

IP: Shy Ninja

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Logline : An 11-year-old girl with social anxiety joins a ninja school to help defend herself from bullies but ends up at the center of a conspiracy where she will be forced to decide how to use her new skills.

Genre : Action Adventure, Martial Arts, Coming-of-Age, Spy/Espionage

AV Types : Live Action Series, Animated Series

AV Demographics : TV-G, TV-14

Part of larger Universe : Standalone

- Characters :**
- Rena Villanueva - She is an only child, middle-schooler who suffers from social anxiety, and is happy staying in her room and playing video games remotely with her friend Sidney. That is until she joins a ninja school which helps her confidence and provides her with skills to deal with her shyness. Rena can be a bit sassy with her psychologist, Dr. Menoly who chalks it up to her practicing her assertiveness exercises. When Master Dysart tells her she is “The Ghost,” a child with incredible natural aptitude as though born to the ways of the ninja, and will fulfill a prophecy, she laughs in his face and says that’s the setup for a dozen lame action movies. While she initially thinks she’s “cured” of her anxiety as she gains confidence in ninja school, she doesn’t understand why she’s so scared to go visit her friend Sidney. Dr. Menoly says her anxiety comes from a fear that people are watching and judging you. As the danger escalates during a big mission, Sidney encourages her to embrace her destiny and become “The Ghost.”
 - Sundar Dysart - Master Ninja and member of the secret ninja council, a long-running organization that has played a key, if stealthy, role in shaping our history and who believe in an age-old prophecy. He has ulterior motives to take over the council. He runs the Watsonville Ninja School that Rena joins. He tells the council that ninjas have become a joke and Rena is the key to restoring their status, she will fulfill the prophecy and become The Ghost.
 - Mary Villanueva - Rena’s mom is a scientist working at Emergent Technologies on a long-running project with an AI robot named Junior. She is doing her best to help Rena but sometimes finds it’s easier to throw herself into her work.
 - Junior - an advanced AI robot modeled by Rena's mom to be Rena's little sister and meant to be a helpful technology. Rena’s mom talks about Junior all the time which both bores and annoys Rena. When Rena realizes the mission Dysart sent her on is to steal Junior, she and Junior must work together to foil Dysart.
 - Sidney - Rena's best friend. He has a compromised immune system so lives in a literal bubble and communicates with Rena online, where they spend lots of time playing video games. He is supportive and caring towards Rena.

HUMANOIDS

- Antonia - Dysart's protégé who ends up training Rena. She gets injured on a mission and turns to Rena for help. She decides to leave the ninja school after Dysart betrays his students.
- Dr. Menoly - Rena's psychologist who has a more traditional approach to helping Rena with her anxiety. Very patient and encourages Rena to step out of her comfort zone.
- Matt - the local bully who likes picking on Rena. Rena uses her ninja skills to sneakily sabotage him during a baseball game.

Book Plot/Twist : Eleven year old Rena feels different from other kids her age. She prefers to move through life unseen, like a ghost, to avoid interaction with anyone who's not Sidney—a boy in a bubble who can't go outside, and her only friend, with whom she communicates strictly online. Rena's mom is a work-obsessed scientist who is developing a new AI technology, JUNIOR. She is worried about her daughter's lack of social interaction and encourages her to join a club, per Rena's therapist's advice. Reluctantly, Rena and Sidney brainstorm ideas for clubs Rena could join that would require minimal social interaction and Sidney jokingly sends her an application for a Ninja School that he found online. Rena, desperate to appease her mom and therapist—and maybe a little bit curious—clicks the button to apply.

The next morning, Rena awakens to Dysart at her front door, the Master of the Watsonville Ninja School. Apparently, Rena's score on the aptitude test she took online was the highest he'd ever seen, and they must begin instruction immediately. But when Rena arrives at the dojo, Dysart tells her that he has spent his entire life searching for a child of the prophecy: The Ghost, an individual born to be a ninja, who will lead the ninja clans and restore them to their former glory... and that child is Rena.

He tells her that her social anxiety isn't an ailment, it's just her instincts pushing her to become the ninja she was born to be. After a day or two of reluctance, Rena finally gives in and begins her rigorous training under Antonia, another of Dysart's prodigies, and finds that she can use her newly acquired skills to fight the evil in her everyday life, like protecting the other "outsiders" at school from the bullies.

Meanwhile, Antonia is preparing for a "big mission that could save many lives" and gets mysteriously injured. Rena proves to Dysart that she can take her place! She's ready! Now, she has to break into a tech laboratory and steal top secret information on a new software that's being developed for the mob, and turn it into the FBI! Against Sidney's advice, Rena accepts the mission without realizing it's an elaborate plot to steal her mom's technology for JUNIOR, a classified military project that's far more advanced than anyone realizes.

When her mom is taken away by the FBI for questioning, Rena and Sidney have to figure out how to save her AND the world from the ninjas who can now become all-powerful with their stolen technology!

Rena and Sidney succeed with the help of JUNIOR, Dysart has fled, and the story ends with Rena meeting Sidney (who is using a remote viewer robot) out

in the world to see a movie together.

- AV Key Attributes :**
- Themes and Topics: Self-discovery; Social disorders/anxiety; Friendship; Justice; Social technology and AI; Ninjutsu
 - Like WANTED for kids
 - Addresses social anxiety (and therapy) in a unique, empowering way
 - Predominantly female cast, including a young girl protagonist and her scientist single mother
 - Overcoming and working through challenges by becoming a ninja!
 - Fun hero's journey with a relatable protagonist