

Thump! Ninjaface dropped onto the harbor deck. He had been called to investigate the strange events that had been occurring on the Boston waterfront. The latest of those was the ghostlike disappearance of one thousand pounds of Peruvian lead graphite that was supposed to be delivered to Justin Stovall.

The air off the sea made the tails of his black mask whip around. He walked across the harbor deck silently to the River Queen boat that had recently made port and carried many priceless jewels. He hid himself waiting for the thieves to strike.

As he waited, the seconds turned to minutes and the minutes to hours but he had to continue to wait. He was one of the only survivors of the team of ninjas that trained with Batman. Miles away the town clock struck midnight. Suddenly the sloshing of water alerted Ninjaface that his enemies had arrived. His hand gripped on his nunchucks. He waited to hear boots thump on the deck. Nothing. He heard nothing. That splash though...Ninjaface heaved a heavy sigh. It must have just been an animal.

“Crash!” Ninjaface jumped to his feet as fast as a cheetah, if not faster. Silently he ran toward the direction of the crash. He stood in front of the entrance to the vault room. A vase lay broken on the floor.

“Hello boys. You had me worried you wouldn’t come.” Fourteen men stood in the room. When they turned to face him all humor seeped from Ninjaface’s body. Yes fourteen men stood before him, but they were glowing, white pirates with cutlasses. The eerie, faded, purple glow made his eyes water. He shook his head and opened his eyes.

The pirates moved closer to him, cutlasses drawn. Ninjaface jumped into the air, spun and kicked a pirate in the chest. He swung his nunchucks causing two pirates to lose their weapons. He punched those two in their faces sending them sprawling backwards. He did a sweep kick and took four more down.

“Come, I’ll take you guys down too,” Ninjaface taunted. The pirates stayed still, staring, as if learning something important, at something behind Ninjaface. Before he could turn around a wooden board came smashing down against the back of his head. It was only seconds before he regained consciousness. He leapt to his feet and rushed after the pirates. He ran to the edge of the ship and... gone? How? No human could do that only...“Phantoms, phantom pirates,” he said aloud. Ninjaface would have sat down but sirens cued for him to leave. Just as the pirates had disappeared, so did he.

He arrived home as the clock struck one-thirty. He removed his clothes and hung them up. He walked into his living room, wearing shorts and a tank top, to see his wife, Maria, waiting for him.

“You’re home early. Did you get them?” she asked as she got up to greet him.

“No,” Ninjaface, Cliff Jones, said, “They were Phantom Pirates.”

“What?” Maria asked.

“When I fought them, I fought pirates that were glowing a faint purple,” Cliff said as he sat down and Maria plopped in his lap. ”And when I got up and went after them they vanished.”

“Well I’m sure you’ll be able to crack this case, even without Panda-Man.” Panda-Man was Ninjaface’s mutant, kung-fu, talking panda sidekick.

“Yes, but I will need some help,” he said as a grin spread across his face,” and I know just who to call.”

~

His cape whipped around in the wind. He had been waiting for Ninjaface for about an hour now. It was fine though. He was the most patient person on this planet.

“You’re late.”

“How did you hear me? We trained at the same place man.”

“Well I’ll tell you how, I’m Batman.”

“Yeah well thanks for coming to help me out. This truly is the toughest case I have ever faced,” exclaimed Ninjaface.

“You don’t know hard until you’ve faced the Joker,” responded Batman.

“Yeah, maybe next time. Now let’s get to the harbor.”

~

They arrived at the River Queen to investigate at eleven-thirty. The first place they went to search was the vault room.

From his belt, Batman took out his UV light. He waved it over the floor swiftly, searching the area for signs and clues. Outside the Wind howled sharply. Had the two been normal people they would have been terrified but they were not normal people. They were Batman and Ninjaface!

“Have you found anything?” Ninjaface asked.

“Yes,” Batman said holding a cotton swab with a strange material on it, “This is a special ingredient used for items that glow in the dark.”

“Sooo...”

“So we know they weren’t really phantoms. Right now,” Batman said as he stood up, “what we need is bait.”

“What are we going to use, my pie eating trophy?” Ninjaface said smiling though no one would be able to see.

“That was pretty awesome. I like pie but I don’t know how you could eat that much. Three thousand six hundred seventy-nine pies and only one survivor.”

“Let’s just hope the surviving pie didn’t get jealous or angry, right?” The two laughed at this remark.

“Who in the area sells paint and other craft supplies?” Batman asked as seriousness returned to him.

“Only one place, Joey’s Paint and Other Craft Supplies,” Ninjaface responded.

“He seriously named his store that?”

“He was going to name it Joe’s Depot but was too worried about a lawsuit.”

“I say we go back to your place. It’s very tiring driving the Batmobile all the way from Gotham so I could use a rest.”

“Let’s go!”

~

The living room was a complete mess. The couch and chairs were overturned and the table was laid down with its legs facing upward.

Ninjaface’s spine was an icicle. Upstairs there was a loud thump.

“What the...” Batman was cut off by a scream louder than a tornado siren.

Ninjaface and Batman ran up the stairs and into Ninjaface’s bedroom. Eyes wide they saw a stunning sight. Maria was being held captive by a giant pie with eyes, a mouth, arms and legs.

“You shouldn’t have left me,” the pie said.

“Put her down,” Ninjaface said, his voice quavering.

“The Pieman will see you later.” He jumped out the window with Maria in hand. Ninjaface plopped down on the floor.

“I should’ve eaten that pie.”

“It’s not your fault, but now we have a case to crack.”

“You’re right. First the pirates, then Maria.”

~

The store was dark and empty by now, or it should’ve been. About thirty people were gathered in the store.

“Hey guys, who’re we gonna hit tonight?”

“Shut up Phil! You wanna give us away?”

“Naw, but if you tell me to shut up again I’m gonna punch you in the face,” joked Phil.

“Would all of you shut up? I’m trying to think!” Joey was not happy with his men. All they did was bicker and give him headaches. And if he had headaches, he wouldn’t be able to plan their crimes.

All of a sudden, the lights shut off.

~

It was fifteen years ago. Pie filled the space of his stomach. Only one pie left. But he didn’t need to finish it, he had already won.

“Well Cliff, will you eat it?”

“No.”

“Well now we announce you the winner!”

A cheer traveled through the crowd. They all chanted Cliff’s name. Yes he won, or did he?

~

Thock!

“Well, well. Look who fin’ly woke mateys.”

Ninjaface tried to move but he was tied down.

“It’s useless,” Batman informed.

“Aye it is. And now yer gonna die.” The Phantom Pirates stood in front of them fully suited.

“Why Joey?”

“Times be tough and I need some money, savvy?”

“No I don’t.”

A huge welt was on Joey's face, probably caused from the struggle. That caused Ninjaface to smile under his mask.

"Does it sting?"

"Ye shouldn't 'ave attacked us. Now yer gonna die. Ther be a bomb planted in this ship and as soon as we leave ye'll be food fer de fishes."

The pirates started laughing loudly and then they began to exit off of the ship.

"Oh and Ninjaface," Joey said as he climbed to the other ship, "Pieman and Maria say hi." He then left to the other ship and pressed a button. Once the pirates were out of sight, Batman pulled a knife from his utility belt and started cutting the ropes.

"We have to go after them!" Ninjaface exclaimed as Batman swiftly cut the ropes, his were already cut. Ninjaface stood up.

"Ten, nine, eight..."

"We have to get out of here now!" Batman and Ninjaface ran to the edge of the ship but it was a very large ship.

"Three, two, one!"

Boom! The ship exploded and Batman and Ninjaface were nowhere to be seen.

~~

"So you have buoy capsules all over the place?"

"Uh, yeah, I'm Batman."

They had jumped off of the ship and into a submarine disguised buoy, just in time. They had been riding underwater for fifteen by then.

"Do you use that line every time?"

"Yeah, I'm Batman."

"Stop that!"

"Don't have to because..."

"...Because you're Batman."

"Exactly."

Ninjaface sighed and annoyance entered his body. "How much longer?" he asked.

"We'll be there in about five minutes," replied Batman.

"Good."

“Looks like your husband won’t be joining us now does it?”

“You’re all a bunch of filthy murderers!” shouted Maria.

“Shut her up,” Pieman ordered. A pirate put a gag around her mouth and she murmured as she continued to talk.

“Pieman this be brilliant. We’ll hold ‘er for ransom and then sell all de stolen products and be the richest men alive!” Joey then turned to Maria. “And you won’t be given us any trouble aye ye loud mouthed cur?”

“It’s not nice to talk to ladies like that.” The inside of the submarine was suddenly silent. The gray metals and control panels echoed no sound. The voice of a man who was supposed to be dead was just heard by all and fear engulfed all the in the sub.

“Not possible, not possible,” Pieman muttered as if trying to convince himself that what just happened didn’t.

“Actually, it is.” Two figures jumped out of nowhere and one of them launched six batarangs.

“Get ‘im!” yelled Joey as six pirates went down.

Two pirates got hit in the face with nunchucks. Batman punched two pirates in the face, knocked the cutlass out of one of their hands and then kicked him in the face. After a couple of more punches, kicks ,and nunchuck slaps, all the pirates were down except Joey.

“Batman, you handle Joey, Pieman is mine.”

The two figures pounced upon their foes. Batman and Joey exchanged punches and traded kicks, but instead of fighting, Ninjaface tore off his mask and began to eat Pieman. Screams of pain and agony filled the small submarine distracting Joey. While his head was turned, Batman took the opportunity and kicked Joey in his head knocking him out.

Buuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuurrrrrrrrrppp! Ninjaface belched loudly as he finished devouring the giant pie that was Pieman. He ran over and untied Maria and they embraced. They then turned to Batman.

“I love it when a plan... Wait! Wrong story.”

~

“...And you see officer, Joey used a submarine , with the layout of a ship on top, to act as a phantom ship.”

“Thank you Ninjaface,” said the policeman as his squad finished arresting the villains. Ninjaface and Maria then joined Batman on the roof of a tall building.

“Well I guess you’re heading back now,” Ninjaface said to his old friend.

“Yeah, the Joker is up to his schemes again.”

“Well I’ll see you...” Ninjaface turned his head back to where Batman was standing. In Batman’s place was a lonely breeze.

“How does he do that?” Maria asked as she and Ninjaface began heading home. Ninjaface smiled, as he answered, “He’s Batman.”