

DLC/FanFic Treatment for “Still There” Game

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This goal of this document is to outline the overall story, characters, and puzzles for a potential “Still There” FanFic Twine based adventure. “Still There” sets up a rich universe that is still ripe for exploration, including opportunities to dive deeper into the intertwining lives of the characters themselves. The game ends somewhat nebulously with Karl, Gorky (if you backed him up on the floppy), and Elle exiting the story falling further into the time anomaly, their fates uncertain.

The new FanFic experience will mimic much of the tone of the original game: Jaded, wry, cynicism with dashes of tender and humorous moments. This document (and twine game) will focus mostly on the first act of the broader story, which will remain WIP for the foreseeable future.

The Ballad of Gorky

In this story, Karl has backed up Gorky at the end of the previous game. The floppy has popped out of the time stream, floating in space near the wreckage of the Bento. It is recovered by a lone, down on her luck scavenger, Joey Kowalski. She is the player’s avatar like Karl Hamba was in the original game. As she inserts the recovered floppy into the ship’s mainframe to inspect it, Gorky springs back to life, shuts down the current AI on the ship, and hijacks the controls. Through Joey’s conversation with Gorky, the player finds out Karl had saved one additional file on the floppy that contains just two lines:

1. A date and time, along with a space navigation coordinate
2. The text string “Still there asshole.”

Gorky, feeling he owes Karl for saving him, convinces Joey to help him find Karl in exchange for lost research data on the anomaly that she could sell to the highest bidder on the black market. With that money, she could retire from scavenging (scavenging space for high value items and materials) and pursue her dream of becoming a burner jockey on the GravShot circuit. The two set off on the journey to find Karl, uncertain what they will uncover.

1. Room/Location Changes:

- a. Like the first game, all action would take place inside a pan scan “room” that makes up the cockpit of Joey’s small scavenger ship.
- b. The Bento had no windows before, but it could offer additional contrast from the previous game if her ship had glass to see outside. This could add some extra interaction/animation possibilities.

2. Puzzles:

- a. Whereas the last game focused on mundane day to day maintenance, this DLC would focus more on engine, propulsion, and navigation puzzles as they search the galaxy.

- i. GravShot puzzles: The GravShot circuit is the future space equivalent of F1 racing in space. Joey has always aspired to be a pro racer since she took an interest as a child and her mom bought her the toy burner set.
- ii. The main theme of GravShot is that you are accelerating souped up racing ships (called burners) at incredibly high speeds and then using natural (planets/asteroids/etc) and man-made gravity wells (special satellites that can increase/decrease gravity in a small area) to turn on a dime and increase/decrease speed.
- iii. While the strength of the natural gravity wells would be mostly consistent, the man made ones would vary and fluctuate. Some would be under control of the racer different points and others would be randomly changing.
- iv. The actual “tracks” of the courses would be open-ended, the main goal being for the racers to use their intuition and skills to determine how to pass X amount of checkpoints in the shortest amount of time before crossing the final checkpoint. If this play method proves to be too difficult/costly to implement, then the game could just take a more linear approach from checkpoint to checkpoint.
- v. Accelerating at such high speeds is extremely taxing on a pilot's body, so one additional aspect could be health management during the races.
- b. Additional puzzles would include scavenging additional wreckage for high value items, as well as celestial bodies such as asteroids, comets for their material composition (Joey has to make a living while she's searching for Karl).

3. Potential Story Points:

- a. The Bento has gone back far enough in time that Gorky has a chance to not only save Karl, but save Eshe as well before she falls off the roof.
- b. The Bento has come out in what would have been Karl's present day. Early on in the game it is revealed that Karl is actually dead, but it's Elle who is “still here” in this time period and needs to be rescued.
 - i. With everyone she knows currently not existing in this era, at the end of the game maybe Elle is introduced to Hani. Elle can then tell her the full story of what happened to Karl.
- c. The Bento has wrecked in the future, this time over 100 years since Elle sent Karl her original distress signal. Elle is still alive, Karl died saving her in timestream, but she still needs to be rescued.
 - i. The economic and human rights divide has grown further in the 100 years since Elle disappeared. The 6 main mega corps (including the Glowfeel and Brane Co from prev game) use their financial and infrastructure clout to influence the official governing body of United Planets (UP). The UP caves to their demands from extortion and political buyouts.
 - ii. All six mega corps are joint owners in a conglomerate known as MassWork. On the surface it seems to be an organization designed whose purpose is economic stability for families, but in reality it's the

mechanism the big six use to keep billions of workers under lifelong contracts. Many of the contracts get passed down from generation to generation in the unfortunate families.

- d. Joey's desire to be a GravShot burner pilot figures prominently into the game and is one of the "edges" she has against other corporate scavengers.
 - i. Obsessed with the burners and the craft of racing.
 - ii. Except for very rare cases, almost all Burner pilots come from Corp families with money and influence, since the ships are very expensive. Joey struggles with keeping faith that she is good enough to belong on the circuit or even has a chance at all to try.

e. Potential Characters:

- i. Eleanor Kowalski
 - 1. Joey's sister
 - 2. Ran off to join the same terrorist organization that Elle did, fighting for rights of indentured colonists.
 - 3. Terrorist organization has grown significantly since Elle's time, sparked in large part by making martyrs of the original Corona hijackers.
 - 4. Very combative with her/Joey's father as they grew up, resents him for being a corporate grunt, never attempting to stand up against the oppressive nature of the system.
 - 5. Disappeared some time after joining the terrorist organization, her fate unknown.
- ii. Joey's Mom
 - 1. Upbeat, loving, caring mom.
 - 2. Slightly obsessed with documenting every moment, dreams of escaping her MassWork life by losing herself in InstaCeleb videos.
 - 3. Died of cancer when the girls were young
 - 4. Joey developed a lifelong hatred of AI because:
 - a. When her mom was fighting cancer, they were only able to afford a simple, unsophisticated AI doc. The AI doc was terrible at dealing with the emotional fallout of her death, and Joey blames it for her mother's death.
 - b. Real burner pilots do their flying by instinct, without relying on AI.
- iii. Joey's Dad
 - 1. Quiet reserved type
 - 2. Family came from non-corporate status, but had been raised to obey and yearn for corporate life and privileges
 - 3. While extremely rare and unlikely, he always believed if he was a good worker grunt, he could raise himself and family to corp status.
 - 4. Considers most things frivolous.

5. While he was reserved before his wife died, he withdrew himself even further after. He tried his best, but did not have emotional tools to deal with the situation. This caused the rift between him and his girls to widen. However, Joey was always there for him, even if she was emotionally checked out, out of family obligation.
6. Also started drinking after his wife's death, but it never manifested violently. It became just another way of shutting himself off.
7. Joey quietly rebelled to leave him behind once she hit legal mandatory employment age as dictated by corporate law. By choosing to work as a long haul scavenger, she harbors guilt knowing that she could have chosen something closer to home, when she told her father she had no choice.

iv. Thato Mokoena

1. Freelance Mercenary
2. Dutch South African Man - Late 30's - ex military
3. Hired by Brane Co. to track down it's missing research. When Gorky is brought back online, he is unaware he has code that causes him to broadcast a secret transmission with his location. This code was put in by Brane Co. as an additional insurance policy in case something happened to the Bento.
4. Engages in a game of cat and mouse with Joey as the game progresses.
5. Belongs to an ultra devout offshoot of Catholicism that sprung up as a backlash against growing secularism in the 23rd century.

v. Mamma McGlatts

1. Runs a scavenging operation on the Mushka colony, Joey's Boss
2. Irish-Asian mix female - late 60's
3. Very aggressive, in your face, developed as a survival mechanism to keep rowdy salvage contractors in line. Constantly makes sure her workers never get the illusion they have options in life. This includes putting down Joey's GravShot dreams. Joey handles her better than the other workers because she's used to dealing with her father.
4. Has rare moments where she is somewhat kind to Joey. Near the end of the game the player discovers she has been secretly helping her behind the scenes, trying to give Joey the option to break out of the MassWork life.