



Once upon a time, Falco admitted, "Ok, so maybe giving free hot sauce wings to my grandfather isn't the best way to find Blaze."

Fremt interjected, "We need a fool-proof plan, without these complications and what-ifs. Since Shogun Honourous, is friendly to Ninja. How about we search the taxation office for addresses of Fun Dashaus House members and pay them a visit?"

Bamf argued, "But what if he is at a location of a branch that married into the Fun Dashaus House, they won't have that last name? We show up at the wrong house and they ambush us."

Fremt exclaimed, "I said no complications. How about we ignore the complications of my plan and just go for it. We are never going to find a foolproof plan."

Isabelle saw many plans but decided not to speak, realizing it would make her sound too smart to Fremt. Zoro said, "How about we solve one of our complications?"

Ahimsa asked, "What do you mean?"

Zoro said, "On the top of the Beast Mountain is the Temple of Trees."

Krispal gagged, "Oh, no, not those gross things-trees."

Zoro continued, "It holds a massive set of trees all branching from a few trunks, intertwining, separating. It documents everyone's familial relationship in Ninjago."

Bamf nervously said, "Isn't the Beast Mountain really dangerous to climb?"

Ahimsa said, "Well, I am going to climb it if it means finding Blaze."

Flowious said, "And I am going to climb it too."

Bamf stood up and said, "Well, you know, I'm sure not afraid."

Fremt said, "I'm in. I mean, how hard can it be to climb a mountain? We have a flying ship."

Sarcea added, "And a master of gravity."

Falco added, "And a fanatic that has wings while a monster."

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Blaze was aboard a small cloud slicer with Minister Steampuff. Blaze said, "You are driving wrong."

Steampuff said, "No I'm not. What experience do you have with flying a cloud slicer?"

Blaze said, "You are supposed to drive in the left lane over the Central Shoguntu."

Steampuff remarked, "We are in the sky, there aren't lanes. Foolish Blaze."

Blaze remarked, "Please let me drive. I really like to drive."

Steampuff again asked, "Your merit behind the rudder is?"

Blaze said, "Merit? I can fly because - I can fly. There, sounds reasonable, right?"

Steampuff argued, "You lack a reason. That isn't reasonable."

Blaze replied, "My ability is reason enough."

Steampuff agreed, "Fine, since you are so eager I will let you learn how difficult this is."

Blaze confidently strode over to the levers and wheel. Steampuff quickly let go and Blaze took his time to grab the controls. He said, "Now, how about some more speed."

Steampuff argued, "It is a fir propeller, I really think it will shatter above the current RPM."

Blaze pulled a lever and the vessel shot forward. They hit some turbulence and the cargo canvas bags were ripped off the vessel. Blaze brightly said, "Great, now we are lighter."

Steampuff yelled, "Oh, our trading money was in one of those bags. This will set us back twelve weeks."

Blaze argued, "Oh, well. You could have told me. Don't worry, I'll get them."

He pulled a lever that released hot air from the top of the balloon. They went into a freefall.

Steampuff yelled, "Don't bother. Why should we be behind our lives when we could be behind twelve weeks? Pull up, pull up!"

Blaze released the lever. Another ship came speeding toward them, this one a cloud junk. It was a massive ship and they were lined up dead center with the nose. Steampuff yelled, "Get in your lane, get in your lane!"

Blaze exclaimed, "I thought we agreed there weren't lanes."

Steampuff yelled, "There are in passing!"

Blaze, thunderstruck, yelled, "Brace for impact!"

The slicer shattered on impact and the crew fell onto a bank of snow which cushioned their two-hundred-foot fall. Blaze remarked, "Well, at least everyone survived."

Steampuff squeezed his four fingers like he was imagining strangling Blaze, whom had wet his pants.

Garmadon said to Wu, "I think it best we visit our father's shrine."

Wu said, "Why the change in heart?"

Garmadon said, "You need to try and connect to him in the Departed Realm."

They left the Valley of the Martial Children and arrived at the Shrine of the First Spinjitzu master. Garmadon said, "I fear speaking to him, so you must enter alone."

Wu walked under the archway into the courtyard. He entered the castle and sat on the dusty boards in front of the Spinjitzu master's staff. He saw a shadow run past in the hallways beyond the wax paper walls. Windchimes danced as the shadow rushed by, circling the innermost chamber. Wu wondered if he should enter the hallway or wait for the shadow to enter the chamber. He felt the giant foot press against him. He screamed, "Father. Answer my pleas for help!"

Garmadon heard this from outside and walked under the gateway. He saw a statue of a younger him being handed a baton by the former sacred protector. He turned away. Wu burst from the inner chamber and chased the shadow. He was angry because he had abandoned his peacefulness. She wore a white semi-transparent cloth that matched her white semi-transparent skin. She floated without feet and had a weathered yellow wooden mask in the shape of a crocodile head. Wu asked, "Are you the Shinto of this shrine?"

The Shinto said, "Yes. I am Julia the Cheerful."

Wu asked, "You must know my father, you are both in the Departed Realm and you have been tasked with protecting his shrine."

Julia said, "Your father cannot help you."

Wu asked, "Why can't he?"

Julia said, "Like fall turning into winter he is passed."

"Why isn't he the Shinto of his own Shrine?"

Julia answered, "He delegated that duty to me. He created the earth, fire, ice, and lightning and when he created this hilltop, he made me the Shinto in his passing. It was Shogun Honourous who disrespected him by building a Shrine on another Shinto's land than his own. Your father left all of Ninjago, but asked to be Shinto of none of it. This shrine was made post-humously, without his consent. He left you many things but didn't ask for you to glorify him in return, that was your own choice. Shogun Honourous is a tiger without concern for the delicate laws of the departed. He seeks to gain influence from sheep by building shrines for the great departed but doesn't follow the rules in antiquity. He is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Never trust a wolf in sheep's clothing or a sheep."

Wu asked, "You mean, the Shogun is a Snake? But what am I supposed to do? My father knew so much and I know so little. I came here for answers, not to be compared to the Shogun."

Julia said, "The point is your father was a man of great powers of creation. He created the feared serpentine, he created the Dashaus House, and he created the Sensei's League. He left behind a large inheritance for you to work with. You aren't mad because you're lost - you are because you're sad."

"Why did he have to die when I am twelve? I came here to speak to him! Can't the departed speak to the living?"

Julia said, "I have seen you have begun a spiritual journey. When it is over, you will be strong enough to accept his loss."

"Like I am." Garmadon said from the end of the hallway. Wu cried, "Why, brother? Why must you turn evil?"

Garmadon snapped, "How dare you ask me that? Just imagine how I feel."

Garmadon helped Wu to his feet and said, "It is ok. You will be strong enough for this one day. I have been through a lot since I was bitten. You couldn't leave this shrine, and I couldn't enter. But I grew stronger because of the pain of venom. It was I who crossed the gate to save you. Cry, brother. Let the departed be the departed."

Garmadon led Wu out of the Shrine and through the gateway. Garmadon said, "So I guess now we go our separate ways."

Wu said, "Next time we meet, it may be on the battlefield."

Garmadon mentioned, "Yes. And promise me you will defeat me."

Garmadon left down the hill. Julia joined Wu, ready to give one last piece of advice.

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The Destinys' Bounty arrived at the base of the Thousand-Mile-Thick Mountain range. Zoro explained, "In the center of the range is the Beast Mountain, which we have to walk to. The range has pine trees that shoot needles at flying objects. So no zero gravity, wings, or flying ship."

They heard a voice behind them say, "That's right. It isn't the tallest mountain range in the world but it is the deadliest."

The voice came from a man who resembled a marble wall with his high stature and thick chest. He wore an exuberant number of weapons on a harness. He introduced himself, "I am Virgil the Vigilant. I must warn you against climbing the Beast Mountain."

Falco said, "We have our reasons."

Virgil said, "I can get you to the top, if you learn my lessons."

Bamf asked, "You can get to the top?"

Virgil said, "Yes. I have multiple times. The mountain is not forgiving. It detects happiness. As you grow afraid foot and handholds appear, but as you grow happy they disappear. The key is ABA."

Fremt asked, "Jeep gettn' deep? Real deep."

Zoro asked, "Altos Bar Association?"

Virgil said, "No. Always be afraid. I will teach you how to always be afraid."

He instructed, "Close your eyes and focus on your fear."

The ten Ninja closed their eyes. Virgil kept his eyes open. He instructed, "Think of your fear and try to think of it for as long as possible."



One by one the Ninja were called out by looking more relaxed. They began their long hike to the middle of the Thousand-Mile-Thick Mountain Range ready for only Virgil to climb and write down the details of the Fun Dashaus House.

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Blaze and the nine Shuu Clan members kept trekking but the snowfall soon became a blizzard. Steampuff's right hand piece had frozen and was near falling off. He yelled, "If you hadn't been so irrational, we wouldn't have crashed into the other ship."

Blaze argued, "I already apologized. Do I need to sound like broken sheet music? Sometimes being irrational is correct."

They soon heard the chanting of horse's hooves. Out of the galling wind of snow stepped a horse carrying Undead X. Steampuff pulled a dagger with his left hand. Steampuff yelled, "We can't trust him."

Blaze argued, "Ah, we have to. Do you have another plan to survive this blizzard?"

Undead X led a group of ten horses. Each Shuu Clan member eagerly got on the back of one of the Ronin tribe's Indian's horses. They arrived in the gated tribe's village where they were placed by a fire to melt away their frost bite. Steampuff could move his hand again. Blaze noticed a greenhouse and snuck over to it. Inside were not fruits or vegetables, but poppy flowers. Blaze realized they were growing Efficient. After the blizzard had ended Undead X led the ten survivors to the gate and watched them leave.

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Julia said, "I may not be able to have you speak to your father, but I can share with you experiences with yourself, Garmadon and Elemental Masters that I have learned."

Wu was ready to learn what she had to teach. Julia said, "You, Garmadon, and every Elemental Master have three forms to them. A normal human form, an animal form, and a spirit form."

Wu asked, "What about Fanatics and Apathetics?"

Julia explained, "A Fanatic is an Elemental Master that is very closely connected to his animal form. An Apathetic is an Elemental Master who is closely connected to his spirit form."

Wu asked, "What is my animal and spirit form?"

Julia said, "I cannot read your animal form because I am a master of spiritual forms, but your spirit form is a Shinto."

Wu asked, "You mean I can turn into a Shinto? What are Shinto abilities?"

"Yes. You can turn into a Shinto once you are ready. One of the Shinto's abilities is to give power to other spirit forms. The amount of power they can produce is dependent on how well their sacred site is protected and maintained."

Wu said, "Thank-you. That is helpful."

"Come back to me when you and the Ninja are ready to learn about entering your spirit form."