

Just as last episode took Barry through the rite of losing his powers, this one gives him a double-whammy of superhero tradition: teaming up with a fellow vigilante and losing his crap. The former is purely glee for the fans, and being a fan of both The Flash and Arrow myself, it was hard to keep my own excitement in check as I watched Barry and Ollie rub shoulders, banter, and obviously, spar against the other. There'll be a lot of happy rewatching later, but for now, I'll try to keep it objective. Fortunately, on an objective level, Barry and Ollie do play well off one another, whether as partners (enthusiastic on Barry's part, reluctant on Ollie's) or opponents. A lot of credit must go to the choreographers, stunt people, and CGI nerds because both Flash and Arrow got to shine in this episode, a remarkable feat when you consider that by any standard, Ollie doesn't stand a chance. But his at times twisted level of preparedness (e.g., distracting Barry long enough to shoot two arrows in his back) comes off very credibly here, emphasizing that Ollie's virtue is his tenaciousness and his edge is surviving long enough to eke out a win. This is intended to be a humbling experience for Barry, who, as we learned last week, does have more than a little ego about his powers. He may be playful about it, but he's cocky just the same, which lends support to Ollie saying that he can't rely on his superspeed as a replacement for thinking ahead. After rushing in to confront the anger-inducing Roy Bivolo (a.k.a. Rainbow Raider)* and getting "whammied" himself as a result, Barry can hardly deny that Ollie was right. In a way, it's kind of daring to portray Barry at his least appealing in his own show during an episode where he's competing against his rugged, chiseled rival. Not that his fixation on Iris and jealousy of Eddie was ever attractive, but both definitely look ugly when he loses the wishy-washiness that stands in for his self-restraint. This is all very predictable superhero-losing-control material: Barry unleashes all the feelings he's suppressed at exactly the wrong time and has to deal with the fallout when he gets back to normal. This sets Eddie on the path of Quentin Lance, Arrow season one, in trying to capture the crazed, superpowered vigilante, and Iris on that of Dinah Lance, Arrow season two, in vacillating between admiration and disgust. These aren't exciting directions for the couple, but it beats the whole lot of not much they were doing before. Meanwhile, everyone else gets a lot of fun stuff to do, with Team Arrow gamely falling into The Flash's lighthearted rhythm. This is a cinch for Felicity, who's easily the brightest part of Arrow, but it's delightful to see both Ollie and Diggle engaging in some humor for once. Ollie mostly plays long-suffering straight man to Barry's antics, but Diggle gets a few good lines from how clearly rattled he is by the speedster's powers: "I had a cousin who got hit by lightning once. He just developed a stutter."** Of course, the S.T.A.R. crew is used to this snappier pace, and as if to show that off to the visitors, their gags have never clicked better than here. For once, you'll actually laugh at Cisco without rolling your eyes, when he tells Caitlin, who's dismayed by a robbery at her bank, "Once super-thieves showed up, I went mattress." The eye-rolling returns later when he accidentally sets off the boomerang Team Arrow brings for the scientists to investigate, but on the other hand, it gives us Caitlin shrieking through the lab and covering her hair as the weapon flies after her. On a structural level, the episode works very well because it is a Flash episode that just happens to feature some impressive guest stars. The writers wisely avoid forcing fans of one show to visit the other with a two-parter storyline, and instead focus on making Team Arrow as appealing as possible, which is the better strategy for attracting viewers to another show. Some Musings: * Cisco insists on Prism, but I'm gonna go with Rainbow Raider because Caitlin likes it and she's too cute to deny her anything. Plus, that is actually Bivolo's codename by canon. ** Although Felicity's shirt catching fire after Barry speed-escorts her to the lab is pretty good. The fact that Barry can still insist he has no plans to tap that even after she ends up stripped to her bra is a testament to

how romantically pathetic he really is. - And the award for Line Delivered With the Most Conviction and Vagueness goes to Eddie, for ranting to Captain Singh, "Something is happening in this city, and everyone wants to pretend like it isn't, but it is, and I think we should do something about it." Bravo, Eddie—you should go into politics. Commentary! - So Singh is also gay in this incarnation, although he's open about it in a way that his comic book counterpart isn't—wasn't? The post The Flash: Flash vs. Arrow appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

Read more: <http://weeklycomicbookreview.com/2014/12/05/flash-flash-vs-arrow/>