

Stephen Kandel

BATMAN

FALSE-FACE

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HOWIE HORWITZ

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FALSE-FACE

OPENING: FALSE-FACE, the internationally famed criminal master of disguise and trickery, has threatened to loot an International Jewelry Fair in Gotham. Alerted, the Police surround the Fair building with scores of men, dozens of vehicles, and unrelenting caution.

However, on the first day of the Fair, the Police are staggered by a message from False-Face, delivered via sky-writing. His trademark - a miquotation - appears in the air:

ALL THAT BLITTERS IS GONE!

Chief O'Hara sounds the alarm, and races into the exhibit hall - only to be reassured by the sight of the famed MergenBurg ducal jewels, still in their case. But at that moment, an aged curator reveals himself to be False-Face in disguised person! Laughing in mockery, False-Face dashes past O'Hara and outside, where he leaps into a Police riot truck, as the Police are decoyed by his accomplice, a beautiful girl, BLAZE. As the Police are baffled, False-Face and Blaze race off, and in the pursuit, False-Face touches a control - and changes the apparent Police Riot Truck into an innocent-seeming bakery van. It is - we see - False-Face's infamous Trick Truck, containing his personal laboratory, and capable of assuming any vehicular disguise.

O'Hara, disappointed at losing False-Face, is nevertheless reassured at having protected the gems -

until he discovers that they are false; clever copies left by False-Face!

There's nothing for it, but to call Batman.

Answering the Bat-phone, Batman and Robin accept the challenge - and are off!

ACT ONE: Racing to the scene of the crime, they are greeted at the entrance by another message from False-Face; another quotation:

MIGHTY CASEY WILL STRIKE OUT.

Unraveling the meaning quickly, Batman realizes that Casey, the famed slugger, or bat-man, is indeed himself, and by this message, False-Face is hurling down a challenge. Batman and Robin accept.

Meanwhile, False-Face and Blaze, who is now a different girl, different hair, eyes, etc., are making preparations for a strike against Batman and Robin. He has enlisted a gang, the COUNTERFEIT CREW, all of whom follow him loyally. False-Face realizes he must eliminate Batman and Robin before he can carry out his master plan of evil. Besides, he rather resents the fact that Batman and Robin, like himself, have successfully concealed their identities.

First - a diversion.

Blaze, disguised as a messenger boy, delivers False-Face's challenge: LITTLE BOY GREEN, COME BLOW THE SCENE.

Realizing this means an attempt on False-Face's part to rob the Ladd Armored Car Company, Batman and Robin

determine which armored car is on duty, carrying large sums of "green", and prepare an ambush.

However, they don't realize that the "armored car" is actually False-Face's Trick Truck, in disguise. The money is handed into the truck - and it might have worked, except for Batman's alertness, enabling him to realize that one of the "guards" and the "messenger boy" are actually one and the same - and both are Blaze!

Diving to the attack in the Batmobile, they pursue the Trick Truck, and follow it into a trap! The entire robbery was only bait - to capture Batman and Robin!

However, using their skills and devices, the deft duo outwit an attack by the Counterfeit Crew members, and recapture the loot. Blaze escapes, after a brief personal encounter with Batman - an encounter that shakes her to the core. And False-Face leaps into an elevator which runs up the outside of a nearby building. Pursuing the glass box via the Batarangs, Batman and Robin finally catch up at the roof - only to discover that the "False-Face" inside is merely an inflated dummy; another deft counterfeit by the master of disguises.

Meanwhile, on the street below, False-Face has stolen the identity of Inspector Basch, and in a disguise plans to entrap Batman and Robin.

ACT TWO: Having resumed their real identities for a short while, Batman and Robin repair to the Batcave for a strategy meeting. There, Batman subjects the message from False-Face to careful analysis via his Batscope, Batometer and Batanalyst and discovers that the paper is identical with the special paper used for printing money! There is only one place where such paper is stored in Gotham - the Official Banknote Printing Company.

Going there, Batman and Robin climb up the walls, enter unnoticed, and capture Blaze - red-handed with a stack of banknote paper.

Taking her to Police HQ, they call a top-level meeting in the Commissioner's office. And present, of course, is "Inspector Basch" - actually False-Face in disguise!

At the meeting, False-Face apparently attempts to eliminate Blaze - but is foiled by Batman and Robin. Indignant, Blaze offers to guide them to the hideout of the Counterfeit Crew.

They must travel by subway, apparently as innocent passengers.

However, the train they take is empty - except for a single motorman. And once below ground, that "motorman" reveals himself to be False-Face; reveals that the entire train is only a gigantic trap - and

before they can fight - Batman and Robin are cunningly gassed.

They come to enwrapped in plastic, molded about them into unbreakable bonds. And they are lying on ~~the~~ subway tracks. Blaze ~~has~~ is dismayed, but False-Face is ruthless. He intends them both to be destroyed by the BMT - Batman by an Express, Robin by a Local. They are scheduled to go within minutes. And leaving the plasticized pair enshrouded in epoxy, False-Face leaves, hauling Blaze with him.

In the distance, a whistle. The trains are approaching!

PART TWO: Recapitulation.

ACT ONE: Alfred is in despair. Pacing moddily about the Wayne mansion, his eye is caught by a banner of skywriting, flung against the blue:

MANY ARE CALLED, TWO ARE CHOSEN.

Realizing this message must have something to do with the False-Face affair, Alfred races to the Batcave, and puts in an emergency ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ call to the Batman and Robin, via high-frequency Batalarm.

In the subway tunnel, the trains are approaching, as the call comes through. Thinking swiftly, Batman rolls over, crushes his Batalarm receiver, creating a short-circuit which quickly melts the plastic bonds, and enables him to rescue Robin and himself - barely in time.

Back at the Batcave, Batman and Robin are grimly determined upon revenge. But Batman is puzzled - why the message, which enabled their rescue?

Meanwhile, in the hideout of the Counterfeit Crew, False-Face has the same grim query: who ratted? Nobody can answer that - but we detect suspicion settling on Blaze, who has been clearly attracted to Batman.

However, before suspicion can jell into action, Batman ~~xxx~~ replies.

Using the Batplane, he spells out a sky-written message over Gotham:

TO THINE OWNSELF BE FALSE.

It's a challenge False-Face cannot resist; when the Batplane lands, the Counterfeit-Crew is on hand, with Blaze as a hostage. They attempt to capture Batman and Robin, but the intrepid pair outflank False-Face, and a chase ensues! Batmobile vs. Trick Truck.

It ends with Batman and Robin rescuing Blaze, while False-Face escapes - to forge ahead with his major plan.

Now on the side of Justice, Blaze reveals all: False-Face has been manufacturing vast quantities of counterfeit money. He plans to tunnel up into the Gotham National Bank, and replace the entire assets of the ~~xxx~~ Bank with his counterfeit: billions of dollars.

ACT TWO: At the Bank, Batman lays a deft trap for False-Face, by turning his own method on him. Batman and Robin substitute

a false vault for the real one - and when the Counterfeit Crew breaks in, they're ~~xxxxxx~~ forced to reckon with the caped couple.

There's a tremendous clash in the echoing cellars and vaults of the bank; counterfeit money burns on all sides; the Counterfeit Crew is finally subdued and captured.

But in the process, False-Face vanishes. All exits are closed, and as the Police are searching, Batman and Robin receive the hearty congratulations of the Bank President. Not until the "President" leaves, is the real Bank President discovered, and only then do they realize that False-Face has done it again. Disguising himself as the Bank President, he simply walked out.

But his scheme has been foiled; his gang has been captured; his chief assistant - Blaze - has been converted to justice. Batman and Robin can congratulate themselves on a successful solution.

And so they return to their civilian identities, vanishing into the anonymity that is their refuge against discovery, recharging energies for the next Batforay.

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