

Like a Natural Disaster

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Like a Natural Disaster

by [Crimson1](#)

Summary

When Captain Cold sacrifices himself to kill Zoom, he rises from his seeming demise as a meta human. As Barry seems to be the only source of heat that comforts Snart, and the only one unaffected by the chill of his touch, what builds between them with the connection of their powers is like nothing either could have expected.

Notes

I had a religious writing experience last night. My husband just laughed fondly at me like I was adorable, when I tried to explain it to him, but I just...became so overwhelmed when I hit my stride, so wonderfully elated and emotional, like I might cry in joy. This one is really special for me. I hope you all enjoy it.

LIKE A NATURAL DISASTER

Barry couldn't defeat Zoom alone. He'd always known that. But Cisco, Caitlin, Harry and the others all working to help him hadn't been enough either. They needed a real team, made up of both people in the field and as support in the cortex. Barry expected he'd eventually have to ask Oliver, once Damien Darhk was taken care of. He never imagined that help would come instead from Captain Cold.

Snart and several others Barry knew—some well, some only in passing—had been working with a man from the future to prevent the resurgence of Vandal Savage. Barry didn't even fully understand what they were doing, only heard a few details from Ray when the group passed through Central City. But the next time Barry came across them, he found himself begging for their help.

They'd be off again soon, traversing through time, but time was something they had plenty of, so a few days helping Team Flash wasn't much of a sacrifice. Only Rip Hunter refrained, not wanting to interfere any more with the timeline than he already was. The rest of the crew could make their own choices about how they affected their present.

Barry assumed Snart and Mick Rory would scoff and say, "Have fun with that, kid," but they were the first to sign up.

"Just point me at 'im, Flash," Mick said. "Love to see ol' Spark Plug go up in flames for messing with our city."

"He as susceptible to cold as you?" Snart asked.

"Should be," Barry said, a little shocked by their enthusiasm.

"Then let's get the job done, Scarlet. 'Bout time I paid that wannabe speedster back."

Back for what, Barry wasn't sure, but what mattered was he had a team, larger than he would have ever asked for, and in only a few hours' time they had a working plan to take Zoom down. Even Lisa joined in once Snart informed her he was back in Central.

"Playing hero's growing on you, huh?" Barry said to Snart in passing.

Snart shrugged, smirking wryly at Barry as he said, "Doesn't pay as well."

Not an admission or denial. But Barry would take it. He'd take all the help he could get.

He hadn't slept much since—well, since Zoom broke his back, but it had been worse ever since Patty left. Sleeping alone made his nightmares worse. Trying to avoid Zoom didn't help. Trying to face him always resulted in failure. But finally, finally Barry felt like they had a chance, to finish Zoom once and for all and rid Barry of his sleepless nights.

The plan went perfectly too—at first. Everyone in place, everything set up to catch Zoom inside a faraday cage Ray and Cisco had built, hoping to disrupt his speed, however slightly,

and trap him, with plans B, C, and D all in place as backup, from the others all being armed with darts that had only briefly stopped Zoom before, to planned aerial assaults from Hawk Man, Hawk Girl, and Firestorm.

What Barry didn't anticipate when they led Zoom into the cage, what none of them could have anticipated, was for the dark speedster to snatch up Snart along the way, faster than the cold gun could hit him. Zoom held his claws to Snart's throat as he stood before Barry, daring him to spring the final trap.

Barry had prepared himself for Zoom to target his loved ones, had made sure Joe, Iris, and those he held most dear were the furthest from the scene. But he wasn't prepared for how nauseated he felt seeing Snart hanging from Zoom's grasp. Someone Barry had foolishly pined over, never imagining his crush would amount to anything but childish yearning for a man he found stunning and admirable in his own right, but whom he had only recently grown to trust.

Barry did trust him, because Snart had proven him right, being a hero across space and time with a team that depended on him. Zoom wasn't allowed to get in the way of that when Snart had started to finally believe in himself.

So Barry faltered when he could have signaled to the others to spring the trap, to close the cage and cut Zoom off from escape. He'd be leaving Snart in there with him. He couldn't do that. He couldn't sacrifice anybody else.

But Snart didn't give him a choice. Barry hesitated. Barry gave Zoom an opening because he cared too much to make the hard call, so Snart made the hard call for him.

"Such a small man, fighting a gods' war," Zoom taunted, tightening his grip on Snart's throat as he held him aloft. He lowered him slowly, just enough so that Snart's feet touched the ground and he gasped for air, still unable to move more than the one hand clawing at Zoom's grip and the other hanging onto his gun.

"Zoom, please!" Barry cried, already knowing there weren't any options left to him, that he wasn't fast enough, could never be fast enough. The door to the cage was behind him, the one way to shut Zoom in forever, and Barry was frozen to the spot.

"Tell me, Flash, when did your enemy start to mean so much to you?" Zoom said, before he turned his frightening gaze back on Snart. "Any last words?"

"Just...one," Snart choked out, hand holding firm to his cold gun, no finger on the trigger, but on another button, one Barry recognized, just as Snart's cool blue eyes looked over at him through his goggles and he pressed down on the button hard. "Run."

The gun dropped from his hand, and as it fell as if in slow motion to Barry—awful slow motion worse than any he'd ever known in all his time as a speedster—the eruption began even before Barry turned on his heels.

The first of the blast of cold struck him just as he took off through the cage door, the next wave hurtling him forward, faster than his speed could carry him. He stumbled and stuttered,

finally finding his feet again to keep running, to run and run until there was no more shockwave following him. He collapsed in a roll and let himself tumble.

“Hawk Girl, Firestorm!” he yelled into his comms at those he knew had been within the blast radius when the gun blew.

“We’re clear!” Kendra called.

“I got Sara!” added Jax.

The aftermath was already dwindling, so Barry stood and stared, watching the great arc of ice dissipate, leaving sparks of blue lightning in its wake and a glassy sheen to the field where they’d built the faraday cage, thankfully far from any civilians in Central City. Half the cage crumbled under the intense structural decay from the cold, crashing loudly even as Barry got over his shock and raced forward, slipping and sliding and nearly falling on the ice left behind like a smooth skating rink.

If Snart had pulled this stunt in Barry’s home as he’d once threatened, it wouldn’t have been this devastating. He’d worked with Cisco to increase the damage for the mission against Zoom, “Just a failsafe, kid, nothing to concern yourself over.”

It never should have been needed. No one else was supposed to die because of Barry’s mistakes. No one. Especially not Snart, who wouldn’t have been there if not for Barry, who never would have made the call to give up his own life to save someone else’s, to save the city, to save Barry, if Barry hadn’t influenced him.

Barry raced through the carnage of ice and creaking, falling pieces of metal from the faraday cage. He knew it was pointless, knew it was hopeless, but he had to see for himself, the truth not sinking in but remaining a tight knot in his stomach that he pushed deep down like a held breath.

“Flash, what’s going on?” Lisa called over the comms, frantic.

Barry didn’t answer, couldn’t tell her. He heard her shout at Ray, demanding that he fly her to her brother, while Barry searched for him.

At the center of the blast, the sparks of blue lightning still flickered around scraps of black fabric, and chunks of dark almost black frozen pieces of bloodied flesh. Zoom was gone, blown to frozen bits in an explosion of cold Barry almost hadn’t outrun either, even with a moment’s head start. Snart had saved them all.

Then Barry saw the back of a familiar blue parka, blown almost to the other side of the faraday cage, but still intact. The jacket was torn, the pants tattered, but the body was whole.

Barry moved at a glacial pace, his breaths too loud in the otherwise quiet of the field with only the voices over the comms calling for him to answer, yelling at each other, arguing, while he reached the parka and knelt down. He gripped the shoulder and gently pulled, turning the body over and...recoiled when he saw what remained.

Snart's frozen face, mouth wide open in pain, eyes staring up blankly, iced over, was too reminiscent of the security guard Snart had once left at Barry's feet. He had done so much to make up for that, for all his past crimes and evil deeds, honestly tried to make something more of himself, and now here he was, doomed to the same fate he'd once given others.

The tears ran hot down Barry's face before his first gasp and snuffle for air. "Why did you do that?" he whimpered to the still, silent form in front of him. "Why did you have to be a hero NOW? Why did you...do that?"

He ripped his cowl back so he wouldn't have to hear the questions that roared in his ears as he was overheard, even if it was unfair to Lisa, who just wanted to know if her brother was okay. He wasn't ready to face this burden more than reaching out toward Snart's awful, frozen face, much more whole and lifelike than the security guard had been, but still a terrible blue and black.

Barry pulled the glove from his right hand, wanting to feel the chill, the cold, before he'd believe Snart was really gone, another person lost because of him. He expected it to be so cold it would burn when his palm brushed Snart's cheek, but instead the cold shot a thrill through him like an electric shock, leftover from Zoom perhaps. At least it meant Barry could touch Snart, say goodbye and try to convey how sorry he was.

Lisa's scream broke the quiet, echoing from Barry's cowl and behind him as Ray touched down in his power suit and dropped her onto her feet. Barry looked back to see her hands up covering her mouth, head shaking in disbelief as she took in the sight of her brother frozen—gone.

Barry tried to take a breath through his tears but they just fell harder, as he choked on them and tried to say...something, anything to let her know how much he wished this could have ended any other way, but the words wouldn't come. Once again someone had died for him; someone else was the hero because he wasn't enough.

The sudden grip on Barry's wrist shocked him as much as the gasp he heard from Snart's body, his heart trip-hammering as he whirled back around, staring in horror at Snart holding onto him in a death grip, eyes somehow blinking through the ice.

Alive. He was alive. Which was so much worse than Barry could have imagined—or so he thought at first, assuming these were Snart's last painful moments.

He let Snart take his hand. Snart's glove had broken off in chunks like a sheet of ice, so that Barry's bare hand and Snart's blue skin connected. That same shiver of cold and electricity shocked through Barry, and he gripped harder, held Snart tighter. And slowly, as Snart's eyes cleared and the ice seemed to melt from him, the blue-black tint to his frost-bitten skin began to fade to its normal tanned beige.

"Snart!" Barry cried in surprise and barely contained elation at what was happening, leaning over the man...the man who had saved Central City. "You did it. You killed Zoom. You saved everyone."

The ice even receded from his clothes, though his Cold gear was mostly in ruins from the blast. He felt so cold to Barry's touch, but not painfully so, the chill he radiated almost pleasant, welcome with how worn and sweaty Barry had become during the fight.

And he was awake, alive, blinking slowly, somehow okay.

He relaxed into the icy ground beneath him, his grip on Barry loosening as his eyes grew distant and he faded from consciousness. The only words he managed as he looked up at Barry, and reached with his free hand toward Barry's face was, "You're okay," before he passed out.

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"How did he survive that?" Lisa asked once they rendezvoused at STAR Labs.

She'd insisted Barry flash her brother there as quickly as possible, which Barry had been more than willing to do, while also insisting Ray give her another ride so she arrived at the labs not long after. The others who had been part of the fight trickled in, first Firestorm and the Hawks, then Heat Wave and White Canary. The rest had all been in the cortex.

They had Snart laid out on the hospital bed, his parka and clothing peeled away from him like paper, most of it having sloughed off during the sprint to the labs. Even his underwear had shed from his skin like brushed off frost, and Caitlin had quickly moved to cover him with a blanket as she set to work.

"Everything about his condition—his core temperature, what he went through—says he should be in deep hypothermia, but his skin shows no damage, his heart rate only slightly elevated. I'd say he passed out more from the trauma of the explosion than the cold. It doesn't make sense."

"It was Zoom," offered Jay, nodding down at Snart as Caitlin fiddled with the IV and heart monitor, then checked his blood pressure with practiced ease, which was also only slightly higher than normal.

"What do you mean?" asked Cisco.

"We both received our speed from the same particle accelerator blast from Earth-2, but our abilities have never been equal. Who's to say his connection to the speed force was the same as mine? Or that it was the same force at all? Whatever was in him when he...blew apart, maybe some of that power found its way into Snart."

"So he's a...meta human now?" Lisa asked.

"Seems so," Caitlin said, looking over her readings again. "We won't know anything for sure until I've done some blood work, and we can get him awake and alert to test what's happened to him. For now, it's good that he's resting. But this is far too many people for a hospital room."

"This ain't a hospital room, doc," Heat Wave grumbled.

“It is for as long as he’s my patient. You can all stay, but not in here. I need room to work. And when he wakes up, it’ll be better if he has as little chaos around him as possible.”

The Hawks, Stein, and Jax all took their leaves with solemn nods. Sara eventually coerced Mick to leave with her, go get a drink while they waited for Snart to wake up. Lisa insisted she stay, even if it meant spending the night on the floor. Cisco led her into the lounge to let her rest there, assuring her that Snart would be fine, and got her a drink of water, a blanket and pillow if she needed to sleep.

Jay stayed by Caitlin’s side to help with anything she needed while she worked. Harry barely said any goodbyes before he disappeared down into the basement to take the portal home and search for his daughter where Cisco had vibed she should be. Barry felt altogether too numb and exhausted to ask if they’d ever see the man again. He wasn’t ready to think about tomorrow, not after everything that had happened tonight.

He hugged Iris and Joe, told them it was okay, that he was glad they were both safe, but no, he wasn’t leaving. He needed to be here. With Snart. With the others. He needed to at least wait until Snart woke up. His family understood.

Sara and Mick eventually came back, camped out in the lounge with Lisa. Cisco soon joined them, and they became a great mess of sprawled heroes on the sofas and chairs. Jay and Caitlin stayed up longer, but soon retired to the other room when Snart showed no signs of stirring, where they could crush themselves onto the other hospital bed until needed. Caitlin was ever ready and on-call if Snart awoke before she did.

Barry remained at Snart’s side. He’d long since shed his Flash suit. It didn’t matter, hadn’t when they joined forces to stop Zoom, if Mick and Lisa knew his face. His sweats and STAR Labs sweatshirt were as soft and comfortable as ever, but Barry felt rough around the edges, like he’d been the one who burst free from a cocoon of ice.

Snart was alive. But he just as easily could have been another casualty, another person lost in Barry’s battles. It ached so much, worse than when they’d lost Eddie, when they’d lost Ronnie, because he was getting used to always being in pain, always blaming himself, always being too slow to be the hero they thought he was.

Once again the man who saved Central City had been someone other than him.

Fresh tears filled Barry’s eyes as he sat in a chair pulled close to Snart’s bedside, the beeps from the monitors the only sound in the mostly dark room with the cortex lights all but one snuffed out. He sniffled, and scooted closer, reaching a shaking hand to slip beneath the blanket covering Snart and touched his ankle, bare and chilled. Caitlin had advised against anything to warm him up like a normal victim of hypothermia unless his vitals changed, for fear that heat would hurt him more than help now that he was a meta.

“This is my fault. Because I pushed you, and you listened. Because I brought Zoom here, and I couldn’t take care of him on my own. If you’d really...died tonight, Snart...when I just wanted more for you, just wanted you to see the good person you can be...” Barry hung his head as the tears fell more freely, blurring his vision so he had to clench his eyes tight. “Just be okay...please, be okay...so I can rub it in at least once...that I was right about you.” He

laughed to himself through his tears, looking up to stare at the beautiful chiseled face of a man who might as well have been carved from ice, but he was warm, Barry knew, and caring, cared so deeply even if only for a few people that he was willing to give everything up to finally have the chance to do something good.

Barry squeezed Snart's ankle gently, feeling that same shiver of tingling cold shoot through him—

Snart jerked halfway up in the hospital bed with a huge gasp for air, shivering and looking around wildly as he collapsed back, arching in pain, too tied to the bed with tubes to sit up fully.

“Snart!” Barry hissed as he jolted to his feet, not daring to break the otherwise stillness around them by raising his voice. “It’s okay! You’re okay! I’ll get Caitlin!” He made to dash out of the room, but Snart’s swift hand was for once faster than Barry’s reflexes.

Another thrill shot up Barry’s arm at the skin to skin contact of Snart’s fingers on his wrist.

“No...” Snart croaked, even his voice like cracking ice, hoarse from being out for so long. “Please...” he tried again, reaching out with his left hand as well until Barry grasped it. Snart sighed as if that meager touch was the most soothing relief he could imagine.

Until ice shot from his hands, completely covering him and Barry up to their forearms. Barry cringed. This, unlike Snart’s normal though icy skin, hurt the same way a shot from his cold gun used to.

Snart’s eyes widened, his mouth opening as if to scream.

“Calm down,” Barry tried, gritting his teeth through the pain.

Snart stared at the frozen coating encasing them. He tugged, yanking Barry half onto the bed since they were connected at their arms, succeeding in also pulling the IV and heart monitor from the machines just as his vitals spiked high enough that they would have alerted Caitlin in the other room. Everything went quiet save Snart’s heavy breathing as he tugged again.

“Snart,” Barry pleaded, catching the man’s eyes. “This is you. You can control it. It’s okay. Just...breathe.” He had never seen so much panic and weakness revealed in the other man. Snart looked ten years younger with his eyes that wide and his expression unguarded.

Focused on Snart’s eyes, Barry marveled at how they glowed when he accessed his power, hypnotically blue. The self-assuredness Barry was used to from Snart filtered into his expression, and slowly, the ice began to recede, the pain of the cold Barry had been feeling receding with it.

When it was just Snart’s naked hands again, one on Barry’s wrist, the other gripping his hand, fingers tightly laced, Barry couldn’t deny that Snart’s hands in contact with his bare flesh was the most intoxicating sensation he’d ever felt.

The moment passed and Snart started to shiver. Barry tried to remove his hands so he could pull the blanket over Snart again.

“No...” Snart clung to him, voice a grunt as he held onto Barry tighter.

“You’re freezing, right? I’m just trying to help you get warmer. I can get more blankets...”

“Barely even...f-feel that,” Snart’s teeth chattered, as he indicated the thin blanket draped over his waist and legs. “But you...” his eyes glowed again as he took in Barry’s face, then their joined hands, “...your...skin...”

The rumble of Snart’s voice, so low, accompanied by a fresh tingle through their connected hands—which Barry recognized now as Snart’s power interacting with his own, it had to be, communicating silently through the speed force—made him shiver down his whole body, and not because he was cold. Snart didn’t feel cold to him, not really, more like...invigorating.

Barry was already leaned over the bed, a mere foot between his and Snart’s faces. Slowly, Snart’s eyes drifted back up to meet Barry’s gaze. He released the grip he had on Barry’s wrist and reached for the back of his head instead in one fluid motion.

Barry tensed, wondering if Snart was actually going to...kiss him...but found himself pulled down until his cheek rested against Snart’s chest. Snart groaned at the added contact.

“Get this...offa me,” Snart said, tugging on the heart monitor still connected to him so that it pushed up against Barry’s face. “Need...more.”

“Uhh...okay...okay,” Barry said, lifting his head on autopilot to do as Snart requested, which wasn’t easy when Snart’s hand immediately reached for his face, holding a palm to his cheek as if starved for touch, desperate for it.

Barry pulled the heart monitor from Snart’s skin, as well as the IV, which all fell to the floor in a jumble since they had already been disconnected from the machines. He should get Caitlin, he knew he should get Caitlin, but Snart’s eyes like that, beseeching and glowing, transfixed him.

As soon as the unwanted tubes were gone, Barry was unsure how to proceed. Should he climb into the bed? Body heat was often the best way to help hypothermia if that was anything like what Snart was going through, but Snart acted first.

Cool hands forced their way under Barry’s sweatshirt, making him gasp at how unexpectedly good it felt, wrapping around his waist and pulling him down. His face pressed to Snart’s shoulder this time as the man held him.

“Please...feels...so good...” Snart said in pained breaths, though it seemed the more he touched Barry, the more contact they had, the more he relaxed, even if his mumbled speech proved he wasn’t in his right mind.

“Okay...shit, okay,” Barry said, scrambling up onto the bed carefully, which wasn’t made for more than one person, but Snart made room, pulled him closer, half on top of him, as Barry

settled in beside the other man on top of the blanket.

Snart grumbled irritably, tugging on Barry's sweatshirt. Barry understood, pulled up just enough to shuck the sweatshirt off of him and toss it to the floor. Snart's arms wrapped around him instantly like coiling vines, tight and needy, sighing when their chests finally pressed together, skin on skin.

"More..." he moaned, hands drifting to Barry's sweatpants.

Heat flushed to Barry's face, and Snart moaned again as if he could feel the rush of heated blood flowing through him. "Snart, wait..."

"Please," he tugged insistently at Barry's waistband, already trying to pull them down, to push the blanket from his own hips, "...need...your skin..."

Barry shuddered. If he was right, if the reason the cold didn't bother him when Snart was in this state, the reason Snart felt better in contact with Barry's skin, really was because of the speed force, than nothing else could replicate that. No blanket or warm bath would be enough.

"Okay," he said, aiding Snart in pulling down his sweats, in letting the blanket get kicked away, and then...shit.

Snart was heavy against Barry's naked thighs. Barry still had his underwear on, his sweats trapped around his ankles, but Snart was naked. He felt no shame, it seemed, as he tangled his legs with Barry as eagerly as he held him to his chest. They touched all down their bodies; the only barrier left was Barry's shorts. Then Snart pressed into Barry, and started to push the shorts down too.

Barry let him. He didn't have it in him to argue, to feel more than passing embarrassment as Snart pulled his underwear down his thighs and hooked his foot in the waistband to tug them the rest of the way off.

He plastered himself against Barry full bodied, arms around his waist, head tucked under his chin. The way they connected below the waist was too intimate, Barry knew, dangerous, wrong with Snart in this state, but he found himself relishing in the close contact with another person. Something he'd missed, something he'd needed and gone without. Something he'd only vaguely fantasized about happening with Leonard Snart in his darkest, most private dreams.

They stayed like that, silent save their breathing, as Barry felt Snart's heart rate slow to normal. The chill in Snart remained, but seemed different. Soothed. Shared with Barry.

Barry knew the exact moment when Snart's awareness returned to him, because his breathing stilled and he tensed all at once, almost as if he might pull away before deciding against it and relaxing again into Barry's body, into his warmth.

"Feel better?" Barry asked softly.

Snart shifted, nuzzling his face to Barry's collarbone as if to keep hidden. "Felt like I was... gonna turn solid and break apart. You pulled me back."

Barry blinked over the top of Snart's head. "You mean...now or...at the faraday cage?"

Snart nodded against him. "Then. Now," he said, without elaborating, but Barry understood what had happened.

Barry touching Snart skin to skin...had been what saved him.

No. He pushed that thought away as he held Snart close, just trying to keep the man warm, to keep him comfortable and calm. "It was the speed force. Zoom had it too. Differently, but... whatever happened when your gun blew and took Zoom with it, my connection to the speed force brought you back."

"Speed force..." Snart repeated, his voice muffled by Barry's skin. "Just a fancy way of saying it was you, Scarlet."

Barry laughed. "If you say so, Snart."

"I do say so. Saving is what heroes do."

"Yeah? Well I'll accept that if you admit that tonight the hero was you."

Snart chuckled shakily, shivering, but seemed better than he had been before. Barry could feel it in the thrum of power between them. It reminded him of the thrill of running, of the speed force alive and surging through his veins, only coming from an outside source for the first time, from Snart. The inherent chill to counter Barry's heat only enhanced the sensation.

Barry shivered in echo to Snart, but from the endorphin rush that came from touching Snart's skin. Even as they remained connected, that feeling didn't dwindle, but grew, little by little, enough that Barry hadn't noticed at first. It made his breath catch as he felt it now, something primal and wanting stirring in his gut.

"Uhh..." Barry fumbled for words, anything to distract him as he began to react to Snart's proximity—his touch, his skin, his power. Him. God, just him. "We're uhh...polar opposites. Speed and cold. Ice and lightning. Like positive and negative charges in a magnet, we balance each other out."

"Like a magnet..." Snart said with a low snicker, curling closer—how did he keep getting closer when they were already all over each other? "So either I freeze...or we stay like this forever?"

Barry relaxed marginally at Snart teasing him. "Just until you can balance on your own. You'll learn." At least Barry hoped so. He assumed metas always had the ability to control their powers to some extent, but then there weren't set rules—Bette had proved that—and this wasn't the same as the particle accelerator.

Snart tightened his hold around Barry's waist, shivered again. "Not balanced yet."

“It’s okay,” Barry said, kept saying, because it would be. Somehow it would be. Even if he had to hold Snart like this until they figured something else out.

But that feeling, their connection, the shock of raw pleasure in it was still building. It made Barry want to rock forward into Snart, and he had to bite his bottom lip to keep from moaning. He was growing hard, wrapped up together like this, feeling low and dirty for getting turned on when this man needed his help.

The way Snart moved his legs, tangled up as they were, so that their calves brushed back and forth against each other with gentle friction, didn’t seem to indicate he minded if he’d noticed. He would tense every so often, like he suddenly remembered who he was holding, how bare and raw they both were, but rather than pull away, he always sank into Barry again, soaking in the relief of his touch.

“I don’t usually...do things like this,” Snart said in a strangely small, quiet voice.

Barry sobered somewhat as he considered the admission. Snart rarely touched anyone. Not even Lisa. He always seemed distant. Knowing his upbringing, that wasn’t a surprise, and it saddened Barry to think that this man had probably never known real intimacy with someone. He’d never had the chance. Never believed it was safe or right to open up to someone. To just be with someone else without any barriers. Though if Barry was being honest, maybe he wasn’t so different.

Not that Barry had any right to speak of intimacy, something private and personal, when he was hard and getting more wound up every minute they touched.

He tried to lighten the mood, “What, snuggle your enemies naked in a hospital bed?”

Snart chuckled. “Precisely.”

“You saved the city, Snart, you’re allowed a few...oddities for tonight.”

“Oddities? So is that what’s poking me in the hip?”

Barry blanched. “Uhh...umm, I...uhh...”

“Relax, Barry, just trying to get a rise out of you. Though it seems you've managed that just fine on your own.”

Barry allowed the strangled laugh that left him, thoroughly humiliated, and yet somehow comforted by Snart calling him out. “You are the worst, you know that?”

“So I’ve been told. But being bad has its...advantages.” He shifted just slightly and—

“Shit,” Barry sputtered as his erection brushed Snart’s—who was as hard as he was; how had he missed that?

“If I played hero, Flash...maybe tonight you get to be bad.” Snart raised his chin for the first time, and his blue eyes, glowing again, so mesmerizing, held Barry captive as he smirked. He shifted his hips again, sliding them past each other purposely.

Barry whined. Normally, such a slight touch wouldn't cause such a strong reaction, but the thrill of ice and heat between them, steadily growing, was as if every nerve ending of Barry's skin sprung to life at once in mutual harmony.

"Fuck," Snart spoke breathless against Barry's lips, "just being with you like this, kid... makes me feel like I could come from a single touch."

Barry gaped. It wasn't just him. The connection, the sensations, went both ways. "Oh thank god," he groaned before he could stop himself, and pressed into Snart in return.

The full length of their bodies in contact, erections turned toward each other, moving subtly, then rocking...rocking in synchronized rhythm, made Barry shiver so hard he buzzed with vibrations.

Snart growled, "Do that again."

"Oh god...we shouldn't do this," Barry gasped, barely even feeling the bed beneath him anymore, encompassed as he was by Snart's body and wonderfully cool skin.

"Why not?" Snart said, lips almost touching with how close they were, rocking faster, hips pumping, cocks wet and dripping as they collided.

"S-Snart..."

"Don't I deserve...something nice...for saving the city? Unless you're really not interested," he whispered close against Barry's cheek, seduction in his tone even as he gave Barry an out.

"Being interested...was never the problem."

"Then what is?"

A dozen answers sprang to mind that no longer had a voice.

Because they were enemies. But that wasn't true anymore.

Because Snart hurt people. But he no longer did that.

Because Barry couldn't risk someone he loved being in harm's way again. But Snart already would be, by his own choices, because of he who was and how he lived.

All the other reasons seemed baseless, easily dismissed, until there was nothing left to say.

When Barry thought the feeling building from the connection of their skin couldn't get any more intense, it kept growing...and growing. Snart's eyes were so brilliantly blue, while Barry knew his own had started to spark yellow.

"You're amazing," Snart said, hips never ceasing as he pulled one hand from being wrapped around Barry's waist to grip his neck, thumb hooking beneath his jawline.

“You’re beautiful,” Barry gasped, buzzing, blurring on the bed against Snart as they moved in time with each other, so charged with sensation that they started panting, unable to say anything more.

Barry watched, in awe, as a thin layer of frost began to grow across Snart’s face, down his chest and arms, and where he could feel it over Snart’s legs. This time, the coating of ice, controlled, symbiotic, didn’t pain Barry, but worked in tandem with the sparks of lightning beginning to spring to life around his vibrating body.

Everywhere they touched, steam began to rise. Barry didn’t feel overheated, or overpowered, or overrun, he felt revitalized. The way he only did when he went his fastest, pushed his hardest, found the pinnacle of his power.

“Barry...” Snart keened his name, and even that struck Barry’s ears like a winter wind, soft, and echoing, and beautiful.

The thrusts of their hips couldn’t compare with the connection throughout their limbs and chests, and then finally—

Their mouths met in a crash of elements, like a natural disaster just hitting its stride, ready to wipe the world clean and start anew. Even Snart’s tongue carried a chill, his lips, and Barry sparked and vibrated against him, knowing he didn’t have to worry about it being too much or too strange because they felt all of it together in the clash of their powers.

Barry kissed Snart within the blur of the speed force like he never could with anyone else, connected at every bare inch of his body, feeling the pressure building as they kissed, and clung, and wrapped their legs tight around each other, bodies moving in a writhing dance until—

Barry gasped from their kiss as he came, the sparks and vibrations leaving him all at once in a shockwave that pulsed out of him throughout the room, mixed with a blue chill of cold from Snart as he followed after Barry, like lightning in a snowstorm. The lone light still on in the cortex burst, throwing them into darkness.

Barry gulped in deep breaths of air like he was drowning as he came down from whatever had just happened. A last fizzle of yellow lit up his and Snart’s bodies from Barry’s arm. Then darkness again. Snart was cool, but not cold, no longer covered in frost. They were still steaming.

Little by little, the emergency lights, signaled by the short-circuited bulb, blinked on, dim blue bringing the room back into faint illumination.

“Did we do that?” Barry whispered, as if not daring to break the silence but having to speak, having to be sure this was real and that he hadn’t merely passed out and dreamed it all.

“Think so...” Snart huffed exhaustedly, contentedly. “Our sex life might be an electrical hazard, Scarlet. What a wonder.”

Barry laughed, wondering if he was delirious. He felt like...he didn't know what. The closest he'd ever been to anything like this was that brief moment of pure drunkenness from Cisco and Caitlin's concoction. He felt euphoric, with no edge of darkness on the horizon, not anymore, not with Zoom gone.

They lay in quiet bliss for several moments.

"Now I'm balanced," Snart said eventually.

Barry chuckled again. "And I'm sticky," he said. He tried to slip from Snart's hold, but Snart tightened his grip like reflex.

Barry moved one of his hands to Snart's head, holding it gently, fingers smoothing over the finely buzzed hair. "Hey...think you can be out of contact with me long enough for me to clean us up?"

"Depends. You coming back?" His words were stiff, cold, but with a catch on the end, like a hint of fear.

"Right back," Barry said. "Promise. I have been known to move pretty fast, you know."

Snart snuffled a laugh into Barry's neck. "Okay."

That rising tide between them had finally quelled, and as even the high of the aftermath settled, Barry understood Snart feared a return of the cold that had gripped him when he awoke. He uncurled himself from Snart slowly, and only when he knew he would disturb him as little as possible to leave the bed, did he zip away at Flash speed, finding a cloth to clean them, depositing the jumble of his clothes more neatly on one of the desks, and returned to the bed with the blanket pulled up over them.

He settled in more beside Snart than on top of him, but still snuggled close, arms wrapped around him and legs coiled. Snart sighed into him with barely held back relief at his touch, but when he looked at Barry, their faces close in the blue lighting of the room, his eyes no longer glowed.

"Not as bad anymore," Snart said. "Even when you weren't there. Maybe you fixed me."

"Giving you an orgasm fixed you?" Barry couldn't resist teasing.

"It was an exceptional orgasm. One we shared. I get the feeling the balance aspect is important."

"Balance can be...good."

"Mmm," Snart hummed, hands trapped between their chests but not seeming to mind that as he pressed his palms to Barry's collarbone. "What I always liked about you, kid."

"Yeah?" Barry said with a wistful smile. "And...how long has that been going on?"

Snart's expression smoothed out, for once without any guile or subterfuge. "A while."

Barry swallowed. He'd always assumed the attraction was one sided, took their banter in stride, not as flirting the way Cisco sometimes teased him. But then Barry always had been shit at knowing when someone wanted him, and too good at wanting people who didn't.

"It's the suit, right?" Barry said with a twist to his smile to break the tension.

A twinkle returned to Snart's navy, non-glowing eyes. "Nah...does wonders for your ass, sure, but hides that pretty face."

"Pretty? I think you win that award between the two of us."

"Do I now?"

"Yeah. But that isn't why I like you."

"And why would the wayward hero like an old criminal like me?"

The question was back to their usual banter, like most of the exchange, but this time Barry wanted to be honest. "Because," he said, lifting a hand that trembled more than he wished it did as he brushed his thumb along Snart's cheekbone, "you make me a better me."

The snark washed out of Snart's face, smooth and blank again, but for a moment a bit of that glow of power returned to his eyes, betraying how surprised, how...touched he was by Barry's words. Maybe the glow in his eyes was more the shimmer of moisture that started to build, but whether emotion or meta powers or both, Barry read the answer there, that Snart wanted to say...me too.

Me too.

He didn't say it. But maybe that was okay for now.

XXXXXX

They slept, curled together tightly on the tiny hospital bed, Barry trying to remain alert to whenever Caitlin or one of the others might rouse, so he could explain. But their encounter, as exhilarating as it had been, also meant Barry and Snart both slept hard—the best undisturbed sleep Barry had had in weeks.

He didn't wake until Caitlin shook his shoulder, with Jay standing over them from the other side of the bed. At least those in the lounge hadn't woken yet. Cisco and Lisa would never have let them live this down.

They woke Snart before Barry attempted to pry himself away, to test if he could stand to be out of contact with Barry. The fear Snart felt wasn't as outwardly evident with an audience, but Barry knew it was still there.

When they separated, Barry flashed into his underwear to at least cover himself, but was still ready to dive back into bed if Snart needed him. Snart relaxed by millimeters, without calling out in pain even after several minutes had passed.

“It’s okay,” he said. “I feel almost...normal.” It should have been a relief, but he sounded disappointed.

Maybe Barry was just imagining it, because he felt the disappointment himself, assuming that if Snart didn’t need him, he would no longer want him. It was the type of person Snart had always insisted he was—someone who used others for his own benefit. It would make sense. But Barry stubbornly clung to the hope that what they had shared last night hadn’t only been out of necessity, but because that raw expression of—me too—was honest.

Barry dressed. Snart was given a fresh set of clothes as well, that Mick and Sara had brought back for him from Rip’s ship. The others awoke in stages. First Lisa, who practically flew across the cortex at her brother when she found him sitting up, dressed, looking healthy and alert. He accepted her embrace with only slight trepidation, but though she shivered as they hugged, she swore his skin only slightly chilled her.

Barry hadn’t noticed when they were still in bed together, not the way it seemed to feel to the others. To him, Snart’s skin felt like—he almost laughed to think it, but—the cool side of the pillow when you turn it over in the night. Like comfort. To most of the others, they flinched if they touched his skin for too long.

Barry frowned, thinking it rather sad, but then Snart didn’t seem bothered. Barry reminded himself that Snart had never been one for touch. He probably didn’t mind that now people had an excuse to avoid meeting his skin, when he shied from that connection most of the time anyway.

His core temperature was low, but his other vitals were normal. His brain waves were unique. His blood work like nothing Caitlin had ever seen. A meta human clearly. But with traces of the speed force that were and were not like Barry.

When Barry and Snart explained what had happened in the night, leaving out how amorously things had turned, though Caitlin and Jay shared a knowing look considering they’d been the ones to find them in the morning, Caitlin insisted she take readings while Barry and Snart were in contact.

Barry wasn’t sure if Cisco or Mick were worse with the teasing while he and Snart sat on the hospital bed holding hands for fifteen minutes and Caitlin retook all of Snart’s vitals. But her findings proved everything Barry had already guessed. While in contact with Barry, Snart’s body temperature evened out. And the speed force within him was...active.

“I can’t explain it, Barry, but it’s the same for you, like...like two polarizing ends to the same force, seeking each other out.”

“Like a magnet,” Snart offered, smirking at Barry sideways.

Lisa and Cisco both snickered. Mick and Sara shared an amused eyebrow raise. Barry just looked at Snart and smiled.

The rest of the day, they tested how well Snart did out of contact with Barry, which was just as well. They couldn’t touch every second. Snart had to live his own life, and learn how to

regulate on his own—if possible. And for a while, it seemed he was doing just that.

His body temperature was always low when out of contact with Barry, that's just how he was now, but it didn't seem to bother him, just his natural state. As Barry had observed when Snart first awoke, he could cover himself and others fully in ice, whether thin frost or thick like the output of his gun. He could project cold as well, like daggers shot from his hands, or a field of cold that dropped the temperature in a room to the point that Cisco's teeth chattered and he begged Snart to stop.

There were still more tests to be done to push his limits, but for now, he had a grasp of what he could and couldn't do, and could call out an aspect of his abilities or suppress it at will with ease.

Eventually, they had to part. Zoom was gone. Snart had business with Rip's crew to take care of. Barry had work and cleanup to manage in the wake of Zoom's defeat. They still had to close the breaches, though they intended to keep the one in the basement open until Jay decided what he was going to do, and in case Harry came back.

Barry and Snart hadn't really talked about what had passed between them during the night, hadn't explained it in detail to anyone but Caitlin. It soothed Barry enough that before Snart left with Mick and Sara, he turned to him and said, "I'll check in soon, kid."

For now, that was all Barry would ask for.

It was the middle of the night, that same day, with Barry asleep at home after a strange, dizzying evening of mostly normal chaos, when his phone woke him. He blearily answered, "Ngnn?"

"B-Barry..." Snart's voice shivered from the other end.

Barry was awake instantly. "Snart? What's wrong?"

Little by little throughout the remainder of the day, the absence of Barry had taken its toll on Snart. He hadn't noticed at first. Pushed through it when it started to irritate him, but finally couldn't dismiss what he needed when wracking pain woke him in the night.

They hadn't left anywhere on Rip's ship yet. Snart was at one of his safe houses, with Lisa, Mick, and Sara staying in various rooms. He'd called Barry rather than disturb any of them, and Barry was there, at the address Snart gave him, in only a few minutes.

The night repeated the previous one. Clothes shed. Snart reaching for Barry, pulling him in desperately for skin contact. This time the bed was larger, allowing them to spread out, though they still tangled and coiled and clung. As soon as relief flooded Snart, the pleasure in their communion began to build, merely touching, not even moving against each other yet.

"Fuck," Snart cursed, holding Barry too tightly in his anger.

Nausea filled Barry to war against the increasing pleasure in his belly. Snart didn't want this. Maybe last night he had, but he didn't want to need it, wished Barry didn't have to be here

now. And that stung, made bile rise in Barry's throat, because he couldn't suppress what their connection did to him.

"I'm sorry," Barry whispered, holding as still as he could, willing it all to go away, to balance out without having to be...this.

"You're sorry?" Snart spat at him, eyes glowing bright as ever when he looked up and their gazes locked. "You know, you're remarkably stupid for such a smart kid."

"Huh?"

"Barry...this isn't your fault. I'm not angry with you. I'm angry that something I want...I have to need. That something I've wanted for a long time now, you have to give me or I'll go crazy. Feels like I'll...burst apart, lose my mind in the cold, and you don't even get to choose if you want to be here. I tried not to call, tried to handle it myself, but I..."

"Snart," Barry held Snart's face so that the other man's glowing eyes stayed on him, "you don't have to suffer through this just coz you think I don't want to be here. It sucks this is something that, at least for now, we can't control. That you need this without us being able to think of another option. But I do want this. And if you want it too...then I'm not the only stupid smart guy in the room."

Barry kissed him, and it was and was not like last night, when they were already pushed to the brink, sparking and frosting over. It's what Barry always imagined kisses with the one person you were meant to be with were supposed to feel like, intense and desperate for more, no matter how deeply they embraced.

They were gasping and steaming, Barry already vibrating when they finally pulled apart. He willed himself to go still long enough to tell Snart one last thing.

"I don't care if you need me as much as you want me, as long as you really do want me. It's not pity from me. Not obligation. I want you too, Snart. Would have even if it didn't feel this amazing to be with you."

"Len."

"What?"

"We're naked in bed for the second time, kid, you need to get used to calling me something other than my last name."

Barry laughed despite himself, despite how the pulse of power between them began to build again. He couldn't stop himself from blurring, his voice a reverberating echo. "Not Leonard...or Lenny?"

"Maybe Lenny. If you earn it."

"I think I can manage that."

Reservations dropped away in the wake of their honesty, the playfulness returning that had always made Barry look forward to facing Captain Cold, even when they were most at odds. This time, when their bodies started to rock in harmonized motion, Barry reached down between their bodies to touch Snart—Len—directly.

The crescendo built as it had before, Barry charged with lightning, Len covered in ice, but this time when the shockwave burst from them in their moment of shared release, no lights were on to shatter.

They lay in the aftermath feeling a contentedness nothing else in their lives had ever given them. Maybe tomorrow, Len would last longer before he needed Barry in this same way again. Maybe each day, he'd get stronger and more able to outlast the polarizing pull to be near Barry like magnets, negative and positive, barely able to be separated. Or maybe he'd need Barry every night from now on, for the rest of their lives.

Barry didn't mind either option. He knew now that even if a day came when Snart no longer needed his touch to stay sane and healthy, the want between them, and...glimmer of something more, something they could build on...would remain. Barry wanted it to remain, even though his old fears taunted him that this might be something else he'd one day lose.

"You make me a better me too, kid. You made me this. You did. Not Zoom. And I don't just mean the powers, or this need for you like...like I could never get enough of your skin. You made me someone who could need another person again. Made me want to be more. Made me believe...I could be the hero, just once."

"Because you are," Barry said, feeling his fears squashed down by Len's words. He kissed him again, couldn't not, and even with their energy spent, and Len's eyes back to normal navy, it felt nothing like kissing anyone else had his entire life. "All the rest, all this," he took Len's hand and laced their fingers together slowly, tightly, that thrill between them ever present, even when calmed, "we'll figure it out."

Barry had never seen Len look so young, so unguarded, so free of the masks and personas he wore, even if he was the one who'd never hidden his face with anything more than a pair of goggles and a hood.

Their pulses calmed. Their energies stilled. Barry eventually cleaned them with swift precision, then returned to the bed. Snart laughed when Barry mostly teasingly said he didn't have to stay if Len didn't want him to.

"Don't you dare go anywhere, Scarlet. Should know by now that even when I need something...it's what I want that always wins out."

Barry grinned as he rested his head on Len's shoulder. "Are you saying I win? Coz in the grand scheme of Flash versus Cold, I think you just admitted I win."

"Shut up, Barry. Sleep."

"Okay. But Len?"

“Mmm?”

“I told you there was good in you.”

Len sighed, but sounded more fond than anything. “For now, Barry, let’s say I’m a work in progress.”

THE END

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