopped moving again, both undoing all of Hartley's hard work and not giving him the excuse to ignore what had just transpired. It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times.

"Are you okay?" Hartley asked.

"I—I think so. Yeah, I'm okay," Cisco decided. He hadn't let go of Hartley's shirt. Cisco bit his lower lip; Hartley watched him, he couldn't help it. But that seemed to be the right thing to do because Cisco leaned in, stopping just before their mouths met. Hartley made no attempts to move away, just sucked in an anticipatory breath and let Cisco close the last bit of distance between them.
Kissing was always something Hartley liked, just the combination of muscle memory from previous times and learning what someone else liked. Cisco was eager, and talented, and Hartley had thought about this moment a lot, but figured it would just be like all of his childhood imaginings — things that never materialized into reality. But Cisco was all too real, and the feel of his mouth pressed against Hartley's, the small desperate sounds he could hear Cisco making as Hartley kissed back while clutching his hands at the back of Cisco's shirt, was almost too much to take. This kiss was dizzying, Hartley's stomach dropping as he realized something he'd wanted for way too long was suddenly within his reach.

Or maybe it was just that the ride had started moving again.

Whatever. The kiss was still great.

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When Cisco and Hartley came back to earth, Hartley's legs were like jelly, half from the ride and half from getting to see how swollen Cisco's mouth had gotten. They were looking at each other sort of shyly and for once, neither of them had much to say. But that was all right; talking could wait for later.

Barry zipped over to them then, grinning from ear to ear. He let out an excited little whoop and shook them both by the shoulders. "Happiest place on earth!" he declared before dashing away again.

Well, Hartley thought, maybe he was right.

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