

Writing Samples

by

Thanasis Karavasilis

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Fiction

The first chapter from a science fiction novel aimed at young adults.

Chapter 1 of "Star Lost", a novel

CHAPTER 1 – WHAT ABOUT THE STARS

Alice ran to the edge of the cliff, stopping only to find herself a few steps from the steep abyss. Under the full moon, she could make all the surrounding details, the blue-green grass, the yellow dandelions, the black sea stretching all the way to the horizon. The gentle breeze caressed her pitch-black hair, and she felt like an invisible hero was whispering in her ear. Her real hero, however, was just a few steps behind her.

'One of these days, you'll run so fast that you'll miss the cliff and I will have to fly down and catch you.'

'You can't fly, Dad,' said Alice, but she wasn't sure. Maybe her Dad could fly. Maybe he could save her if she fell off the cliff, fly to her rescue and bring her back up to the gentle breeze, to the grass and the dandelions.

'I guess I can't. But I can make *you* fly, little stardust.'

He took her in his arms and threw her as high as he could, and for a few seconds, it felt like she was flying. Alice kept her gaze to the stars and for a mere second, they felt closer. So many stars. So many little blinkering lights, pins on a cosmos that has no borders, no end. Many times, late at night and alone in bed, Alice would think about beginnings and endings. She would think about the dawn of life and the sunset of death and ponder how all things must have a beginning and an end and how time and space made her dizzy with their infinite nature. She would stay awake all night trying to figure out what it means to be without a start and a finish. 'How cool', she would think, 'How unbelievably cool.' Now, late at night but not alone in bed, she made plans in her head on how she should spend these few days of her father's shore leave. *More stories*, she thought, more vocally than she intended.

'What's that?'

'More stories,' said Alice, 'I want to hear more stories about space. I want you to tell me how space travel works and how far it is to the next galaxy and... and... about stars. I want to know all about the stars.'

'What about the stars?'

'I want to go there someday.'

'And do what?'

'Explore. Like you do.'

'Exploring is dangerous.'

'I'm not afraid.'

'Of course you're not, Stardust.'

Alice sat beside her father and took a shy glance at his uniform's badge. One day, she will wear one of those and serve like her father does. She will travel the stars in a spaceship and explore the galaxy. She will know what it means to have no end to reach, no border to cross. She sat next to her father, and they talked for hours. He would point to a star and she would name it. Then another and another until they had the name of a constellation. And then stories. So many stories about Gods and hunters and beautiful ladies trapped in the heavens. Stories about starbases and alien creatures and traditions so weird that made her stomach hurt from laughter. And then, when the stories made her sleepy and the moonlight gently curtained her gaze, she would let herself fall on his back as he carried her back to the house. Years later, she would find out that every night, her father would stay by her side, stroking her hair for one more tale, one last story. 'What about the stars, my little stardust?' he would say in that whispering voice she

had associated with her hero in red uniform. 'What is it about the stars that draw our eyes to the sky? It's the promise of endless possibilities. The dream of reaching the unreachable. One day, you'll come and find me, and then you'll know.'

Game Writing

Right click copy and general dialogue from an indie adventure game

Game: A Leap of Fate (unpublished)

A Leap of Fate

Test dialogues for Act 1-Part 1 (Joe's House)

Joe and Jasper

Dialogues triggered by right click - observe.

1. computer

Jasper: Hey, do you know how this thing works?

Joe: You know how to use th...

Jasper: I was talking to the computer.

2. calendar

Joe: My calendar. I look forward to Jasper's birthday. It is my favorite day of the year.

Jasper: Of course it is. You have nothing else to celebrate for.

3. closet

Joe: Just my closet. It has nothing more than...

Jasper: ... a few skeletons, a couple of secrets and a lot of dirty laundry.

4. unknown thingy (in the wall)

Joe: This looks kinda strange. I wonder what it is.

Jasper: It actually looks like a time machine. How about going back to the day we NEVER met?

5. guitar

Joe: Ahhhh... the melodies, the chords, the music...

Jasper: ... the humiliation, the disappointment, the horror...

6. books

Joe: My stack of books. My favorite is...

Jasper: ... "How to avoid reading like a boss".

7. clock

Joe: A cheap wall clock. My inexpensive guardian of time.

Jasper: Of which you have plenty. Sadly.

8. a bowl of something.

Joe: I do NOT even want to know what that is.

Jasper: ALIVE! That's what it is.

9. pictures on wall (no hotspots in the game yet)

Beach photo

Joe: Jasper, do you remember that day at the beach?

Jasper: I remember leaving your girlfriend with a friendly bite to commemorate her photographic skills.

Las Vegas photo

Joe: I always thought it would be nice if we had more pictures of our adventures.

Jasper: I always thought it would be nice if I could break your camera into pieces but you do not hear me complain.

10. phone

Joe: My landline. Hardly used.

Jasper: Because it receives the same number of calls as your cell phone: Nada.

11. pile of clothes

Jasper: A pile of Joe's clothes I lately call home.

Joe: You know that 6 months is more than "lately", right?

12. toolbox

Joe: My toolbox. Full of tools.

Jasper: Which you have no idea how to use. Next time I won't save you from trying to drink the screwdriver.

Jasper Interactions

Left-Right Click Responses (paw)

fridge_lemons:

Left: I am fairly sure I can't grab anything round. Especially lemons.

Right: Sour and yellow. Just like Joe after a drinking night.

fridge_lemonade:

Left: I am not dropping that. I feel bad for the microbes that live inside.

Right: The freshest thing in this fridge. Only three months old.

fridge_pancakes:

Left: I do not need that. A cheap substitute to pizza with olives.

Right: I remember the last time Joe made breakfast. It was when I became three. Oh wait...

microwave:

Left: In case you missed it, I am a dog. I scratch, sniff, and dig. For everything else I have Joe.

Right: Pizza... with olives...

table_pizza:

Left: I ate what could be eaten. Sadly, a piece still remains at the mercy of the flies.

Right: Pizza... without olives...

hat:

Left: I look kinda cool with that hat. Mysterious, dangerous,

sexy... Too bad it is out of reach.

joe*There is a reason it is out of reach and you know it!

jasper*IT WAS NOT SEXUAL HARRASMENT!

Right: I can smell the awesomeness. Snif...

cereals:

Left: I am a dog but even a dog has his limits. I am not touching that.

Right: From what I can smell, we are witnessing the birth of a new life form.

Guitar:

Left: Joe must have a secret stash of extra strings somewhere. Each time I get rid of them they keep coming back.

Right: Smells like failure. I wish Joe learned to cook instead.

food_bowl

Left: Remember, Joe. The bowl has to be full each and every day at precisely 10:00, 13:00, and 21:00. It is very important th...

Joe*Sometimes I feel you are treating me like a slave...

Jasper*A very dear and trusting slave, Joe. Don't you ever forget that.

Tv:

Left: 1. Ahhhh, the Next American Top Hound is on! Arf Arf Arf!!!

2. Tv*When we look in their eyes, we see honesty, we see friendship, we see love. And when you see dogs the way we see dogs you just have to make food that is good for them.

Jasper*Pedigree. The brand with no pizza with olives. Just dog stuff.

Right: You want me to smell the Tv. Yeah, ok. Good luck with that.

Computer:

Left: The computer. Only good for two things: Playing goat simulator and changing Joe's password.

Right: Smells like burning. Of brain cells.

Flap door:

Left: Especially made for my slim silhouette.

Right: Smells like freedom. No good without Joe.

A few dialogues on key story moments

After the first TV broadcast

joe* Jasper, you need to wake up. There was this strange earthquake just moments ago and I found this strange thing in the wall and there is the strangest thing happening downtown and...

jasper* Did you by any chance prepare a strange thing called jasper's breakfast coupled with my finest choice of beverage?

Joe* Weeeell... not y...

jasper* Weeeell, no foodie - no talkie.

After the food is served

joe* So, what do you think this thing is?

Jasper* I have no fraking clue. But I know this: you wake up with a gum the size of your nose glued to your hair; a strange earthquake reveals an even stranger object on the wall which

points to the place where a strange thing is happening as we speak. I say that the least strange thing to do is stay home.

joe* Oh, come on, Jasper. Where is your sense of adventure? And after all, I need to work. We have to take pictures for the magazine.

jasper* My sense of adventure disappears every time you try playing Captain Kirk. Every time something strange happens you say "That is a strange occurrence, we need to explore it". Oh guess what, I am not beaming down for this mission.

Joe* You know you are.

Jasper* ...

Joe* you are a victim of popular culture as much as I am.

Jasper* Guilty as charged. What do we need, captain?

Then Joe is asking about the keys and the story continues.

Article

Sample SEO optimized article for a gaming website

WHY I HATE MOBA GAMES: \$%^& NOOB LOSER FEEDER

There is something incredibly annoying about MOBA games. A troubling feeling. An itching sensation. A desire to plug the keyboard off and smash it on my monitor. A craving to break the world record for throwing a mouse out the window. Do you want to know why I hate MOBA games? Keep on reading. ~ Thanasis Karavasilis

"GOD [of games] GRANT ME THE SERENITY

TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CAN NOT CHANGE,

THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN,

AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE" Serenity Prayer

Hi, I am Thanasis and I am not a MOBAholic.

(Here is where you say: *Hi Thanasis*. It is pronounced like catharsis. Yeah, it is weird.)

I played my last game of MOBA a year ago, and I've been sober ever since.

Well, if you count out that game of 'Heroes of the Storm' I played last month and that last (it was the last - I swear!) game of '[League of Legends](#)' I played with my friend Alex - he insisted.

Since you are reading this post, I feel I do not need to go into the whole explaining what a MOBA is. But I am sure you want to know why I hate MOBA games so much.

Disclaimer: You do not need to hire assassins, guide an angry mob to my front door, or send me letters full of poisonous spiders. I do not think that MOBAs are terrible games. These are just the reasons they don't work for me.

I will be brief.

Where is the ball? Who hid the ball?

""From way downtown, BANG!""

Do you know this famous sports catch phrase made popular [by Keith Olbermann](#)? I am sure you do, if you are a sports fan.

I like sports.

I have a favorite team and I occasionally watch the most important games. I like basketball, I enjoy football, and I fancy watching a tennis game or two when I feel like it. I used to play sports as well, for fun. You know, gather your friends and head for that dirt alley, put some soda cans for goal posts and bleed yourself out. Sports.

MOBAs are also sports. They are video games, of course, but they share the main characteristics of mainstream sports: teams, conditions for victory of defeat, rules, playfield, etc. And before you start your rumbling, NO, you cannot apply all those traits to everything, and, NO, life is not a giant game.

[Maybe it is](#), but that is a totally different discussion.

Back to our subject, there is a thing I learned from all those endless hours playing football and MOBAs, and from [online gaming](#) in general: Competitive sports bring out the best and the worst in people.

And, let's be honest now, most of the times it is the worst. It is the perfect place for bullies to bully and for the bullied to be bullied. It is an arena of constant discrimination, flaming, name calling, anger, and frustration. And for what? A game? Really? Is it worth it?

Well, no. Hell no.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dt9GwmOWoqo>

If you want a chance to experience the positive side of sports, go do a fracking sport. If you want to dive into everything negative about sports, then play [Bronze League](#) in 'League of Legends'.

Games are for Fun

"Try to be like the turtle - at ease in your own shell." - Bill Copeland

I love playing video games with my friends. I enjoy sharing the experience. I mush button the latest '[Mortal Kombat](#)' and laugh my guts out with '[Mario Kart](#)'.

But I do not want my performance on a game to determine the mood of people other than myself. I don't want to invoke anger and disappointment. I hate that negative feeling I feel each time the game takes the wrong turn in terms of camaraderie.

Most often than not, a game of MOBA is about the end product; it is about the victory and nothing else. There is either success or failure. Either you play well or you don't. Either you suck or you don't.

I want the 'DEFEAT' sign to be followed by laughter and beers. Is that too much to ask?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3B61M60o5ts>

People are not the reason I play video games. Not now, not ever.

Video Games are like Books

"That's really one of the things I love about video games. It's a whole new world every time you start. " Jennifer Hale

Video games are like books. They are like music.

Video games make you smile. They make you wonder. They urge you to care. They make you think and ponder and travel to places where mystical dragons create colorful gems full of mischievous elves and nuclear catastrophes.

Each time you play a game, you embark on a new journey. A unique adventure. And it can involve other people as well; fictional or not.

MOBAs are not that kind of games. And I am not sure I would like to spend my days playing the same game, having the same emotions, making the same things.

And don't start with the vast selection of characters and the different stages; [metagaming](#) is your little bitch.

I want to play 'Guitar Hero' while my dog barks during the solo. I want to rip my girlfriend's head off when she chooses Kitana - again. I want to argue on whether [Tifa](#) was the perfect match for Cloud.

I want to have fun. I want to learn things. I want to leave the controller with a smile on my face and, hopefully, as a better person.

MOBAs are not the kind of games that remind me why I love video games. Sure, they can be fun, until that moment you want to rip your eye off because of that #\$\$^ing feeder.

League of Anger

I might have been a little harsh on poor MOBAs. And possibly, my reasons for why MOBAs are bad might sound a little too... generic.

During my time as a League of Legends player, I had felt my adrenaline pumping quite a few times.

MOBAs are exciting. MOBAs let you feel part of a team. MOBAs might even get you a new friend or two.

But whatever MOBAs are, they are definitely not fun. They are not thought provoking. They are more sports than games.

What do you think? What are MOBAs to you?

Let me know with a comment below.

Keep watching, listening, reading, and playing!