

Ahh, the holiday season—that most wonderful time of the year when every show decides a Christmas episode will be just the thing. The thing is: I'm not being sarcastic. People who know me know that I love Christmastime, most of all because people just seem to get more compassionate and charitable around that time.* For TV purposes, that means so much sappiness you can get stuck in it, but I don't care. It's just nice to see my favorite shows and characters get in the Christmas spirit. With The Flash, it's even nicer because this episode gives me all I wanted for Christmas: some forward movement on this dreadful Barry-Iris thing. Without a doubt, this particular plotline has been a drag on the show, forcing us to endure so many awkward moments of Barry staring longingly at the oblivious Iris. This has never failed to make Barry seem pathetic (and, as commenter TRobb says, a bit creepy) and Iris worryingly ignorant. So I'm glad that dynamic is behind us; open discomfort can lead to interesting places, whereas avoidance can only keep Barry in place. As Barry realizes later in the episode, he's already been stalled for too long. While the trauma of his mom's murder and his dad's wrongful imprisonment has nothing on Ollie's bleak history in Arrow, it is a dark stain on Barry's otherwise positive attitude. In an episode that starts off with him sipping eggnog, decorating the Wests' tree, handing out gifts to the S.T.A.R. crew, his anguish and rage over the speedster in yellow are even more noticeable. This isn't the primal Barry of "The Flash vs. Arrow," but a Barry who convincingly has a permanent thorn in his soul. Admitting he's afraid of his opposite doesn't dislodge that barb, but maybe it'll prevent it from infecting the rest of him. Recognizing this weakness also puts Barry in a better position to actually catch up to the man in yellow next time. The tantalizing thing about MIY's appearance is despite getting up close and personal with him, we still know very little about him. [Spoiler alert!] The episode tosses in all kinds of mixed signals—Wells confronting and getting beat up by MIY, then revealing MIY's suit and voice in his secret chamber; MIY's special treatment towards Eddie—leaving us with exactly the same suspects as before. There's also no real clarity as to what MIY is after. Okay, fine, he wants the tachyons to make himself invincible, or whatever (that particular plotline gets lost amidst the episode's surplus of drama), but as is, he's already the most powerful being in the series and no one, not even Barry, can really lay a hand on him. Yet he's content with killing a few unfortunate guards and cops while sparing the core cast, despite them deliberately getting in his way (especially Joe, who flat out spurned MIY's threat in "The Flash Was Born" by telling Barry about it). This choosiness indicates a specific agenda, but what that is, no one knows yet. On the plus side, we get a Christmas present in the reappearance of Ronnie, whose flame abilities make for some marvelous visuals but who also gives Caitlin and Cisco a whole plotline all to themselves. It's about time. The duo has a history that predates Barry, but often it seems like their lives only really began when he entered into it. Caitlin's grief at seeing what her fiancé has become allows Danielle Panabaker to stretch her acting chops for a very emotional outburst, and it also prevents Cisco from falling back on his usual juvenile behavior. For once, he gets to be a grounding force and he pulls it off, reminding you there are things only he, not Barry or Wells, can understand about his lab partner. As a smaller gift, this episode also nips Eddie's vendetta against the Flash in the bud by having MIY admit that he's more of a "reverse" Flash and Joe (who's suddenly in the habit of spilling stuff) flat-out admitting he knows who the Flash is. Now that Eddie's in on the secret somewhat, maybe he can finally do more in the show than run around like a chicken with its head cut off after the latest metahuman attack. Now, if only the show can do the same for Iris as a New Year's resolution. Some Musings: * Although the presents are the bomb, too. - Wells assures Caitlin, "We'll bring Ronnie home." Coming from him, that sounds ominous. I'm pretty sure "home" in his mind means the prison of super-freaks

below the lab. - I understand Christina McGee is a renovated character from the original Flash show, but other than a cute nod to diehard fans of that show, she doesn't make much of an impression here. I wouldn't mind if we never saw her again. The post The Flash: The Man In The Yellow Suit appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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