



Ultimate Speed Force #1

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Ultimate Speed Force
Issue One: Family Ties
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Infantino Park Apartments
Central City
5:45 PM

Iris Allen busied herself around the kitchen of the modest Central City apartment in a vain quest to make everything perfect. She was in her early thirties now, so the apartment wasn't close to disarray, but tonight everything needed to be flawless.

Any moment now Barry would be walking through the door, ready to swap stories about the day and drink coffee from his "World's Fastest Husband" mug. That was the routine, followed night after night.

Tonight would be different.

It wasn't the routine that would change, Iris thrived on that as much as Barry did. Tonight, however, the mug said "World's Fastest Dad," with a blue ribbon surreptitiously tied around the handle. It wasn't subtle, but even though Barry appreciated subtle more than anyone she knew, tonight she wanted obvious.

Iris soon heard the welcome relief of footsteps echoing against the other apartments and quickly surveyed the room once more. She was waiting for the tell-tale jangle of keys and the careful scruff of shoes against the welcome mat, followed by a flurried explanation about why Barry got a late start home.

But it didn't come.

Iris waited on baited breath until she heard knocking at the door. She smoothed the wrinkles from her shirt, allowing her hands to linger on her stomach for a few moments before grasping the knob and opening the door. Barry must have left his keys at the lab, it wouldn't be the first time.

Her smile diminished only slightly when she didn't find Barry, but Jay Garrick at her door. She hurried him inside and closed the door quickly, not wanting to ruin the surprise for her husband, who was likely on his heels.

After closing the door, Iris urged Jay to take a seat, but he resisted, as he removed his helmet and stared at the ground, as if to steel himself for the conversation to come.

Iris moved towards him, her jubilation fading as she finally made eye contact with the elder Flash. She then looked to his hands, shreds of scarlet cloth held behind the helmet in his hands.

And in that moment, she knew.

She looked at the older man, searching his eyes for an explanation, a caveat, some reason to think that she was wrong. Jay could only look away from her uneasy gaze, as he unclasped his hand, revealing two rings: one a gold band of modest proportions, the other larger, in the shape of a lightning bolt.

Burying her head in his shoulder she cried, tears quickly mixing with the dust of a half-dozen continents on his shirt before falling to the tile and pooling on the ground.

Jay could only put his arms around her in a vain attempt to offer comfort – but he knew as well as she did there would be none tonight. Any rehearsed lines about the sacrifice, about the world being saved simply vanished in the moment.

It hadn't been the first time he'd lost an ally in the battle for justice and it wouldn't be the last, and these first moments just never get any easier.

All that was left was to mourn the passing of Barry Allen... The Flash.

15 Years Later...

Infantino Park Apartments

Central City

10:45 AM

Iris shuddered as she opened the door, feeling the sudden rush of unforgiving winter air into the kitchen.

“Come in, come in.” she called out as she ushered a young woman into the apartment, the chill of the air causing her breath to condense. At least knew she’d been right to pick her heavier jacket to deal with the cold.

“Bart should be down any minute,” she told her as she offered the young lady a seat as she continued to get ready.

Carol Bucklen eased herself into the apartment, and quickly shrank into the offered chair. She was tall for her age, quiet and unassuming, but Iris always loved the determined spark in her eyes. Of all her son’s friends, Iris liked Carol the best.

“Thank you, Mrs. Allen,” Carol spoke, sounding demurred. “You’re sure I’m not intruding? I know what this day means to you and Bart.”

Looking back in the kitchen, she sighed and continued to gather together the things she’d need for the day.

“Intruding, Carol? Don’t be silly. You’re practically a member of the family.” She paused a moment to offer the girl a reassuring smile, before continuing to gather her things.

She had her trusty camera bag and notepad, heavy winter coat and pocketbook all arranged on the table waiting to leave. Now all she needed was her son.

“Bart!” she called out, “We were supposed to leave ten minutes ago! Carol’s already here and Wally’s waiting for us!”

"I'll be there in a minute!" came the reply from the other end of the apartment, the telltale signs of video game battles still emerging from his bedroom.

"Bartholomew Henry Allen, get out here right this inst... "

"You're the one who's not ready."

Iris shrieked as she was startled by the sudden appearance of Bart Allen by the door, fully dressed with an expression on his face stuck somewhere between benign amusement and teenage rebellion. Despite a lifetime surrounded by speedsters, Iris hadn't gotten used to the fact that they could do that.

Bart was short for his age, especially in contrast to Carol, somewhat awkward and gangly despite having a sprinter's frame, with wild hair framing his face. He was clearly still waiting for the "filling out" that relatives had been promising since before he'd hit puberty.

His momentary defiance disappeared when he saw Carol, who was shaking her head at him while trying to stifle chuckles. "Hey Carol," he said, a slight smile breaking across his face.

"Hey," she offered back as she got up and moved towards him and the door.

Ever the mother, Iris scrutinized Bart's chosen attire and deciding he'd be cold, sent him back to his room to get a sweater. He returned to his room dramatically, vocalizing his displeasure and allowing his rather sizable feet to clomp down on the wooden floor of the hallway for a few steps before he disappeared, within the blink of an eye reappearing in the kitchen wearing the sweater as requested.

"I think it looks nice," Carol offered helpfully.

"I guess," was the only response Bart could offer, appreciating the comment but unwilling to concede much since he didn't want to be wearing it.

After Iris gathered her things and pulled her coat on, the group headed out to hail a cab towards the city center.

Outskirts of The Bowery

Central City

11:34 A.M.

Elsewhere, oblivious to the clamoring across the city, a lone scream pierced the air almost completely lost in the celebratory din.

As the middle-aged woman fell to the concrete clutching her bruised side, she wailed in agony. The street was virtually empty, the only person who seemed to hear her was the young man who had caused her injury with an abrupt sucker-punch. That act was merely prelude to ripping her purse from her shoulder, wrenching the joint in the process.

The thug managed to run a full two city blocks down South Gardner without anyone paying him any attention, and he figured he was home free.

But he kept running anyway.

In this town you don't stop running, because you're never alone in the backyard of the Flash.

He was so focused on his sprinting, he never saw the outstretched beefy arm and he was clotheslined, a wrist bone catching him right across the trachea. The momentum flipped him up into the air before gravity dragged him down hard against the unforgiving concrete. Wind knocked from his lungs, he quickly blacked out.

He woke up a few moments later in the alley of a quiet side street. With most of the city on Broome Avenue for the big parade or in line at the Speedster Museum, he came to believe he was alone, just with a pounding headache. But then, as if to add insult to his literal injury, the young man quickly found the toe of a heavy work boot against his windpipe.

"Thought we lost ya," a voice emerged with a heavy Australian accent. The young man looked up to see a somewhat squat man with a receding

hairline smiling ominously at him. The thug struggled to breathe as he locked eyes with the face mere inches above his own. "Must be a Christmas miracle!" Digger Harkness said with mock warmth, his eyes narrowed and his lips curled in a toothy, predatory smile.

The thug then looked past the head of the beefy Australian to see the man the boot crushing his bruised trachea belonged to, tall, lean and angry.

Leonard Snart lifted the glasses from his head and looked down at the young thug as Digger eased himself up, to join Snart in casting downward, imposing looks.

"Now, either you're from out of town, little man, or you've been living in a cave the last few months," Snart paused, to let the gravity of his words hit home. "The Rogues made it clear - no crime today, and here we find you with a purse I'm assuming don't belong to you." Unlike his associate, Leonard Snart spoke to the young man with an almost detached demeanor.

The young man felt the toe dig in a little deeper to punctuate the sentence, before Snart removed it completely as the thug's gasps for breath became quite pronounced.

Digger watched with amusement as the young man rolled away, coughing and clutching his throat. After a few moments, he grabbed at some trash cans to ease himself back upright again, stumbling as he stepped which allowed the two Rogues to easily catch up and get ahead of him, blocking his access to the main streets.

"Now, what do yeh propose we do about this?" Digger asked, looking the thug up and down, trying to see if they'd ever worked a job together. The young man was fit and muscular, the sort of raw recruit a Rogue burned through every time they pulled a job, most lost to Iron Heights or the inky void of death – the criminal equivalent of the Starfleet redshirt.

They could almost see the wheels turning in the young man's head as he pondered his situation.

The young thug had already assessed his situation and suddenly felt

defiant as he stared down two men he had a good chance of taking in a fight now that he was upright and on equal footing. The 9mm in his jacket pocket afforded him a certain amount of confidence as well,

“What’s it to you, anyway? You the union rep or somethin’?”

Digger chuckled and looked over to Leonard, exchanging knowing smiles. “He doesn’t recognize us out of uniform?”

“I’ll take it up with our PR department,” Leonard replied, then returned his attention to the thug standing before them. “Union Reps? Something like that.” he replied, remaining distant and collected.

The thug on the other hand was growing more and more tense by the moment. Deciding he had put up with about as much as he was willing from the two he pulled the gun out, pointing it at them sideways. “Alright, freaks, that’s enough.”

Broome Avenue

Outside the Central City Speedster Museum

12:15 PM

The centerpiece of the Sister Cities, especially in the last fifteen years, was the Speedster Museum, devoted to the various speedsters that called Central and Keystone home.

Every year on this date it had become the focal point of a day long celebration of that legacy with parades, conventions, even the annual performance of the local third grade’s “Flashes Through the Years” pageant.

For most residents, it was one of the big events of the year, as celebratory as Mardi Gras, as reverent as Memorial Day, with a spin all it’s own.

As Iris, Carol and Bart worked their way out of Infantino Park, they could see a twenty-something man with red hair leaning against a light pole and reading a newspaper, tapping his foot at an almost imperceptibly rapid pace.

Iris was about to call out to her nephew, but Bart put his hand on her arm, causing her to stop. She looked down at her son to see what he was

looking out. "Oh, no!" Carol sighed, voicing Iris' concerns for her.

The women could only watch as an almost evil grin cross the face of Bart Allen.

Too late to stop himself, Bart decided he'd take advantage and catch Wally by surprise, much the way his older cousin had had done to him all his life.

He took the long way around, by way of Chicago to build up enough speed, but just as he got there Wally stuck a foot out, sending the younger boy skidding along the sidewalk.

He then put aside the paper and reached down to help Bart up, saying "Nice try, Sport" between laughs.

Bart dusted himself off and looked annoyed for a moment before breaking out into laughter. "Next time," he said with as much conviction as he could while laughing.

Iris just shook her head as she and Carol made their way over to the two boys and got in-between before it devolved into the inevitable headlock/noogie that usually closed the Bart/Wally greeting process.

Iris gave Wally a big hug and a kiss on the cheek, Carol quickly moved to assuage Bart's ego.

"Sorry we're late, Wally. Are you ready?" Iris asked as she checked her watch.

"Uncle Barry would be proud," he commented, all smiles.

It was past noon, and if there was going to be any chance to get into the Speedster Museum like they planned, they would have to put themselves on line now.

Iris had always steadfastly refused any special treatment. If the city had their way, she and her family would have a private tour before the museum opened to mourn properly.

It meant so much to the Sister Cities that Barry's memorial was here when he could easily have fit in amongst the legends in Valhalla.

But she knew his heart would be here, in his city, one of the many reasons she never left.

Outskirts of The Bowery

Central City

11:54 A.M.

Digger could barely believe it. He just looked at the young punk and laughed. "Oh, look at this, he's got a gun."

He shrugged and raised his hands in mock defeat. Snart smiled wryly and followed suit.

"Holding it sideways no less," the Australian continued, the events offering him significant amusement. "I tell you, MTV has ruined our industry."

The thug then backed them up a bit by jabbing at the air with his gun. "Don't you move!" he shouted with full confidence, jabbing the air again to punctuate his words. "You freaks just stay right there, or I'll ice you!"

"Ice," Digger called out, desperately trying to stifle a chuckle as he and Leonard stood pat.

The young thug never took his eyes off the two men as he started to ease himself backwards, grabbing the discarded purse from the ground as he walked.

It didn't take long before the thug was running again.

The two men walked out into the street and saw him running awkwardly in a desperate attempt to put distance between himself and them.

"How you y'like that?" Digger just chuckled again as Leonard pulled a strange gun out of a hidden pocket in his jacket and pulled the trigger.

A swath of cold air ripped from the barrel and coursed down the street, finally making contact with the thug's back, just as he was getting ready to turn the corner. Ice exploded all around him, quickly encasing the thug.

Leonard Snart walked to him, smiling contentedly as he watched the thugs eyes slowly follow his movements. Snart then leaned in, coming face to face with the thug, frozen awkwardly in the street. "Was it too much to ask? Just abide by our simple request and show a shred of respect. But you couldn't do that could you? That's why you'll never get made."

He then turned and after leaving a little distance between the ice block and himself, towards his associate. "Digger?"

On cue, the portly man pulled out a razor-sharp boomerang and launched it down the street. It followed the same course as the beam of ice and made contact in much the same place, shattering the ice, and the young man encased in it.

Digger's smile only broadened as the boomerang returned. He took a moment to wipe the blade clean on the scarf around his neck, before the boomerang was promptly returned to its proper hiding place in his jacket.

Leonard then reached in and fished out the pocketbook that had started their little adventure, leaving the rest of the mess where it lay in the street.

It didn't take long before they found the older woman it belonged to, who by this time had found some Good Samaritans to help her up and back towards her apartment. She was still startled and weak, but was much relieved when she saw her purse being returned.

"Oh my, thank you young man. Where did you...?" she muttered before stopping short as Leonard tossed the bag in her lap and continued on his way down the street without another word, Digger hurriedly following behind.

"Come on Digger, the gang is waiting."

And with that, they headed off to the bar, where the rest of the Rogues were waiting for their usual Flash Day round table.

The Central City Speedster Museum

4:17 P.M.

It would take them almost four hours, but the group finally made it into the cavernous hall that was the entryway to the Central City Speedster Museum.

They took their time after getting a close-up look at the newly dedicated statue. Wally however stared appreciatively at his representation, studying its features as one would a famous painting.

“They really captured my eyes,” he said, almost absent-mindedly and to no one in particular.

“When do I get mine?” Bart asked in a hushed tone to his cousin.

“Maybe it’s got something to do with your name... Impulse. I told you, you should use Kid Flash,” Wally replied equally hushed and more than a little condescendingly.

“I’m not your sidekick!” Bart retorted, a little louder than he intended. His voice was cut off almost immediately as Carol drove her elbow into Bart’s side.

As Carol glared, they both looked around and decided this was not the place for sure a discussion.

Looking for Iris, the trio finally found her at the opposite end of the hall, looking up at the tattered remains of Barry’s costume. At this moment, more than any other so far today, she felt alone, until she heard the sound of her boys back in the crowd.

Her nephew Wally had grown into such a fine young man. He may not have followed Barry’s footsteps into the police academy, but as the Flash he had saved hundreds, if not thousands of lives in the six years he wore

the costume. And Bart, sweet, Bart – every time she looked at him, she could see Barry. Not in his impulsive mannerisms but in his kind spirit.

She knew Barry would be as proud as she was. They were, after all, his legacy.

South Gardner Street

Central City

11:43 P.M.

That evening, all was finally quiet. The songs had all been sung, the candles had long since burned out and people returned to their homes. Life was back to what passed for normal in the Sister Cities once again.

It had been a Flash Day for the ages.

There was a stillness in the evening air on South Gardner, with most of the residents retired to their homes to await the beginning of the next work day.

When asked, the few residents that had been out on the street would say it started with a crackle. A surge of energy, audible then visible. Popping once, then again and again. The phenomenon would slowly grow in both luminescence and intensity, with each bolt lasting slightly longer than the last.

The process went on for a few minutes as the energy continued to swirl and crackle, a vortex emerging from a point in space about six feet above the street.

By the time the phenomenon manifested visibly, a good portion of South Gardner had come out of their apartments to watch the free light show, but even the bravest among them avoided close contact.

The charges were striking out in random arcs, searing the concrete below and exploding chunks from the surrounding brownstones.

People had little time to move for cover as the swirling nexus of energy suddenly ramped up in speed and size, starting to cut wider arcs,

sizzling and howling with greater and greater intensity.

They barely noticed the streak of maroon and silver that whisked them to safety, but tried in vain to articulate their appreciation in the nanoseconds before he raced off to help the next person. Usually he had come and gone several times before the first syllable left their lips.

But Wally West, the Flash, never tired of hearing them try.

Turning his focus to the disturbance above the street, he was taken aback as a figure could be seen hurtling ever closer to the mouth of the vortex. The figure, clearly a man, exploded out into Gardner Street with great force, aglow with an ethereal light as he hurtled down the double yellow line of street.

The glowing figure continued forward momentum, ripping up pavement, trashing cars, and shattering windows with errant arcs of energy, nothing it seemed would stop his inertia.

The Flash sprung into action, rearing back and connecting with the hurtling figure, attempting to quell its momentum by stealing as much speed as the creature possessed.

He roared as he felt the feedback tear through his body with the contact, nearly dropping to his knees as his muscles seized up from the experience.

But he knew he couldn't stop now and pushed through the pain, his uniform scorched, but he found the strength to endure as the creature finally stopped its forward momentum and was driven to the ground.

Wally eased himself up, and as he slowly regained his breath, he finally had time to take in the scope of the damage. A swath of destruction nearly a quarter mile long lay in their path, easily totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage.

He then looked down at the fallen figure that had caused it, but was distracted by an eruption of cheers. As people began to stir from where the Flash had put them, they shouted for their hero, and as haggard as he was, he reveled in it.

It wasn't long before three armored squad cars made their way to Gardner, guns drawn as they circled around the figure as the Flash took his leave. The figure remained motionless as the police finally took him into custody.

When asked if the mysterious man had given any indications about who he was, and what he was doing, a source speaking on condition of anonymity could only say that he spoke three words: "I'm too late."

Coming Next Issue

The destruction of Gardner Street draws the young Impulse to Iron Heights Penitentiary while Iris begins to investigate the Church of Speed and the Rogues return from their one-day sabbatical to find a surprising challenge to their power.

It's going to be a rough day for the heroes in: **Speed Kills**

If you enjoyed this story, you can find more alternate universe tales of your favorite DC heroes at [DC3 Multiverse](#).

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From the same author on Feedbacks

Ultimate Speed Force #2 (2008)

Ultimate Speed Force: Speed Kills.

Something is stirring up the Rogues as an old face returns to threaten a schism in the ranks, but all that may pale to insignificance in the face of the mysterious arrival, now locked in the heart of Iron Heights! Or considering the dark words of the Top, maybe there's more connection between the two than meets the eye!

Ultimate Speed Force #3 (2008)

Ultimate Speed Force: Zwischenzug.

Mysteries abound and trouble brews as the Rogues deal a disastrous lesson to the returning renegade known as the Top, the enigmatic Max escaped Iron Heights, Wally investigates the Church of Speed, and Bart goes on a field trip! And you just know, of all those events, Bart's has GOT to turn out the worst!

Ultimate Speed Force #4 (2008)

Ultimate Speed Force: Cadence to Arms.

The boiling cauldron that is Iron Heights has finally exploded, leaving two cities threatened as hundreds of the nation's worst prisoners threaten to spill out onto the peaceful streets of Central and Keystone.

Speedster or Rogue, no one is safe as rival factions join together, but to what end? Is this what Max has been warning about? Bart Allen may find out the hard way!



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