Talent

A story by: Luke Wagstaff

Introduction

  Welcome to the year 3079! I'm Neil. I live in block 2.9 in the masculine military training unit of the techno-verse.

  Let me explain. Every year, the government chooses 500 boys and girls. The government sends them to the techno-verse, a place where they're trained to gain a strong sense of community.

  These people all have some ability that the government needs for fighting our enemies, the Shorglins.

  The Shorglins are a bad alien species that shapeshift into important people and then force them into the Space Prison.

The chosen are training to defeat the Shorglins and release everyone. But I know a secret. I found out that the principal of the Training Unit Academy is an enemy Shorglin!

Nobody knows this besides me and you. I can't share this with anyone, for fear that they won't believe me and report me as a troublemaker. With a Shorglin as the principal, I'll be sent to the Space Prison for sure!

But I have a plan. My specialty is I'm a coder, and I think that I can redesign the techno-verse in my favor!

Part 1

The Talent

The government says to play "Community Exercises," otherwise known as soccer.

We play this in the techno-verse because Shorglins don't know how to code. Unfortunately, they do know how to access the techno-verse. Only you and I know this.

To "enhance our community skills," they also add the Talent. Basically, in the code of the techno-verse, the Talent is given to one random player every round.

If the name of this player is said, though, the Talent is taken away. This can win the soccer game, because the Talent is extremely powerful.

The Talent is the ability to turn physically invisible. This means you can't hear or see them, and they can go through solid objects, except the soccer ball, or if they're in the goal box.

So to recap: the government brought me here to learn 500 names to gain community skills by playing rigged soccer games. Now let me tell you how I'm going to use the code to reveal the Shorglin at our academy.

Part 2

The Plan

My plan is to find the central computer system of the techno-verse.

I'll break into the principal's office while he's gone. Then I'll quickly open the software and add some text that will aid me. As a coder, it should be easy.

Dang, it's time for a game. Time is running out. The more games I attend, the higher the chance that I am the one that ends up with the Talent.

That's bad because I need to access the code before I get the Talent. There's 500 people, and if I am chosen, I have to wait for all the rest to get their turn before I get my turn again.

The quicker I access the main system, the better. Fingers crossed I won't get the Talent!

Part 3

The Game

The game is starting. The other team has the Talent, so it can't be me.

We get the ball first, because we don't have the talent. Grass swishes nearby. I think I've found the Talent.

Our dribbler dashes forward. I'm good at soccer, but my expertise is keeping the ball, not dribbling.

Our first play goes like this: Our dribbler goes up the field, then does a pass backward to me, then everybody rushes to me, and I wait for an open pass.

We're going. He passes to me. Half their team, including the Talent, rushed to me. I keep the ball, then boom! I pass to an open teammate, and he makes a goal.

We cheer, and I smile for the first time since I saw the Shorglin. But now we have a problem. The person with the Talent has the ball.

He's easily dribbling up. Phasing through everyone, forcing the ball to follow. Undefeated, he reaches the goal box.

But someone from his team shouts, "Hey, where's Carter?" The Talent leaves the game, and he comes into view. Our defense gets the ball and sends it upfield.

I laugh. The government's Talent idea isn't quite working. If you share your name, someone on your own team might take away the talent.

We win the game easily, for the reason that the other team has lost the Talent. I sneak away to the principal's office.

Part 4

The Reveal

I creep in. The Shorglin isn't there. I open up the code to the techno-verse.

It was streamlined for easy use. I open up the code for the soccer field, and begin scrolling for the Talent.

I hear something in the hallway, and hide under the desk. The Shorglin walks in as the principal, then closes the door, and changes into its normal form. It looks like a tiny elephant from waist up and a frog from waist down. They are slightly larger than humans.

It does a short ritual. Thrusting its arms forward, a portal appears. It leads to a dark planet with a purple-red starlit sky, even though it is day.

The Shorglin enters the portal, so I quickly code something for his office that stops portals from closing. The portal stops shrinking at about the size of a soccer ball, ironically.

The Shorglin furiously tries to fit back through the portal, but it's too big.

I reopen the soccer field file. I find the Talent section. I see a bunch of files, and scroll through until I find myself. I create a line of code: 'Add Neil Kershaw to group Talent for time INFINITY.'

It works! I turn physically invisible, and phase through the Shorglin. I grab a Shorglinian weapon, and blast my way to free

everyone from Space Prison. Once back in the world, I add code to teleport all Earth Shorglins back to their home. Then I force close the portal, and seal their universe away.

I've done it! I've saved the planet from Shorglin domination!