Barry Allen of Earth-93

A short story by Henry Cavanaugh

Barry Allen could still remember the time that receiving a message from an alternate dimension caused extreme surprise and shock - after all, it had only been three years ago. Now though it was just part of his daily life as The Flash, the fastest man alive and the hero of Central City. Dimension-hopping was basically a pastime for him and his allies now. It wasn't enough to save their own cities or even their world, they had to save entire universes that they didn't even belong to.

A hero's work is never done, Barry reminded himself, forcing a smile on his face as he thought about the mission ahead. The team at S.T.A.R. Labs had received a message from Earth-93 claiming that their Flash had disappeared and they were in desperate need of somebody with access to the Speed Force to



help find him. It was a responsibility that Barry wasn't afraid to take on his shoulders, in fact it seemed like a relative walk in the park compared to some of the universal threats he had dealt with before. Besides, he got something of a thrill out of seeing how things had played out differently across the multiverse.

Pushing through the normal boundaries of the Speed Force in order to crash right through the barriers between realities, it took the guidance of the folks back at S.T.A.R. Labs for Barry to find the source dimension of the emergency broadcast they had received and he drew his impossible sprint to a stop, skidding right into Earth-93's own version of Central City. He was relieved to find it just as alive and bustling as his own, although there was one stark difference that he took notice immediately: a banner hanging above Central City Train Station featuring a speedster in a yellow and red leather costume, accompanied by the message "THE FLASH WELCOMES YOU TO CENTRAL CITY!" in bold lettering. The speedster wasn't another version of Barry though, indeed it seemed to be Wally West, the young man he had taken under his wing and begun training back on his own Earth.

"Hey, cool costume, dude! Where's the costume party at?" somebody called out, pulling Barry's attention away from the banner. "Who are you supposed to be? Kid Flash?" A couple of people laughed in response to the heckling comment, leaving the Earth-1 speedster feeling strangely insecure, like he was back in high school and being laughed at while Tony Woodward, the asshole bully of his youth, tormented him. Doing his best to ignore them, Barry set off on a run towards S.T.A.R. Labs - only to realize he wasn't going very fast at all. He did his best to focus but realized in horror that he couldn't

access the Speed Force at all! *This is so not good*, he thought miserably, his heart began to pound in his chest. What good was he going to be to the people of Earth-93 if he couldn't even access his speed?

Getting to the lab without access to his speed was nothing short of torturous for Barry. He'd forgotten what it was like to live his life at normal speed - it didn't feel normal, it felt slow and mind-numbing. A journey that previously would have only taken him a second took a full twenty minutes and he was exhausted by the time he got to the lab doors. The last thing he was expecting was to collide with a stone-faced security guard who looked less than pleased to have his quiet shift interrupted. "Where's your pass?" the mountain of a man grunted. Barry could only gape. "Show me your pass or leave the property, sir."

That same insecurity came creeping back in. What was it about Earth-93 that was making him feel so vulnerable? The lack of speed certainly didn't help but there seemed to be something more, something that ran deeper than he could possibly describe. "I-- I'm here to see--" he started, only to be hit by a sudden gust of wind as a yellow streak shot by him and into the lab. "The Flash?" *How is that possible? I thought he was missing?* The unease he had felt since arriving in the new dimension began to creep further through his mind.

"This isn't a superhero-viewing zoo," the security guard retorted, an ugly scowl crossing his face. "I'm gonna have to ask you to leave now." Barry could take a hint; the other wasn't so much asking as he was ordering. Without his super speed Barry was severely outmatched and all he could do was smile meekly and back out of the building. The last thing he wanted was to get thrown out on his ass and feel even more humiliated than he already did.

With S.T.A.R. Labs out of bounds to him, Barry decided to check some of his own usual spots in Central City in the hope that he could find his Earth-93 counterpart and start to sort through some of the madness. He only hoped that Earth-93's Barry Allen had the same positive relationship with Wally West as he did in his home universe but considering his luck so far, perhaps that was asking too much. *Think, Barry, think!* You're trapped in an alternate universe without your speed or your team. Who do you turn to? It took him a moment but finally a potential solution presented itself to him: there was one man who was prepared for any situation back on his own Earth and if his counterpart in this dimension was anything like his own then Oliver Queen would be the perfect ally to help him get back home.

Getting to Star City without his super-speed meant another long monotonous journey, this time by rail, and Barry had been forced to buy some casual clothes just to get out of

the costume that was earning him so many stares. He used the hour-long journey scrolling through the local news sites, amazed by the triumphs of Earth-93's Flash including his numerous team-ups with heroes like Superman, Batman and Green Lantern. Yeah, I have no idea who any of those are. This universe is weird...



By the time he stepped off the train and left Star City Station, Barry's head was spinning. As such, his nerves were so fried that when a red-clad archer dropped down in front of him he yelped in surprise, tripped over his feet and fell to the ground on his ass. The hooded man above him merely laughed and offered a hand, helping Barry up with a surprising amount of care. "Killer reactions, Allen," a modulated voice announced.

"You know me?" Barry asked, genuinely surprised. Where things finally about to turn around for him? "Oh thank god, this has been the worst day ever so far."

Rather than continue their conversation in public, the archer took Barry by the arm and steered him into a nearby alleyway where they were afforded some privacy.

"Did you hit your head on that fall? Of course I know you," the mystery man replied, pulling down his hood and revealing the familiar visage of Roy Harper, Oliver Queen's former protege who Barry had known better as his universe's Arsenal. "Barry Allen, I couldn't possibly ever forget a face like yours."

As if the lack of his speed powers hadn't been a big enough surprise for the day, Roy then loaded on an even greater surprise by leaning forward and pressing his lips to Barry's. The former speedster's whole body stiffened up and after a moment of hesitation out of shock, he pulled away. "Wh-what was that?" he stammered, eyes bulging out of his skull as he stared at the other man.

"A... hello kiss," the other responded, as if that was a totally logical thing for him to do. "Are you sure you didn't hit your head? You're worrying me, babe."

Babe? Oh my god, are me and Harper a thing in this universe? This is officially the wildest trip into the multiverse ever. Barry didn't think he'd ever stumble into a universe where he was in a gay relationship with another superhero but life was apparently having fun throwing surprises his way lately. "I... this is going to sound crazy but I need to speak to Oliver," he croaked, scratching at the palm of his hands as he used to back as a nervous teenager.

Roy merely frowned. "Oliver?" he asked, prompting Barry's heart to sink in his chest.

"Oliver Queen?"

"Why would you want to speak to that asshole?" This time Roy's response was of sheer bewilderment. "I didn't think dumbass playboys were your type, Allen." *Dumbass playboys? Oh god, Oliver isn't the Arrow here.* "Maybe we should get your head checked out, yeah?" There was clear concern in the other's voice, enough that it sent a shiver down Barry's spine. He couldn't remember the last time somebody had seemed so concerned about his wellbeing, especially showing it with such earnest.

"I... I think maybe you should just take me home," he suggested meekly, forcing a smile onto his lips. He needed time to consider his next steps and that meant he had to de-escalate the situation he had started with Roy which he couldn't exactly do if the other believed he was suffering from some sort of head trauma. "I must have had a nightmare on the train or something," he attempted to rationalize, "Coffee and rest will sort me out. Promise." For good measure he pressed a soft kiss against the other's lips which seemed to satisfy Roy for the time-being at least.

Once they had successfully made it back to the loft apartment that Roy called home, the archer all but insisted that Barry get into the bed and start resting. "I'll bring you a hot drink in a little bit, I've just got to report into my team," he explained, pressing a kiss to Barry's forehead. He watched the other man exit into an office full of high-tech equipment before resigning himself to find the bedroom, strip down and get under the covers as had been instructed.

Pulling out his phone, Barry once again used it to search through recent news stories on the web, only this time he focused on developments in the Star City area. Unsurprisingly many of the articles included reference to the elusive 'Red Arrow' who was responsible for bringing so many criminals to justice. There was no mention of a 'Green Arrow' anywhere on the web, although there were countless articles that suggested that the Oliver Queen of this universe was nothing more than a misogynistic gym junkie who thought with his dick rather than his brain. It was actually rather fascinating to see considering the Oliver of his own world was so stern and morose at the best of times.

By the time Roy finally made it up to the bedroom Barry was already half asleep, his eyelids wilting and his brain settling down into a fog. He knew he had a lot to deal with when he woke but he was simply too drained to have that tough conversation with Roy, to explain that he wasn't the other's Barry and he desperately needed to get home. As the other man climbed into bed with him and wrapped his strong arms around him though, Barry let himself believe that he really was the other's lover and cuddled up

against the other's warm torso. He felt safe being held in Roy's arms and as such it wasn't long until he had drifted away into a peaceful sleep filled with dreams of dates he had gone on with the famous Red Arrow as well as their first kiss and the first time they had made love. Little did he know that those dreams were new memories settling in, as there were dark forces at play...



Eobard Thawne, the Reverse Flash, watched through the portal as his bitter enemy was unknowingly indoctrinated into his new life as Earth-93's Barry Allen. When he rose from his slumber he would only remember his life as a shy forensic scientist who was continually treated like dirt by the SCPD but had a loving relationship with the city's crimson archer, the Red Arrow.

All Eobard had needed to do was call in a favor from a metahuman he had saved back on Earth-2, one that had powers of hypnosis, and use him to convince Roy Harper that he was a gay man and that he and Barry Allen had been in a loving relationship for years. In truth there was no Barry Allen of Earth-93, he simply had never been born in that universe, but a whole identity had been created for Earth-1's Barry to fill. It would keep him safely out of the way and remove any opposition Eobard might have faced in finally acting out his master plan.

Calling in a second favor, this time from a meta with powers of transformation, Eobard had them change his visage into that of Barry Allen. Earth-1 would still need its scarlet speedster and Eobard considered himself the perfect person to slip into that role. He would assume Barry's life as a hero and bathe in the glory that came with the young man's perfect existence. He'd make love to Allen's girlfriend, flirt with that cute Snow girl and get beers with the Green Arrow on alternating weekends. He'd finally get the perfect life he deserved and there wouldn't be anyone around to stop or expose him - Barry would forever be trapped on Earth-93 without even realizing he was trapped at all!

With both men known as Barry Allen getting to live a happy life, it truly was the best of both worlds!

