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Summary: Billionaire Bruce Wayne is asked to support the military's
newest weapon, the ParaBomb X, a high-tech orb that emits a paralyzing
light. But during the weapon's demonstration, a general grabs the orb,
crashes through the window, and falls to the street below. Bruce Wayne is
stunned. When he looks down at the street, he sees the thief turn into a
gooey pile of mud and slip down a storm drain with the stolen weapon.
He wasn't a general at all — he was one of Batman's strangest enemies,
Clayface.

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CLAYFACE

“Very impressive, Mr. Secretary,” said Bruce. “But I’ve never been in the business of funding weapons.”

“I assure you, Mr. Wayne,” the Secretary replied, “this weapon is unlike any other. It is extremely powerful but not deadly.”

The Secretary told the guard to dim the lights. Then, he pressed the glowing green button on the sphere. Suddenly, it split in half, hinging open like a metal jaw. A bright green light flared out from inside the sphere, coloring everything in the room.



“I have the ParaBomb in safe mode, so this light cannot harm us,” the Secretary continued. “In combat, however, it could paralyze every enemy on the battlefield.”

“And what about your own troops,” Bruce interrupted.

“Safety glasses,” said the Secretary, tossing Bruce a pair of high-tech sunglasses. The guard handed out pairs to the military officials as well. “These are specially made to resist the ParaBomb’s effects.”

“And can the paralyzing effects be reversed?” asked Bruce.

“Yes,” the Secretary replied. “We’ve developed a highly effective antidote. Of course, the formula is top secret.”

“Any other questions?” the Secretary said, looking around the room.

For a moment, the room was quiet. Then something in the room started to grumble like a loud, hungry stomach.

Bruce looked over at General Werther, who had been late to the meeting. The general was sweating again, and his face was as red as blood.

“I have a question, Mr. Secretary,” he growled. “Have you ever seen a general fly?” General Werther stood and jumped onto the boardroom table.

“Werther!” yelled the Secretary. “What do you think you’re doing?”

The general reached down and picked up a pair of the special safety goggles. Then he ran down the length of the table, grabbed the sphere from the Secretary’s hands, and leaped toward the windows.



Glass shattered, and the general plummeted toward the ground below.

“He’ll die!” one of the officials cried.

Bruce shook his head. “I don’t think so,” he whispered to himself.

As General Werther slammed onto the street, his body suddenly changed. He was not a general anymore. Instead, he was a big lump of soft, muddy clay.

Unharméd, the muddy ooze slid into a storm drain. The ParaBomb X rode along like a canoe on a river.

“How did he do that?!” yelled the Secretary of Defense. “Guards, call an all-points bulletin on General Werther!”

“Good idea,” Bruce said. He stealthily picked up a pair of the special sunglasses and headed for the elevator.

“Where are you going, Mr. Wayne?” asked the Secretary. “The General just stole the world’s most powerful weapon!”

“Exactly,” Bruce replied. He stepped into the elevator and pressed the button for the lobby. “I have to secure my building.” The elevator’s doors closed. *And I must stop Clayface*, Bruce thought.

After a moment, the elevator reached the lobby. As Bruce rushed toward the building’s front doors, he pulled out his cell phone. “Call home,” he said into the high-tech device.

Seconds later, his trusted butler, Alfred, answered. “Yes, Master Bruce,” he said.

“Alfred, we’ve got trouble,” said Bruce. He walked through the revolving doors of Wayne Tower onto the street.

Bruce pushed through a crowd of onlookers that had gathered outside. He stared into the empty storm drain. “Clayface has stolen a new weapon, right from under my nose,” Bruce told Alfred.

“That doesn’t sound like his typical crime, sir,” Alfred replied. “He’s not a thief.”

“Exactly,” Bruce said, puzzled. “So what’s he up to?”

“Perhaps this might help, sir,” Alfred said. “A source has just informed me of a very unusual meeting tonight.”

“A meeting?” Bruce asked.

“Yes, sir,” Alfred continued. “A number of crime bosses are gathering tonight at the abandoned warehouse on Bay Boulevard.”

“The old sporting goods store?” Bruce asked.

“The very same,” Alfred replied.
“Perhaps Clayface will be attending.”

Bruce nodded. “Of course,” he said.
“He’ll offer the weapon to the highest bidder. Still, this isn’t normal for Clayface.”

“Even criminals out for revenge need money, I suppose,” Alfred suggested. “He has to eat while he hunts for Daggett.”

“True,” Bruce replied.

He thought about the man named Matt Hagen who had become Clayface. Hagen was once a famous, handsome movie star before a crash left him horribly disfigured. Hagen learned about a dangerous chemical invented by a man named Roland Daggett. Daggett promised that the chemical would make Hagen handsome again, and it did.

But soon, the two men fought. Then Hagen consumed too much of the chemical, and his entire body began to change. He was no longer human. He was transformed into the hulking menace known as Clayface. And Daggett became the target of the mudman’s twisted hatred.

“Thanks, Alfred,” Bruce added. “And I might be a little late tonight. I have a party to crash.”

“Of course, sir,” the butler replied. “I’ll put your dinner in the refrigerator.”

Bruce switched off his cell phone. He ran back into Wayne Tower to change into the Batsuit. “I’m getting a little tired of reheated meals,” he mumbled.