

SUPER GALAXY KNIGHTS **STARSTUFF STORIES**



If You Can't Beat 'Em...

Hey.

So.

This one's got some adults hitting little kids in it.

And it's a bit graphic.

If that's something you don't want to read about, I'd recommend staying away from this story.

Thank you.

“So, let me get this straight. You decided to join a criminal organization in the hopes of striking it rich... then chickened out in your first assignment and ran off, correct?”

The nervous teenager nodded. The police officer sitting across from him looked up from his computer and sighed.

“And rather than join some other gang in an attempt to keep yourself safe, you have decided to apply for a job at... the police.”

“If it's possible, yes.”

The police officer lifted his tricorne hat and scratched his head. “Listen, kid,” said the man as a criminal carried a police car past him, “I don't know how to tell you this, but...”

Suddenly, the police officer started to sweat. His furled brow perked up, and his mouth slowly wrenched itself into a horrifying grin.

“...we would love to have you on board!” said the man through gritted teeth. “We're always looking for young new applicants at the Cunoze City Police Department!”

“That's great!” shouted the young man. “Thank you so much for the opportunity!”

The police officer gasped as his smile disappeared, and he clutched his chest. “N-no problem,” said the man. “Let me just get the contract out for you.”

The man began to scrape at his desk. As he did, the wooden surface was pulverized into sand, and piled up into one corner. The man pulled a piece of paper out of the hole in the desk, then pushed the sand back in. The young man watched the sand fill the hole and turn back into wood, with no evidence of any damage left over.

“Here you go,” said the officer, handing the paper over to the teenager. “All you need to do is sign your name at the bottom, saying that you'll abide by the rules in our rulebook.”

“Ok, got it,” said the young man. “So is there some way I could, like... read a copy of the rulebook?”

The officer shook his head. "Sorry, kid. There's only one copy, and Chief Onca carries it with him everywhere."

"Oh. Well... is there anything I should know about?"

The man opened his mouth to say something, but his face suddenly contorted itself into that twisted smile again. "Ha ha, well, nothing I can complain about!" strained the officer. His face relaxed again, and he sighed. "Let me get you a pen..."

"Oh, no need for that!" said the teenager. "Check this out!"

The kid pulled what looked to be a small jet airplane out of his back pocket. He clicked the tail in, and a pen tip popped out of the front of the plane.

"Huh, that's pretty neat, kid," said the man. "Where did you get that?"

"Oh, my parents looted it from an abandoned department store, like, five years ago," said the teenager. "They knew I liked model airplanes, so they always collected gifts for me whenever they went out."

The boy signed his name (Xobulu Horajufa) and sighed. "Man... I really miss them."

"Why, what happened to your folks?" asked the officer as he buried the contract in his computer monitor.

Xobulu looked down and fidgeted with his pen. "I... I'm not sure. One day after school, I came home and all our furniture was just... gone. I found my parents in the middle of our apartment – naked, bald, shriveled up, toothless, and with huge holes in their bodies. The only thing that was left was my model airplane collection. I don't know why this happened... the only thing I can think of is that they were late on rent for a few months, but what kind of debt collector would do something like that?!"

"I have no idea how or why that possibly could have happened either!" said the officer in a weirdly robotic voice. He shook his head and started typing on the computer. "Ok, well, to start, you're going to be administering parking tickets. Sound reasonable?"

"Um, does anyone in Cunoze City actually park cars outside?" asked Xobulu as the plane-pen

floated back into his pocket.

“Well, not exactly,” said the officer. “But the position pays 14 Dojiti an hour.”

“I’ll take it!” said Xobulu.

The door behind Xobulu began to open. The teenager turned to look at the opening door, and his eyes opened wide at the sight of a crying red-haired girl. The girl wiped her eyes and looked around, before turning to the nearest officer.

“Can I help you?” asked the officer, as he gave cursory glances to the teenager crouched under his desk.

The six-year-old girl stepped towards the officer's desk, continuing to wipe away her tears. “M... Mr. Policeman? I... my mommy and daddy...”

The girl started bawling. The officer reached out a comforting hand for the girl's shoulder. Suddenly, the muscles in the man's arm tightened, and he slapped the girl across the face. The girl stopped crying out of shock. The officer gasped and quickly pulled his arm back.

“I’m so...!” started the officer before sighing. “Just... just take a seat.”

The little girl pulled herself into the chair previously occupied by Xobulu. She touched the red mark on her face and sniffled a little. The officer began to type into his computer.

“So, kid, what's your name?” asked the man.

“Pejiba,” answered Pejiba.

“Ok, Pejiba. You can call me Officer Kidd. Where were you when you last saw your parents?”

“We were at the... a play with singing 'n stuff. We left the singing show, and then a man with a gun ran up, and...”

Pejiba began to cry again.

“Did you get a good look at the man, Pejiba? Do you know what his face looked like?”

Pejiba shook her head. Under the desk, Xobulu let out a sigh of relief.

“Hmm... well, can you think of anyone who would have wanted to hurt your parents? Any adults who didn't like your mom or dad?”

Pejiba nodded. “When Miss Possprecker comes over to talk to mommy, daddy and me run to play hide and seek together. And when Miss Crow comes over to talk to daddy, mommy and me play hide and seek. Miss Possprecker and Miss Crow always yell super loud, and mommy and daddy never want them to come over.”

“Prospector and Crow...” muttered Kidd. “...Yes, I can see why they tried to hide their marriage...”

Xobulu saw two large feet approaching the desk as Kidd continued to type. A massive hand landed on Kidd's shoulder.

“So, officer,” said the big man, “Who's our guest?”

“Ah, Chief Onca!” said Kidd nervously. “This here is Pejiba. Her parents were just killed – I believe the rival gangs they belonged too didn't approve of their marriage, so one of the gangs ordered the entire family killed.”

“And which gangs would those be?”

“The 49ers and the Ravens, sir.”

“The bankers and the international traders then,” said the chief. “A lot of money in those two gangs, wouldn't you say?”

“Y-yes, I suppose I would, sir,” said Kidd.

“Well, you don't need to worry about that anymore,” said Onca. “I'll be taking care of the investigation from here. Little girl, follow me.”

Pejiba hopped out of her chair and ran up to Onca. The chief's eyes narrowed as he looked down at Officer Kidd.

“Say, Kidd...” said Chief Onca, tightly clutching a dirty book in his left hand. “Is there anything

you're keeping a secret from me?"

"There was a new recruit hired five minutes ago, sir!" shouted the officer. "He's hiding under my desk!"

Xobulu sighed. Sheepishly, he crawled out from under the desk. The boy used one hand to pull himself up, and the other to cover a fresh tattoo on his neck reading "49".

"Ah, splendid!" said the chief. "Come with me, new recruit. Let me show you the ropes!"

Xobulu followed Onca. Pejiba looked back at Xobulu as they walked, but he averted his gaze. Soon, the three had arrived in the chief's office. In the middle of the room was a folding table, with a chair in front of it. Towards the back of the room was an ornate desk, and behind that was an open window. Chief Onca ruffled through his desk drawers, continuing to hold the book in his left hand. After a few seconds of searching, he pulled out a piece of paper and a pen. The chief placed the paper and pen on the table, and turned to Pejiba.

"Girl, can you please write your name on this paper?"

Pejiba nodded, then sat in the chair. She took the pen and wrote her full name (Pejiba Va) on the paper – although her letters were printed in all caps and incredibly messy.

Chief Onca chuckled. "And now it's done. The contract you just signed says that every valuable object you own will be given over to me immediately. Assuming you inherited all of your parents' possessions, that means all of your family's assets now belong to me!"

"Now, hold on!" shouted Xobulu. "Pejiba's, like, six! There's no way that contract is legally binding!"

"Legally binding? Of course not," said Onca. The chief lifted up the piece of paper, and a black aura glowed around it. "But thanks to my ability, every contract I draw up is magically binding! And enforcement can be... harsh."

As Chief Onca said those words, a jeweled egg flew in through the open window. Onca turned around and caught the egg with cat-like reflexes. There was a black aura around the trinket, but this faded away in the chief's hands.

“This little egg is worth 70 million Dojiti all on its own!” shouted Chief Onca. “Pejiba, I knew your parents had dough, but I didn't realize they were on par with the monarchy!”

Pejiba looked down at the ground and started panting heavily as more jewels flew into the room. Xobulu looked at Pejiba, then back at his new boss.

“This man... he's a monster!” thought Xobulu. *“I have to stop him somehow!”*

“Hey, Chief!” shouted Xobulu. “You're a beautiful and kind person, and you're a genius too! Here, take my wallet!”

Xobulu took his wallet out of his pocket, almost knocking out his 6049 Limited Edition Fighting Biplane in the process. The wallet plopped onto the ground. The chief laughed.

“Let me guess – you were trying to tell me off?” said Onca. He lifted the dirty book up and pointed it at Xobulu. “Hate to break it to you kid, but the contract you signed was magically binding too. Everyone working for me has to follow the rules in this book – and rule number one is that you can't ever attack or insult me!”

Pejiba's breathing quickened again. She clutched her chest, fell off of the chair, and began to moan.

“I have to help her!” thought Xobulu.

Xobulu reached out and grabbed Pejiba's arm in an attempt to help her up. As soon as Xobulu touched her arm, however, his muscles tensed up involuntarily. Xobulu watched in shock as he twisted her arm with as much force as his 19-year-old body could muster, and heard the loud pop as he dislocated her shoulder. Pejiba screamed, and Xobulu pulled his hand away.

“Ha! That never gets old,” laughed Onca. “Rule number twenty-six! All officers of the law must be as brutal as possible in physical interactions with the general public. In other words – any time you try and help someone, you'll end up attacking them! Ow!”

The “ow” in the previous line was spoken due to a set of clothes flying through the window at high speeds and smacking the chief in the back of the head. Chief Onca dropped the gold bars he was holding and pulled the clothes off his back. He stared at the bloodstained dress and three piece suit that sat in his right hand.

“Hmm... it seems the acceleration built up quite a bit on these,” muttered Onca. “I suppose it must have taken a while to break free from those rich idiots' corpses... well, whatever, they'll sell regardless!”

Pejiba's screams intensified. She continued to clutch her chest, but now a bloodstain was blooming out from underneath her hand. Xobulu looked on in horror.

“Ah, now for the fun part!” shouted the chief. “Usually I get more jewelry first, but I suppose a healthy child heart does sell pretty well...”

Xobulu's head spun. *“I have to figure out how to stop this guy before he kills any more innocent people! But how can I do anything against him? I can control any of the model planes I have with me, but if I try to hit him with them, that will break the rule! And if I try to somehow rescue Pejiba with my planes... I'll end up hurting her even more! So what can I even do?!”*

Xobulu closed his eyes and stuck his hands in his pockets. Blood spurted out of Pejiba's chest, and she screamed even louder.

“No... I can't delay any longer!” shouted Xobulu. He curled up his hand into a fist. “Hey, Pejiba! Take THIS!”

Xobulu punched straight into Pejiba's open mouth. Xobulu winced as he felt a number of smashed-out teeth fall past his hand. He pulled his fist out and sighed.

“It's no use,” said Chief Onca. “Soon, every object of value that she owns will be in my grasp. Her money, her organs, her blood plasma – everything. And there's nothing you can do to stop me!”

“You... I see it now!” Xobulu yelled. “The landlord who killed my parents and stripped their bodies... that was you, wasn't it!”

“It may have been,” retorted the chief. “I've been a landlord from time to time. But if so, it's only because they didn't pay their rent. They knew the consequences when they signed that contract, so their deaths were on their own hands!”

“I mean this with all due respect, chief,” said Xobulu with a forced smile on his face. “You can't run from your crimes forever. They will catch up with you.”

The chief opened his mouth to tell his recruit off, but noticed a pale green glint out of the corner of his eye. He looked down and saw a powerful green aura, emanating out of Pejiba's mouth.

“See, you never said *what* we were allowed to do to civilians,” said Xobulu. “Only *how* we were permitted to do it. So, I was able to give Pejiba a gift... I just had to do so brutally. As for the gift in question - that would be the 6049 Fighting Biplane, the most valuable thing my parents ever looted. It’s limited edition, and an antique. Ballpark, I’d peg its value at around the 2 million Dojiti mark.”

“So why-“

“Why isn’t it flying at you right now? Well, see, you aren’t the only one here with a magic ability. My magic gives me the ability to control model airplanes! While your rules keep me from shooting the plane right at you, they don’t stop me from holding the plane back. And really, is it my fault if that means your ability will just keep ramping up the acceleration? So all I need to do now is lose focus for just one instant and...”

The green aura around the plane disappeared. The plane shot forward at bullet-speed. Before Onca could react, the steel toy slammed into his forehead. The chief fell backwards into his desk, dropping everything in his hands. He slumped over and closed his eyes.

Xobulu reached to help up Pejiba, but stopped himself. He turned and walked over to Chief Onca instead, and put his fingers on the chief’s wrist. Onca’s eyes shot open.

“Checking the body - very good,” said the chief with a smirk. “We’ll make a strong police officer out of you yet, rookie. But unfortunately, it seems your plan to kill me was a failure.”

“Kill you? Oh no,” said Xobulu. “I just needed to distract you. See, I realized something. You have hundreds of rules in that book. Surely there’s one to prevent officers from tampering with the book itself? But then I considered - if such a rule existed, why would you need to have the book on hand at all times?”

Chief Onca’s eyes opened wide. He patted the ground around him, looking for the rulebook. Eventually, he spotted it. The dirty book was lying to the chief's left. Writing in the book, with a pale pink aura around it, was a pen shaped like a plane.

“I’m not sure if you ran out of space or if your ability has some weird condition about recursion or something, but that wasn't particularly important to me. All that mattered was the mistake you made. And thankfully, you told me exactly what rule I needed to change. Rule one - officers of the law must ALWAYS attack Chief Onca!”

The aura faded away, and the pen dropped to the ground. Xobulu grabbed Onca by the throat and lifted him into the air. The wall behind Pejiba turned to sand, and about a dozen officers rushed in. Xobulu swung the chief around. The officers all opened fire. Blood splashed out of Chief Onca's body as the bullets hit their marks. Onca's body crashed against the floor. The contract on the table turned to dust. Xobulu kneeled down next to the chief. He heard a breath- faint, but still there.

“It's over, Onca,” said Xobulu. “Your crimes have finally caught up with you. Finally, my parents will have justice.”

Chief Onca looked up at the young man. Weakly, he lifted a hand up to Xobulu's neck – smearing blood on his fresh “49” tattoo.

“Funny,” wheezed the chief. “You claim to be for justice, but it seems you have some crimes of your own. I wonder how long you can keep running...”

Onca's hand fell, and the light left his eyes. Xobulu turned around to see the officers behind him. Kidd reached out to help Pejiba as she stood up, but she pushed his hand away. All the other officers were too stunned to stop the little girl from running out of the door.

The following years went by in a flash for Xobulu. It seemed like he was promoted to chief mere minutes after defeating Onca (because he was). All his work chipping away at the city's crime problem felt like it happened over days or weeks rather than two decades.

As Chief Xobulu Horajufa lay awake every night on the roof of the station, he knew, deep down... these years wouldn't last. Sooner or later, his crimes would catch up with him. The only solution was to delay the inevitable as long as possible. Everything Onca did and then some. Change names, skip town – anything to run away from his destiny!

Yet, he stayed.

Justice would be served.