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Narrative Design & Game Writing Portfolio

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CHARACTER DESIGN & BIOGRAPHY - Yonder Goes The Light

Jacob / The Boy

Gender/Age: Male, 12-14 years old

Physical Description: A diminutive boy, a skinny frame from obvious malnourishment, tatty mousy brown hair and pale, ashen skin. He has a hard twitch in his right shoulder and wears the ratty, oversized clothes his various owners have handed down to him. His face is forlorn, big searching eyes opposite to a petite nose and mouth.

Characteristics: Pensive, shy, intelligent, resilient, hopeful.

Background: Born into the ruined world of the neocrete, Jacob has only ever known its horrors. His mother died when he was toddler and his memory is vague, pieced together from his dreams and scraps of information from his owners over the years. All he has known is servitude and suffering. Faced with this, he holds onto the prophetic visions that creep through into his dreams that hint at his 'Navigator' ancestry. Ultimately, this allows him to pilot one of the vast neocrete ziggurats once built to take humanity to the stars, before they lost control of the 'crete. Paired with the heavy twitch in his shoulder and his intuitive understanding of the world he holds onto the hope that there may be something better for him.

Character in Game: Jacob is the central non-playable character in 'Yonder Goes the Light', a key beacon who embodies the game's themes of hope and potential. Gradually he shifts from a burden in the eyes of lead PC Gideon - who wins him in a card game - to the potential saviour of not only his new owner, but of all humanity. The journey that they undertake takes Gideon's 'Wanderer' level of understanding of the world and combines it with Jacob's peculiar and innate abilities. Jacob's powers slowly lead to the revelation of his 'Navigator' ancestry and his ability to control the 'crete. He is quiet and insightful, with eerie intelligence. He evolves from survivor to saviour, helping rid the world of the 'crete plague.

Jacob Dialogue Example: "The lightning...it illuminates the world. Don't you think Gideon? It shows us something before all this. An old world, before the dust, even before us, our very origins."

BARKS - Yonder Goes The Light

Jacob / The Boy - Combat End:

- "Don't worry, I've been through worse."
- "I think I'm okay. I've got this."
- "I'm little, but I'm tough."

Jacob / The Boy - Critical Health:

- "Gideon! Please, make them stop!"
- "I'm hurt bad, am I dying?"
- "Back to the 'crete I will go."

Gideon / The Wanderer - Start of Combat:

- "Fancy yourself a bad man, huh?"
- "Talk's cheap. Get ready to draw."
- "Time to dance the dance."

Mercenary - Idle Chat:

- "Yonder goes the light, compadre."
- "Only 'crete and dust, that's our world now."
- "Gamblin's an old man's game."

Barkeep - Greetings:

- "Ah, a true wanderer. What's your poison?"
- "Black boots, huh, well ain't that the shits."
- "Whiskey to soak up the 'crete, my friend?"

QUEST DESIGN & BRANCHING NARRATIVE - Yonder Goes The Light

Title: The Gambling Man

Introduction: The deeper the player goes in Outpost Jericho, the darker it gets, and the Split Pill is at the bottom, the end of the line. Run by Glycerine, the shrewd barkeep and businessman, he oversees the drinking, fornicating and, most importantly, gambling. The game's main inciting incident takes place here, where the player - as Gideon - enters a card game that once he wins, he receives Jacob / The Boy as the prize, rather than the prize he was promised.

Setting: The Split Pill, the end of the road, the meanest, darkest, deepest bar in all of Outpost Jericho. Hidden in the depths of a failing underworld city, only the meanest dregs come down here to gamble, barter, fight, and drink themselves to death. It's the end of the line, the air thick, the ceiling low, the atmosphere dark and decadent. Conversations hushed by the lamentations of the wicked.

Key Features:

- The Tables: Main gambling area, towards the back of the bar.
- Glycerine's Bar: Where the old barkeep watches over to serve.
- The Store: A back room where they keep everything locked down.

Context: Gideon (PC), knowing that the Split Pill is the best place to win rare items, has just won a high-stakes card game at a gambling table deep in the back of the old saloon. Gideon began the game over a piece of forgotten tech: a rare knife that is impervious to the 'crete and can be used in the outside world without its effects impacting its sharpness. After losing, the NPC 'Fast Eddie' - having taken Gideon for a chump and thinking he would win easily - must reveal he never had the knife. Fast Eddie, now threatened with violence, reveals he has an even 'better prize'.

First Interaction:

Conditions: The Wager

Cut scene script: Triggers when Gideon has won the card game.

INT. Split Pill, Outpost Jericho-Night

[Fast Eddie shows his hand, realising he has lost. Gideon nods to him with a wry smile. Fast Eddie stands and backs away. The lights grow low, and the background sound of the busy gambling room is sucked out. The music stops. Gideon, realising something is wrong, rises from the table. Fast Eddie, true to his name, turns to run but is blocked by the NPC barkeep Glycerine.]

Fast Eddie: Oh, fuck! Glycerine, you can't blame a man for trying...

[Gideon stands with his hand hovering over his holstered gun.]

Gideon: Time to pay the piper, little man.

[Fast Eddie slowly turns back to Gideon, hands raised, smiling with blackened and broken teeth.]

Fast Eddie: Come on now, Wanderer, it don't have to be like that. I ain't got that knife... maybe we can come to some form of arrangement?

PC Gideon:

1. I won that game fair and square. You pay with what you owe or pay with blood. (combative)
2. Asshole! I shoulda known from the start. Just gimme whatever you've got in that back room and make it quick. (nonplussed)
3. Seen too much death already today, an arrangement seems about fine from where I'm standing. (sympathetic)

Fast Eddie:

1. Response: Gideon, now, calm is what's called for here. I'll cut you a deal, show you what I got. You like, you take?
2. Response: Other deals are what the Split Pill was made on! Sharper than you look, you. Let me show you what I've got.
3. Response: Ain't we all, Gideon. No use in senseless killing. I got something for you, out back. We'll square this deal off.

Outcome:

1. First Choice: Fast Eddie nods and beckons Gideon over his shoulder to follow him to the boy. (+ points to combat)
2. Second Choice: Fast Eddie smiles again and heads to The Store in the back. (+ points to reputation)

3. Third Choice: Fast Eddie gives a pensive look and heads to the Store to show Gideon the boy. (+ points to diplomacy)

SCENE CONT:

Conditions: The Handover

Cut-scene script: Triggers when PC Gideon accepts a response.

INT. Split Pill Back Rooms, Outpost Jericho-Night

[Fast Eddie leads Gideon into a back room, set deep into the darkest corner of the Split Pill. As they enter the room, the light is low; the smoke thick. There's a skinny boy sat in the corner in ragged clothes. Despite his situation, his eyes are bright, hopeful.]

[Those hopeful eyes go wide as he sees Eddie approach.]

[Fast Eddie stands to the side, motioning the boy to get up.]

Fast Eddie: Come on now, boy! Up on those skinny legs of yours!

[The boy - Jacob - gets off the ground, standing to face them both.]

Fast Eddie: Well, he ain't much, but you'll get a few years' work out of him, I'm sure. He's not much of a talker, but he's a fair worker once you, uh... inspire him, something eerie about this one.

PC Gideon:

1. Fast Eddie about to pull a fast one right here. I should kill you and take the boy anyway. (combative)
2. This ain't...wait, no, I ain't got no need for a boy. I'm a Wanderer, you seen that. (nonplussed)
3. Not much to him by the looks of things, but I reckon I can find some use for him. (sympathetic)

Fast Eddie: Well, rules is rules Wanderer, I've offered you my highest value item, as far as I can see, this squares us. You either keep him or don't. I don't really care, but that's us done. You got a problem with that, take it up with Glycerine.

[Fast Eddie walks out of the room, leaving Gideon with the boy.]

PC Gideon:

1. Some winnings, huh? Kid, get your shit together. We'll take this up with the keep. (combative)
2. Well, I ain't got much use for a worker boy, but I reckon we can figure something out. Come on. (nonplussed)
3. Damn the 'crete and that asshole to hell. Boy, come here, we'll make this work. What's your name? (sympathetic)

Jacob's Responses:

1. Response: Sure... Sir, I don't have any stuff. Nothin' at all really, only what's in my dreams. (frightened)
2. Response: I reckon so, sir, been a worker for a long time. Lots of masters, you see, taught me a few tricks. (weary)
3. Response: Jacob sir, my name's Jacob. I heard someone say it means 'to follow' but I'm not so sure about that. (satisfied)

[Gideon nods and Jacob moves over to him.]

PC Gideon: Come on then, kid, we've got a long road ahead of us.

Outcome:

1. First Choice: Jacob, realising he has no other choice now but to escape the saloon with Gideon, gathers up his things and runs out and forward of Gideon. (+ points to affection)
2. Choice 2: Jacob, realising Gideon is his only hope, quickly gathers his things and comes to Gideon with his best smile to win him over. (+ points to affection)
3. Third Choice: Jacob, realising that Gideon is friendly, quickly gathers his bits and catches up with Gideon as he leaves the saloon. (+ points to affection).