



The Meaning Of Names

Lilo & Stitch: The Series (Cartoon) · Not Rated · 1761 words

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It was in the middle of a rare truce when Gantu found out about the name thing. Or: An alternate way that Reuben could've gotten his name.

Fair warning: I haven't watched this series in literal years, so I have no clue how in- or out-of-character this might be 😊

Enjoy anyways! :)

It was in the middle of a rare truce — working together to repair the ship was vital if none of them wanted to blow up, but not quite so urgent or difficult that anyone was all that worried about it — when Gantu found out about the name thing.

"How about Peanut?" Lilo said randomly as she struggled to pull out a thick wire from a semi-dismantled control board. She turned at a loud snort of derision from 625. "What's wrong with that one?"

"Kid," 625 told her, rolling his eyes, "I'd rather keep that pretty little number as my name for the rest of my life than go by Peanut for even so much as a day."

625 was sitting a bit off to the side, making sandwiches to 'fuel their strength for all this hard work'. He mostly just offered what he made to Gantu, but he'd fallen victim to Lilo's rather manipulative but adorable sandwich-acquiring techniques a handful of times by that point.

He refused to give any to Stitch, but that was okay; Stitch was having more fun stealing the sandwiches than he'd ever have just being given one.

"What are you two blabbering about?" Gantu asked angrily. He twisted the tool in his hand further into the ship's inner circuitry with a small grunt of effort. The repairs weren't hard, per se, but they were taking far more time than he would like.

He was eager to be done with this not-actually-pointless-but-sure-felt-like-it task so he could get back to capturing Experiments.

"My dear cousin's little human has been trying to give me a name, recently," 625 explained. Reciting things he knew was one of his only real uses, Gantu thought. "I, uh, haven't really liked anything she's come up with so far."

Gantu let out a single sharp, admittedly mean laugh. He couldn't help it.

"What?" Lilo asked, immediately on the defensive at his tone. Stitch paused in his task of lifting heavy wall panels and welding them back into place to growl menacingly at Gantu; as he hadn't been paying attention to the conversation, he was set off more by Lilo's distress than by anything that was actually said.

"Oh, nothing," Gantu said with a smile. Perhaps picking on a little girl should not brighten his mood this much, but in his defense she was more of a little menace than a little girl and was constantly messing up his day, so he felt a bit justified in enjoying the angry look on her face. "I just find it amusing that you could come up with hundreds of names without issue, but struggle with a name for *that*." He jabbed a thumb at 625, who dutifully paused in his sandwich-making to wave in acknowledgment.

Lilo scowled. "It's not that easy, you know."

Gantu scoffed. "It's a *name*," he pointed out. "Millions of idiotic humans name things every day on this planet."

"That doesn't mean it's not hard," Lilo snapped. She might've said more, except for the fact that an alarm suddenly cut through her words.

They spent over ten minutes running around in a panic, arguing over who had miswired what while simultaneously trying to stop the engine from exploding and vaporizing them all. Even 625 helped, if only for his own self-preservation, by working with Stitch to hold the extremely heavy engine casing in place while Gantu and Lilo did the actual repairs.

Gantu leaned against the wall, panting in exertion and relief. He deserved a brief rest, he thought, before resuming the calmer repair work needed.

625 had gone back to making his sandwiches as if nothing had happened. But he was an Experiment, albeit a lazy one, and things like almost dying in a fiery explosion didn't really affect him much once the danger was past.

They did, however, affect little girls. Lilo was curled in the Captain's chair, hugging Stitch close to her in a tight embrace that would hurt a lesser creature. Stitch rumbled soothingly, gibbering in that broken way of his about some sort of breathing thing the pair had learned recently.

Soon, Lilo had calmed herself enough to start helping with repairs again, even if she was still a little rattled.

"Why don't you give it a try?" she asked randomly.

It took Gantu a moment to realize that he was the one being addressed, as the girl had most of her upper body in an access vent. When he did, he simply said, "What?"

He really was getting tired of this ridiculous truce. Interacting with her was frustrating enough as enemies, but Gantu decided it was far worse as allies. You couldn't shove an ally into a containment pod when they began to annoy you, after all.

"If you think naming Experiments is so easy," Lilo clarified, pulling herself out of the vent and sitting up to look at him, "then why don't you try it?"

Only Stitch noticed the way that 625's ears perked up at that, despite how the rest of him seemed as fully engrossed in sandwich-making as he had been before. Stitch considered him for a minute, then turned back to his welding without a word. His cousin could and would speak up for himself, he knew, even with Gantu. He didn't need Stitch's worry or help when it came to accepting and denying names.

"I see no point in doing such a thing," Gantu dismissed, and this time no-one saw when Reuben frowned slightly at his words. Gantu scowled at a particularly tricky bit of reprogramming needed for the ship to be able to use their modifications to actually move at all.

"Told you it wasn't easy," Lilo said smugly. She started hammering panels back into place, a noisy and pseudo-destructive task that suited her well.

Gantu sighed. He thought through all the sandwich-related words he knew thanks to 625's obsession (it wasn't a function or a glitch, 625 had revealed to him once in a moment of vulnerability, it was just something the Experiment had latched onto on his own). He thought about 625 in general.

"Reuben!" he snapped loudly in 625's direction, making the Experiment — and everyone else — startle. Gantu pointed at him. "You are Reuben, now."

625 blinked blankly at him. Pleased with his own decision, Gantu nodded in satisfaction and went back to work. This ludicrous conversation was over now, obviously, so he could focus on the important stuff again.

Rolling her eyes, Lilo turned to 625 and said comfortingly, "Don't worry, 625, we'll find you a proper—"

"Reuben," the Experiment interrupted, still looking and sounding vaguely blank.

"What?" Lilo asked.

Shaking himself out of whatever stupor he'd been in, he grinned broadly and told her, "Didn't you hear, kid? I'm *Reuben* now."

Any response Lilo may have had was interrupted by Gantu snapping "Reuben!" in the exact same tone of voice he'd used last time. It was the voice he always used when calling for the Experiment that had somehow become his partner-in-not-technically-crime. "Is that next sandwich ready yet?" he grumbled, despite having angrily claimed hours ago that sandwiches were not helpful when repairing a ship.

"Coming right up, Gantu!" *Reuben* replied, saluting with his peanut-butter knife. His grin had somehow become even wider and even more delighted than it had been mere moments ago, a feat Lilo hadn't thought possible. He started making a sandwich with renewed passion, his tongue sticking out of the side of his mouth in focus, and completely ignored Lilo's existence.

Sharing a bemused look with Stitch, Lilo shook her head with a smile and went back to repairing the ship.

Lilo watched as Reuben held out the sandwich to Gantu, bouncing slightly where he sat as he waved the foodstuff towards him. The big grumpy shark man surprised Lilo by actually mumbling a short 'thanks' as he took the sandwich. With a small, pleased little grin, Reuben began making yet another sandwich.

Lilo sighed, the sound turning into a small chuckle. Stitch turned to her curiously.

"Well," she whispered to him, "at least we won't have to worry about finding Reuben's one true place."

Stitch snorted, nodding in agreement. "Yeah, yeah, yeah," he gibbered. He looked at Reuben with a lopsided smile.

Unlike Lilo, Stitch wasn't surprised that Reuben had so easily accepted the name Gantu gave him, despite being so picky beforehand. Stitch was Stitch just because Lilo had dubbed him so, after all. Not every name needed deeper meaning or story behind it, some just needed to have come from someone you care for, and didn't need to mean anything other than *this is home*.

And he did so like it when his cousins found their homes on their own...

...even if that home was with a crazy bounty hunter determined to send their entire family to their would-be master.

Stitch shrugged. Every family had one or two oddballs, he'd learned. Freedom vs being some hamster guy's private army was surely just one of those petty squabbles families sometimes had, right?

The ship eventually flew and they all made it back to Earth. Which meant that everything was business as usual. Stitch cackled in glee as he evaded Gantu's attempt to shove him into a containment pod. He scrambled up a tree, using a midarm to shoot lasers at Gantu with his gun while he did so.

Lilo had run off to get Jumba and Pleakley for backup. It looked like things were about to go from *mildly disruptive* to *complete chaos*.

Stitch grinned, baring his teeth. Good, he thought, things had been getting a bit too chummy for his tastes.

Lilo had reformed him, she'd done a good job of it. But *tamed* was something he'd never be.

Stitch hopped out of the tree and launched himself into the air, laughing like the doomsday-bringing maniac he was originally programmed to be and duel-wielding laser guns with his midarms. Gantu screamed in surprise as the feral not-koala landed on his face.

Reuben sat on the gangplank of the ship, watching the proceedings while eating his now-namesake sandwich.

Both Experiments had the exact same thought, at that moment: Now *THIS* really is the life.

(Gantu was mostly thinking AHHH! Get it off *me!*, but who cares about that?)

— end of "The Meaning Of Names" —