

Narrative summary:

Geralt stumbles across a notice urging a Witcher to come to the village. Upon arrival, the burgomaster tells Geralt about a man in jail claiming he would be responsible for the deaths plaguing the nearby villages, but refusing to speak to anyone but a Witcher.

Geralt goes to see the man, who initially remains vague but directs him to a woman in a nearby town, believed to be the mother of one of the victims. After following this and other leads, Geralt realizes that all the victims seem to be the man's blood relatives, stemming from his decades-long escapades with different women.

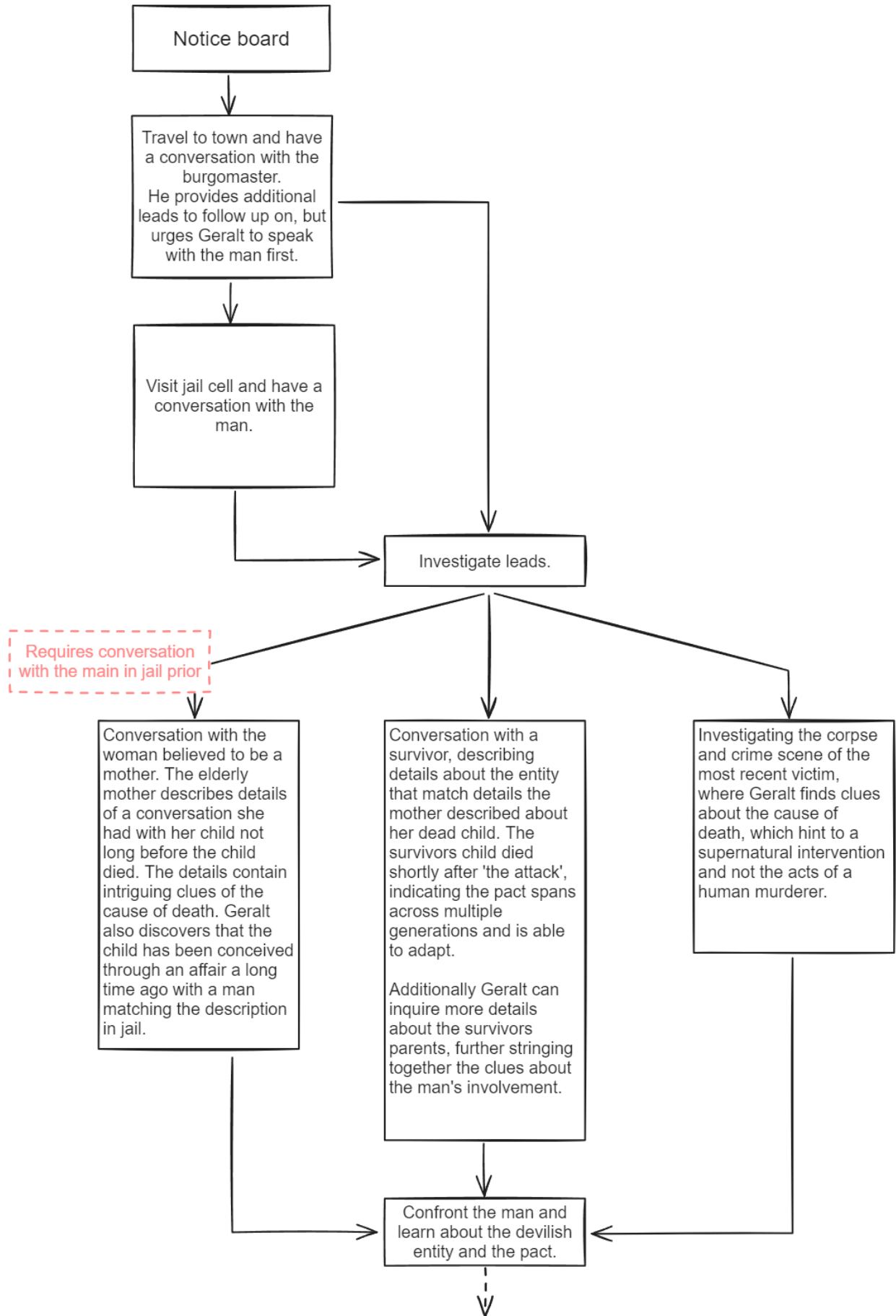
Confronting the man, Geralt learns the truth about a pact the man made with a devilish entity in his youth, trading his descendants' lives when his time has come for irresistible charm and success with women.

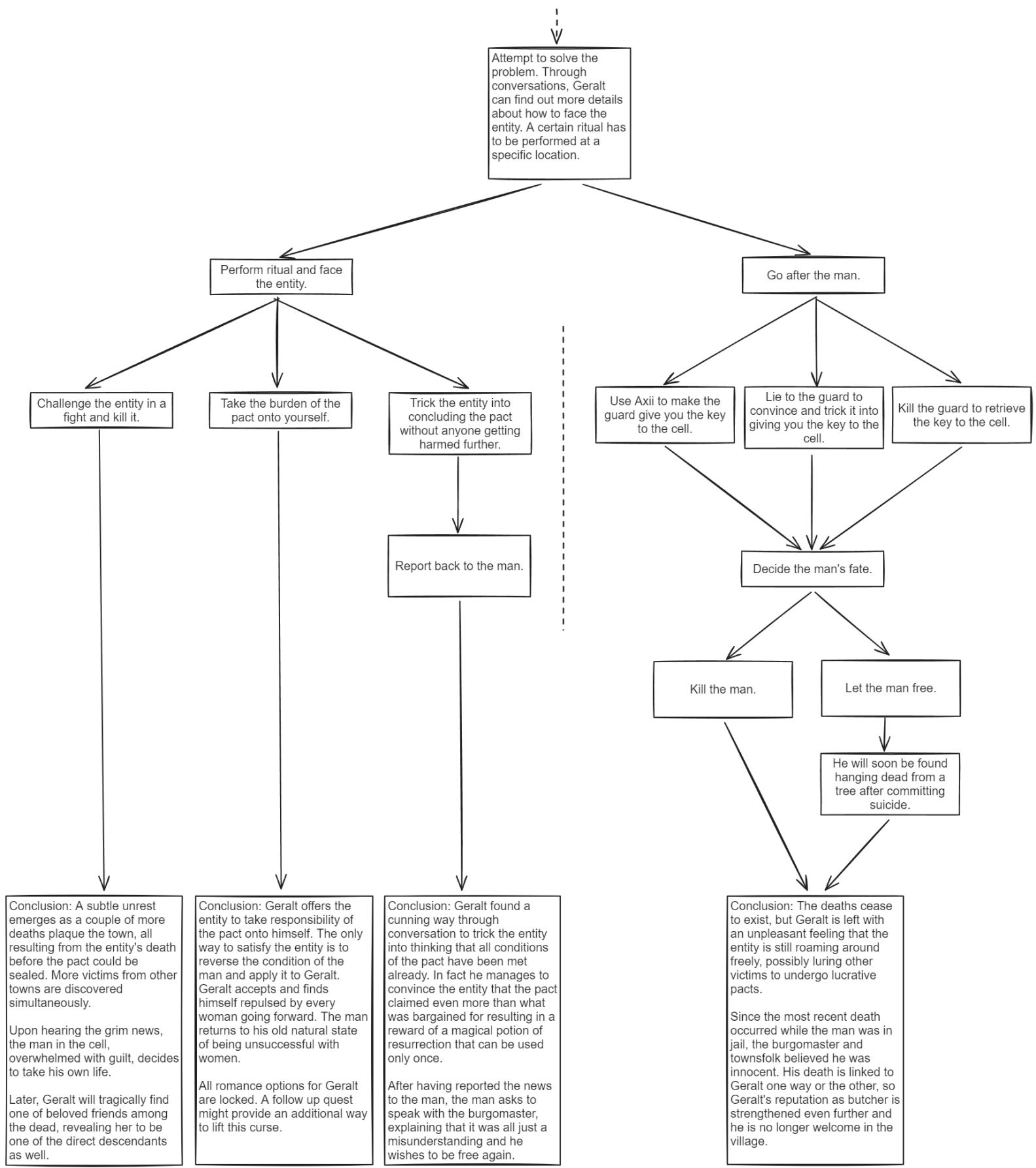
Geralt faces a tough decision: Hunting down and killing the entity will cause the remaining descendants to die immediately, while killing the man might spare future victims but leaves the entity to roam free and find new targets. Seeking a third and better solution, Geralt considers negotiating with the entity and offers something precious of himself to save the remaining descendants.

Introduction:

With the design of this quest I wanted to explore a custom narrative that could fit well into the world of the Witcher. The universe created by Andrzej Sapkowski often takes inspiration from folklore, fairy tales and other existing stories; all adapted to make it fit into the grim and relentless world that Geralt finds himself in. I attempted to do something similar, while trying to come up with my own original narrative.

Quest flow:





Attempt to solve the problem. Through conversations, Geralt can find out more details about how to face the entity. A certain ritual has to be performed at a specific location.

Perform ritual and face the entity.

Go after the man.

Challenge the entity in a fight and kill it.

Take the burden of the pact onto yourself.

Trick the entity into concluding the pact without anyone getting harmed further.

Use Axii to make the guard give you the key to the cell.

Lie to the guard to convince and trick it into giving you the key to the cell.

Kill the guard to retrieve the key to the cell.

Report back to the man.

Decide the man's fate.

Kill the man.

Let the man free.

Conclusion: A subtle unrest emerges as a couple of more deaths plaque the town, all resulting from the entity's death before the pact could be sealed. More victims from other towns are discovered simultaneously.

Upon hearing the grim news, the man in the cell, overwhelmed with guilt, decides to take his own life.

Later, Geralt will tragically find one of beloved friends among the dead, revealing her to be one of the direct descendants as well.

Conclusion: Geralt offers the entity to take responsibility of the pact onto himself. The only way to satisfy the entity is to reverse the condition of the man and apply it to Geralt. Geralt accepts and finds himself repulsed by every woman going forward. The man returns to his old natural state of being unsuccessful with women.

All romance options for Geralt are locked. A follow up quest might provide an additional way to lift this curse.

Conclusion: Geralt found a cunning way through conversation to trick the entity into thinking that all conditions of the pact have been met already. In fact he manages to convince the entity that the pact claimed even more than what was bargained for resulting in a reward of a magical potion of resurrection that can be used only once.

After having reported the news to the man, the man asks to speak with the burgomaster, explaining that it was all just a misunderstanding and he wishes to be free again.

Conclusion: The deaths cease to exist, but Geralt is left with an unpleasant feeling that the entity is still roaming around freely, possibly luring other victims to undergo lucrative pacts.

Since the most recent death occurred while the man was in jail, the burgomaster and townsfolk believed he was innocent. His death is linked to Geralt one way or the other, so Geralt's reputation as butcher is strengthened even further and he is no longer welcome in the village.

He will soon be found hanging dead from a tree after committing suicide.

Further thoughts:

It was important to me to provide a branching narrative that provides the players with an intriguing premise to dive into rather than focusing only on the possible rewards. The players should feel curious as to why the man claims to be responsible for the deaths, but never exactly admits to any crime. Over time I want to evoke a feeling of repulsion towards the man for being so reckless in sleeping with many different women and all the consequences this can bring, but never portraying him as someone who actually committed any horrible crime.

I also want to leave the players with a gut-wrenching decision on how to conclude the quest, as seemingly all options feel wrong. But as it is described in the books, sometimes Geralt has to choose the lesser evil, and the players have to decide for themselves what that is. Very observant players will still be able to find ways to conclude this quest without any further deaths and without Geralt being sexually hindered for the rest of his existence, but this will require observing all possible clues as well as choosing the right dialogue options.

Gameplay wise I want Geralt to further strengthen the use of already established mechanics. Since this is meant as a side-quest, I don't want to introduce any new mechanics, but rather provide opportunities to play around with existing ones in different ways. The design has potential for a variety of mechanics such as investigating crime scenes, smart dialogues, manipulation of other humans, cunning trickery (e.g. finding another gameplay way to get the key from the guard), performing rituals and more.

I look forward to finding out how this quest plays, when I start to design it in more detail and implement it in REDKIT next.