

# The Caravan - By Christian Reichel

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## Section 1 - Project Description

### 1.1 Project

The Caravan - A document describing the design of the quest 'The Caravan'.

### 1.2 Story summary

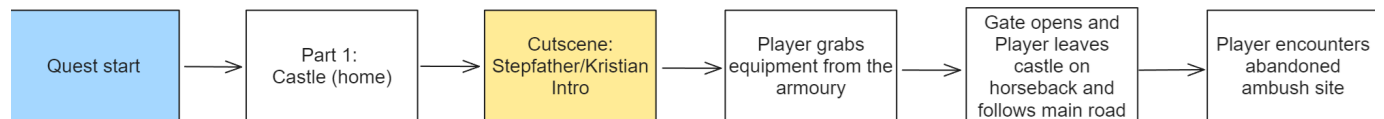
See attached Document 'Quest - The Caravan - Plot Synopsis'.

### 1.3 The design

The quest is divided into 6 distinct parts.

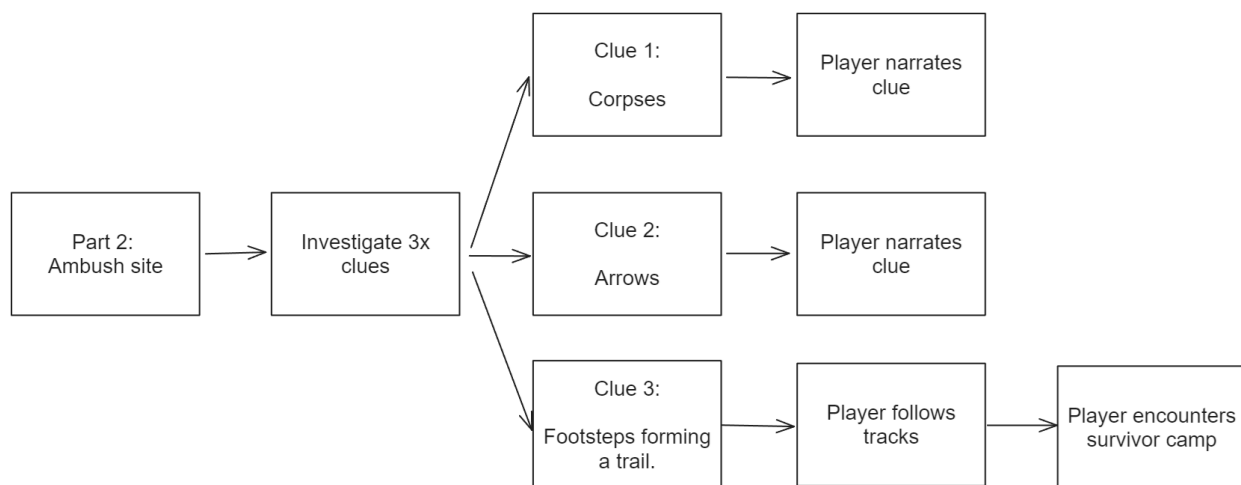
## Section 2 - Parts breakdown

### 2.1 Intro



The first part serves as the introduction to the quest. It is designed to provide the players with information about the narrative background, some key characters as well as the protagonist and their mission. I designed this part to be linear, so that players can ease into the experience and soak in the atmosphere. I also wanted to provide an opportunity for the players to familiarize themselves with some of the game mechanics needed later for the quest, such as opening containers, retrieving quest items, mounting the horse and automatically moving objects. Therefore the only option the players can take is to grab the equipment, hop on the horse and ride out.

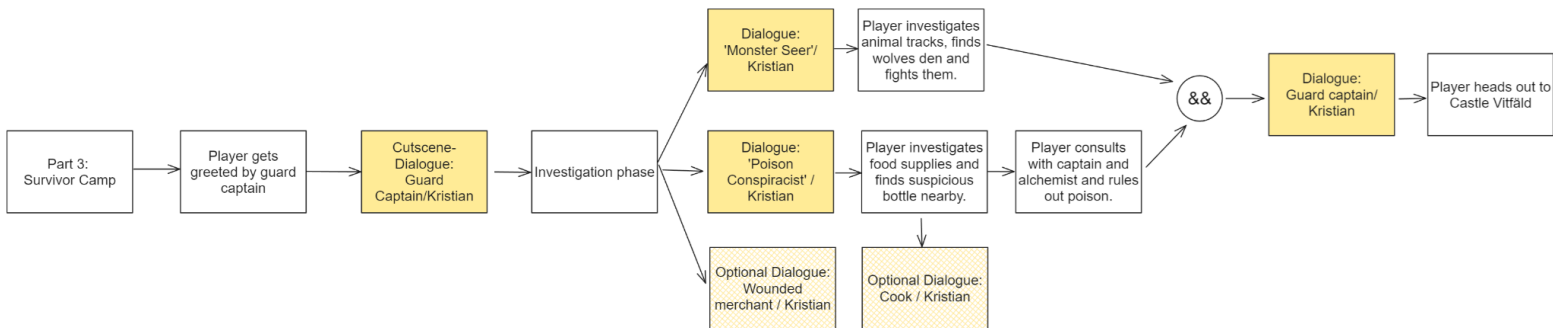
### 2.2 Ambush site



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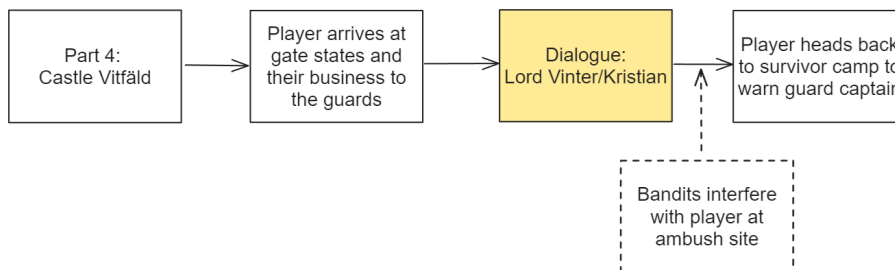
The second part is still somewhat linear. The players arrive at the aftermath of the attack and are given evidence of its legitimacy. There are multiple objects for the players to interact with in any order and the protagonist narrates something about each object individually. When all clues have been found, the quest points them to follow the footsteps and discover what's at the end of them. I did not want to require the players to tick all boxes before the quest continues, therefore I designed fail-saves so that if they choose to follow the tracks immediately, the quest progresses as well.

## 2.3 Survivor Camp



The survivor camp is designed to be the most non-linear section of the quest. I wanted to provide the players with interesting investigation elements that they can tackle in any order. After being briefed by the guard captain, the players are tasked with finding out what's going on in the camp. The two main paths for the players to take are the conversation with the paranoid woman, who suspects the food being poisoned and a schizophrenic man, who is frightened by supposed nearby monsters. The players can freely choose which one to tackle first, and they are also designed in a way so that you can switch objectives during an ongoing investigation or run them in parallel. The main intent was to provide two different gameplay experiences for the players, where one branch leads to the discovery of suspicious items, interesting conversations with the alchemist and an optional interrogation with the cook. The other branch emphasizes tracking animals that result in combat. There are two fully optional dialogues, one being a foreshadowing of the traitor bandit in disguise, and the aforementioned one with the cook that unlocks as soon as you have found the suspicious activity around the food sources.

## 2.4 To Vitfäld



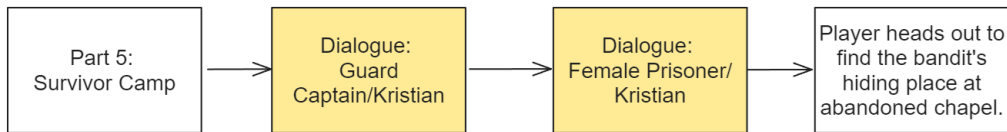
After concluding the camp investigation, the players are funneled back into a linear section of the quest. The guard captain reveals a shocking twist, with the intent to make the players question their received mission and eager to find out more immediately. The players are free to explore the camp further, but with no interactions left, they are urged to ride north where they are greeted by the gate guards through

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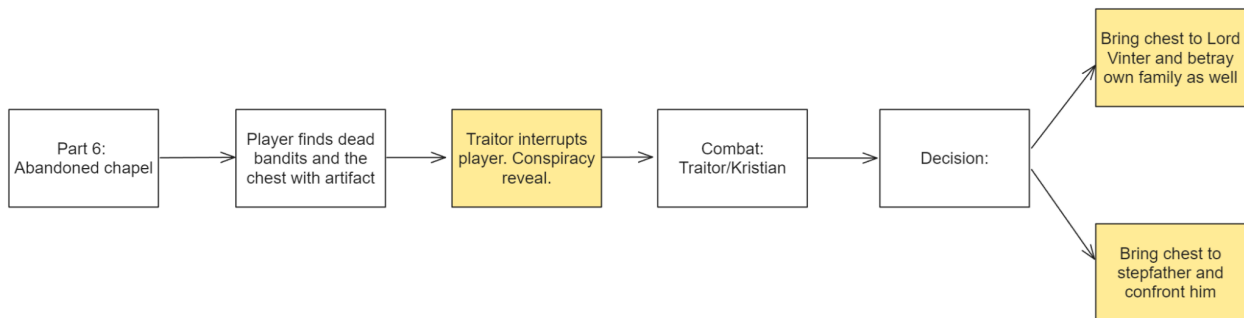
mandatory dialogue. After stating their business, the players are let through and free to approach Lord Vinter for conversation. Lord Vinter reveals more devastating news, as all the troubles at camp are potentially caused by a magical artifact he had delivered to him through the merchant caravan. He gives the players a new mission, who are also determined to head back to camp immediately to warn the survivors. Just before arriving at camp, the players are interrupted by straggling bandits, who seized the opportunity to loot the remnants of the attack site and are not willing to share whatever they may find. I wanted to provide another opportunity for combat as well as an interruption and obstacle for the narrative to proceed at the worst possible timing, as everything just seems to have gotten an explanation, when the players have to resort back to meddling with unrelated bandits.

## 2.5 Back at camp



Back at camp is another linear section that is meant to reduce the pacing a little again with an additional duty at camp. The guard captain reveals a female prisoner, who got apprehended in the players absence and asks the players to speak with her, which is the players only sensible option at this point with no further leads. The inclusion of the prisoner is designed to provide the players with further narrative background about what happened at the day of the attack as well as giving them a sensible lead as to where to look next for the artifact.

## 2.6 Abandoned chapel



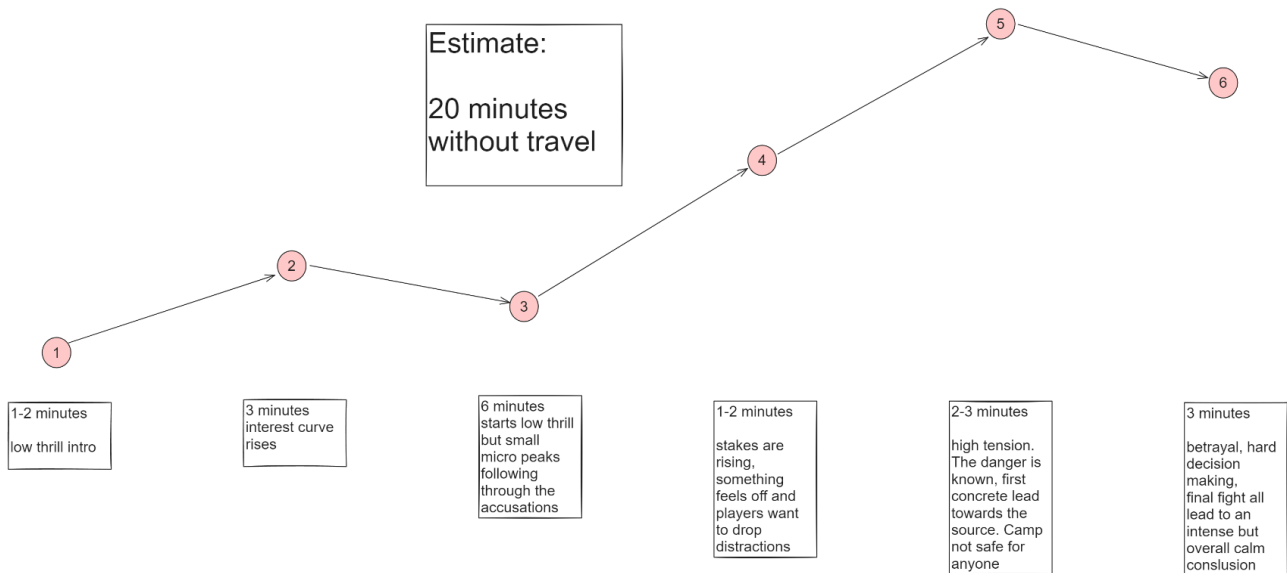
The abandoned chapel acts as the showdown with a non-linear conclusion. When the players head out to follow the prisoners lead, they find the corpses of the bandits responsible for the attack. Before the players are able to look for the artifact, they are interrupted by the bandit who had infiltrated the camp. He reveals the conspiracy that also involved the protagonist's stepfather, but explains that the plans slightly differed. The bandit cannot allow the players to have the artifact. The players have no choice, but to fight him for it and retrieve the artifact from the corpses. The players are now faced with a difficult decision. Bring the artifact back to Lord Vinter, as requested, and contribute to horrible means of warfare, or go home and confront the protagonist's stepfather about the conspiracy.

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## Section 3 - Additional material

### 3.1 Pacing/Timing graph

A graph for pacing/timing I set up after designing the quest, but before starting to implement it. I wanted to reach roughly 25 minutes of gameplay and the graph helped me to determine whether the design makes sense and supports reaching that target. The numbers correspond to the parts described in Section 2. Some parts I overestimated a little bit and some under, but all in all I am very happy with how the average played out in the implementation.



### 3.2 Level Design

A quick draft of how I envisioned the level design to support the quest. The aim was to come up with a small and comprehensive package that can stand on its own rather than squeezing it somewhere into the world of The Witcher 3, where the narrative does not make sense contextually.

