

Unsaved
By Paul Lister

After the first time that we saved our lives together, I knew that she was the one.

The end of a perfect first date and the perfect time for a manual save point. At death, you were returned to your last save point, manual or automatic. So, it was symbolic really. But I wanted Shelly to know that I loved her. Then.

But later, not enough.

Because when she left this world, she left it alone.

We argued just before the car crash. I had been offered a place on the board, it meant less time together but I'd been trying to get the promotion for years.

She was too far gone by the time I got to the hospital but she begged me to come with her. That was one of the clauses for couples, if one was moved to a past save then their partner could be too.

I chose the job instead and she returned to a previous save by herself. She was going to our past, but not our world. It was a copy, because causality didn't care about your life.

Shelly would never know the difference, all memories after the save were lost. There would be a copy of me, but not me. She would never remember my decision not to go, but I would never forget how she looked at me when she left our world.

I didn't have much money left after the company, closely followed by my life, went bust. But I scooped up what I could and after scraping the bottom of the bar barrel found Gus, a guy who worked for the Savers. He wanted everything I had.

"Dude, what you're asking, it can cause all sorts of problems with that world. I can't do the past but even saving you in the present of the new version could cause havoc. I've never done it before."

"And I will replace the version of me there?"

"Yes, yes, I told you that, but still, no guarantee's man. It's a one-way ticket, you understand that?"

It couldn't get worse I told myself and handed over a jammed envelope.

The next day I'd be back with Shelly. No car crash, no bad decision.

Happy.

Shelley put down her coffee in the diner where we first met in our world. But it was not love at second sight.

"All that never happened," she said looking nervously around for the waitress. Maybe it wasn't such a good idea to give my lunatic story the time of day.

"No, I guess it didn't, not here," I said.

Gus had warned me. I'd gone to my Shelley's world and it had caused havoc. It had shifted her last save to a point before we had even met. She had lived a life without me and it had been a happy one.

I watched her make her excuses and leave.

She was still the one, just in a world that wasn't this one.

