

RESTLESS



Narrative Quest Design Document

Prototype made with RPG Marker MV

The Hearthguard arrives in Cutter's Rest to find a town unraveling under sickness, violent wildlife, and whispers of a ghost among the graves. By investigating clues, speaking with villagers, and exploring the abandoned copper mine, the player uncovers a chain of corruption, poisoned earth, and a murder hidden behind grief. In the end, their choices decide whether the town finds peace, faces the truth, or sinks deeper into darkness.

Design Pillars

Investigation

Players can pursue the truth through multiple paths, whether questioning townsfolk, or tracking environmental signs, encouraging them to piece together the mystery rather than fight their way through it.

Consequence

Choices shape relationships and outcomes, ensuring players feel the impact of their decisions both narratively and mechanically as the town responds to the Hearthguard's actions.

Atmosphere

A dark, mysterious tone guides the pacing, shapes character motivations, and infuses each discovery with tension and unease, grounding the entire experience in a sense of looming dread.

Core Gameplay

System

The quest has been prototyped in RPG Maker, including dialogue flow, exploration, and turn-based encounters.

Controls

Movement is handled with the arrow keys or by clicking to move, while ESC opens the menu and Shift allows the player to sprint. These simple controls keep navigation straightforward and let players focus on the story and investigation.

Combat

RPG Maker uses a simple turn-based combat system where each character chooses an action, then characters act in order based on their speed. Players select commands like Attack, Skills, or Items, and the turn plays out automatically. Battles repeat this cycle until the enemy or the party is defeated.

Locations

Cutter's Rest

A quiet mountainside village and the main hub of the quest. It is small, with an inn, a medic's home, the miners' guild, a cemetery, and a few houses.



Inn

This is likely the first building players encounter as they enter town. This is where owner, **Jarek Volnik** can be found. As with any good inn in a fantasy setting, this serves as a great information point as the player enters town.



Benmark's Home

Found on the lower east side of town, this is where **Medic Benmark** cares for the sick. This building provides environmental clues about the miners' sickness and the spreading affliction.



Miners' Guild

Located near the south of town, the guild functions as the workshop and supply station for the town's miners. **Tomas Radow** is found here, making this an important location for investigation and character interactions.



Strel Family Gardens

A secluded garden behind the Strel home, it marks the site of Tomas and Marta's secret meeting and holds the buried wine bottle along with clues near the cliffside.



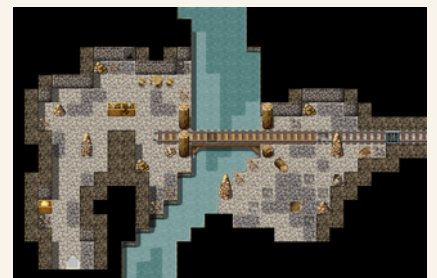
Woods

The quest begins along the forest trail that leads into Cutter's Rest. This area acts as a small open world the player can revisit, with several points of interest that tie into the town's troubles. Players can encounter a sickened wolf on the path, discover the abandoned mine the pack now uses as a den, and trace the steep cliffside that connects back to the Strel family garden.



Cave

Once a functioning copper mine, the cave now sits deserted after the miners began falling ill. The wolves have taken shelter inside, exposing themselves to the same poisoned runoff that spread through the town. Exploring this location is optional but valuable, since it contains several environmental clues that help explain the sickness and unlock new dialogue paths with key characters in Cutter's Rest.



Cemetery

This area can be accessed on the far east of Cutter's Rest. The cemetery is where players encounter the spirit of **Marta Strel** after hearing the ghost rumors. It serves as the narrative heart of the quest, hosting revelations, confrontations, and the potential banishing ritual.



Characters/Creatures

Hearthguard

The player character and outside investigator called to uncover the troubles plaguing Cutter's Rest. Calm, observant, and steady in demeanor, the Hearthguard approaches the town's fears with measured resolve rather than aggression.



Lina Strel

Lina lives near the north of town and is mourning the recent loss of her mother. She worries about Cutter's Rest and confides that she can still speak to her mother's spirit in the cemetery. She is newly engaged to Tomas Radow, a miner working at the guild.



Notable Quest Moments:

- Able to trigger the ghost rumors in town.
- Can follow the Hearthguard to the cemetery to say goodbye before Marta's spirit departs.
- Appears during the final confrontation if Tomas is accused.

Tomas Radow

A miner who has avoided the sickness affecting the rest of his crew. Tomas knows of the mercury vein running through the mountain and hides his involvement in Marta Strel's death. He poisoned her to prevent Lina from leaving the village and can usually be found at the Miner's Guild near the south of town.



Notable Quest Moments:

- Initiates the request to banish Marta's spirit.
- Reveals himself in the cemetery if the Hearthguard breaks their deal or uncovers the truth.
- Can be confronted publicly if the Hearthguard learns the truth before meeting him.

Marta Strel

Once a respected villager, Marta now lingers as a restless spirit in the cemetery after her untimely death. She hoped to move away with her daughter for a safer life but was murdered by Tomas to prevent that departure.



Notable Quest Moments:

- Without a personal memento, she is incoherent when approached.
- Tells the Hearthguard where to find the key to the Strel family garden.

Medic Benmark

The town apothecary, protective of his community and initially suspicious of the Hearthguard. His sharp tongue softens once he sees genuine effort to help, eventually becoming a strong ally.



Notable Quest Moments:

- Asks the Hearthguard to check on Tomas if they have not done so.
- Analyzes wolf blood to advance the investigation into the sickness.
- Identifies the buried wine bottle as being contaminated with mercury.

Jarek Volnik

The innkeeper of Cutter's Rest and one of the more approachable figures in town. Jarek offers background knowledge about the village and its recent troubles, making him a useful early contact.

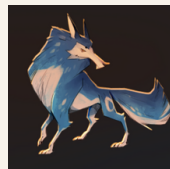


Notable Quest Moments:

- Able to trigger the ghost rumors in town.
- Can provide the Hearthguard with salt if they are wanting to perform a banishing ritual on Marta's spirit.

Wolves

These wolves roam the woods surrounding Cutter's Rest and have been slowly poisoned by the contaminated water runoff. Their increasing aggression has made them a danger to travelers and villagers alike, and the pack has taken over the abandoned copper mine as a den.



Quest Items

Locket



Marta Strel's keepsake, found in a discarded pile within the cave. It grants the Hearthguard the ability to meaningfully speak with her spirit.

Wolf Blood



Taken from an affected wolf in the cave and given to Benmark to help uncover the mercury poisoning.

Salt



A basic ritual component that Jarek can provide if the Hearthguard chooses to attempt a banishing ritual.

Garden Gate Key



Hidden by Marta before her death. She reveals its location so the Hearthguard can access the Strel family garden.



Wine Bottle / Poisoned Wine Bottle

Buried in the Strel garden after Marta's meeting with Tomas. Benmark later confirms it contains mercury, linking it to the town's poisoning.



Combat Encounters

Wolf_Solo

A scripted ambush in the woods near the start of the quest. This encounter introduces basic combat flow and signals that the local wildlife has turned hostile.



Tomas Rodow

A narrative-driven confrontation that can occur either in the cemetery or in Cutter's Rest. This encounter serves as a major story climax and can be triggered by breaking a deal with Tomas, exposing his role in Marta's death, or confronting him publicly.



Wolf_Group

An optional fight inside the abandoned cave. Defeating the pack rewards key items such as the Locket and Wolf Blood, opening additional narrative branches.



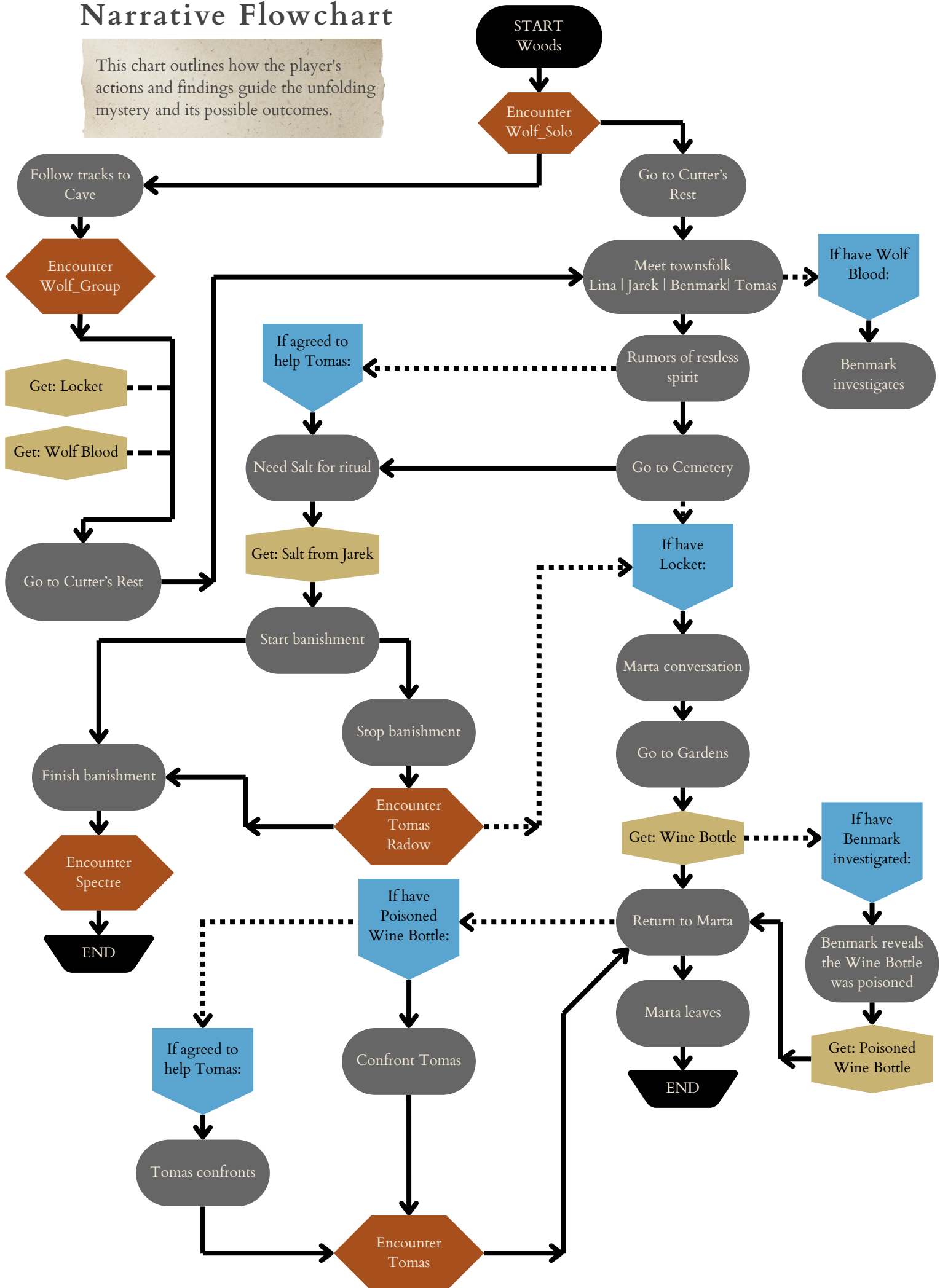
Spectre (Marta Strel)

An alternative finale where the Hearthguard fights Marta's restless spirit in the cemetery. This can occur if the player performs the banishing ritual, sides with Tomas while Lina is present, or supports Tomas after uncovering his crimes.



Narrative Flowchart

This chart outlines how the player's actions and findings guide the unfolding mystery and its possible outcomes.



Appendix A: Quest Script and Event Flow



This appendix documents the primary narrative and event flow for the side quest Restless. It presents the quest as a sequence of authored narrative nodes, translating the implemented RPG Maker MV logic into an engine-agnostic format suitable for production, review, and iteration.

Node IDs are provided for clarity and cross-referencing during implementation and review.

A1. Map001 Woods

Node A1.1: Wolf_Solo Encounter

- **Trigger:** Player intersects encounter on path to Cutter's Rest.
- **Conditions:** None (intro combat).
- **Content:** Combat encounter vs lone violent wolf.
- **State Changes:**
 - Set Switch 0019 **Wolf_Solo Defeated** = ON.
- **Leads to:**
 - Player continues toward town (*Map003*) OR explores caves (*Map002*).
 - Intended true path proceeds to *Map002* for pack escalation.

A2. Map002 Cave

Node A2.1: Wolf_Group Encounter

- **Trigger:** Player enters mine and engages pack.
- **Conditions:** Typically follows A1.1 (but can be discovered later).
- **Content:** Combat encounter vs wolf group in abandoned copper mine.
- **State Changes:**
 - Set Switch 0007 **Wolves Defeated** = ON (wolves cleared from mine).
 - Optional that **Item: Wolf Blood** is obtained.
 - Optional that **Item: Locket** is obtained.
- **Leads to:**
 - *Map003* town investigation opens as the next primary objective.

Appendix A: Quest Script and Event Flow

A3. Map003 Cutter's Rest

Node A3.1: Town Arrival

- **Trigger:** Player enters town map.
- **Conditions:** None.
- **Content:** Player is free to gather leads; NPCs point to three pillars: sick miners, wolf aggression, cemetery spirit.
- **State Changes:**
 - Typically starts **Switch 0002 Ghost Quest Start = ON** via Tomas, Lina, or Jarek.

A4. Map008 Benmark

Node A4.1: Benmark First Contact (*Optional but supports true-path clarity*)

- **Trigger:** Player speaks to Medic Benmark (*Map008*)
- **Conditions:** **Switch 0007 Wolves Defeated = OFF**
- **Content:** Win Benmark's trust by ending the wolf threat.
- **State Changes:**
 - Progress **Variable 0005 Benmark Dialogue** forward (quest tracking).
- **Leads to:**
 - If **Switch 0007 Wolves Defeated = ON**, Benmark can request/accept wolf blood evidence chain.

Node A4.2: Wolf Blood Hand-off

- **Trigger:** Player returns to Benmark (*Map008*) after clearing wolves.
- **Conditions:** **Switch 0007 Wolves Defeated = ON.**
- **State Changes:**
 - Give **Item: Wolf Blood** (if not already held), then remove it.
 - Set **Switch 0018 Gave Wolf Blood = ON.**
 - Advance **Variable 0005 Benmark Dialogue** to "awaiting wine bottle" state.
- **Leads to:**
 - Benmark directs player to Tomas at Mason's Guild while analysis runs.

Appendix A: Quest Script and Event Flow

A5. Map009 Mason's Guild

Node A5.1: Tomas Request

- **Trigger:** Player speaks to Tomas (*Map009*).
- **Conditions:** Early quest state; spirit not resolved.
- **Content:** Tomas frames cemetery spirit as the cause of trouble; offers reward.
- **State Changes:**
 - If player accepts: set **Switch 0003 Tomas Help = ON** and advance **Variable 0002 Tomas Radow Dialogue**.
- **Leads to:**
 - Tomas points to Jarek (*Map005*) for salt supply.

A6. Map005 Inn

Node A6.1: Salt Acquisition

- **Trigger:** Player speaks to Jarek (*Map005*).
- **Conditions:** Player asks for salt, often after Tomas referral or upon their own gravestone investigation
- **Content:** Jarek provides salt and reinforces “spirit stirs wolves” town belief.
- **State Changes:**
 - Give **Item: Salt**.
 - Set **Switch 0008 Need Salt = OFF** if used as a gate (implementation dependent).
- **Leads to:**
 - Player proceeds to Cemetery (*Map004*).

Appendix A: Quest Script and Event Flow

A7. Map004 Cemetery

Node A7.1: Marta First Contact

- **Trigger:** Player engages Marta's grave event (*Map004*).
- **Conditions:** Player enters cemetery during Ghost Quest.
- **Content:** Marta presents as restless spirit. Early beats establish her anger and confusion.

Node A7.2: Garden Lead

- **Trigger:** Player engages Marta (*Map004*).
- **Conditions:** Player has **Item: Locket**.
- **Content:** Marta recognises her locket and awakes from confusion. She provides the detail that a spare key is in the scarecrow's pocket.
- **State Changes:**
 - Advances **Variable 0003 Marta Strel Dialogue** to "investigate gardens."
- **Leads to:**
 - Player goes to Gardens (*Map010*) and searches the mound.

A8. Map010 Gardens

Node A8.1: Dirt Mound Evidence

- **Trigger:** Player interacts with Dirt Mound.
- **Conditions:** None required, but narratively follows cemetery lead.
- **Content:** Player finds empty wine bottle buried in dirt.
- **State Changes:**
 - Set local self switch for mound used state.
 - Give **Item: Wine Bottle**.
 - Trigger **Switch 0020 Garden Ground Fall = ON**.
 - Play collapse sequence and transfer player out of the collapsing area.
- **Leads to:**
 - Player returns to Benchmark to confirm mercury traces OR returns to Marta to unlock confrontation flag.

Appendix A: Quest Script and Event Flow

A9. Map008 Benmark: Evidence Confirmation

Node A9.1: Wine Bottle Analysis

- **Trigger:** Player shows Benmark (*Map008*) the bottle after prior steps.
- **Conditions:** Benmark in “awaiting wine bottle” state.
- **Content:** Benmark confirms bottle has mercury traces and implies fatal dose without visible mark.
- **State Changes:**
 - Advance **Variable 0005 Benmark Dialogue**.
- **Leads to:**
 - Player returns to cemetery to finalize accusation intent, then confronts Tomas.

A10. Map004 Tomas Exposed

Node A10.1: Poison Bottle for Marta_Tomas Deal

- **Trigger:** Player returns to Marta (*Map004*) with **Item: Poisoned Wine Bottle**.
- **Conditions:** Player has obtained bottle evidence from Gardens (*Map010*) and taken it to Benmark (*Map008*) for examination. **Switch 0003 Tomas Help = ON**.
- **Content:** Marta is told the wine was poisoned. Tomas jumps in as the truth is revealed.
- **State Changes (on confront path):**
 - Set **Switch 0014 Tomas Exposed = ON**.
- **Player Choice:**
 - Between siding with Marta or Tomas
- **Leads to:**
 - Combat encounter against the opposition.

Appendix A: Quest Script and Event Flow

A11. Map007 Tomas Confronted

Node A11.1: Public Accusation and Proof Chain

- **Trigger:** Player enters confrontation space with Confront Tomas active.
- **Conditions:** Switch 0017 Confront Tomas = ON and Tomas (*Map009*) engaged.
- **Content:** Player lays out sequence: poison brewed from mine metals.
- **Leads to:**
 - Combat encounter against Tomas.

Node A11.2: Tomas Defeated Outcome

- **Trigger:** Tomas combat resolves with Tomas defeated.
- **State Changes:**
 - Set Switch 0005 Tomas Defeated = ON.
 - Lina commits to visiting cemetery to give Marta final words.
 - Clear Lina follower state as needed when transferring.
- **Leads to:**
 - Transfer to Cemetery (*Map004*) for final farewell and spirit resolution.

Appendix B: Alternative Optional Event Flow



This appendix documents optional and alternative narrative routes that branch from the core investigation. These paths reward exploration and shape how the player understands the events of Cutter's Rest, while preserving narrative coherence. These branching paths also allow for increased replayability.

B1. Banishing Path

Node B1.1: Prioritize Banishment

- **Entry Point:** Tomas asks for help laying spirit to rest (*Map009*).
- **Player Behavior:** Player collects salt, goes straight to cemetery, does not pursue garden evidence.
- **State Focus:** 0003 Tomas Help, Salt acquired.

Node B1.2: Banish Spirit

- **Trigger:** Player uses salt ritual path and engages Marta as hostile.
- **State Changes:**
 - Set **Switch 0001 Marta Defeated = ON** when combat completes.
 - Depending on implementation: set **Switch 0011 Marta Gone = ON** to remove cemetery presence.
- **Consequence:**
 - Player can return to Tomas (*Map009*) for reward and closure.
 - Tomas remains unexposed; miners may still be sick but the town believes the "spirit caused it" narrative.
- **Leads to:**
 - Quest completes without revealing the murder, and without public confrontation.

Appendix B: Alternative Optional Event Flow

B2. Player Learns Truth but Refuses to Confront

Node B2.1: Evidence Found, Confront Declined

- **Trigger:** Player returns to Marta (*Map004*) with **Item: Poisoned Wine Bottle**.
- **Conditions:** Switch 0003 Tomas Help = OFF
- **Player Choice:** Player selects “Perhaps it is time for you to move on.”
- **Consequence:**
 - Marta’s arc ends in partial closure, but Tomas remains active in town.
 - Town does not receive public truth.

Leads to:

- Soft-fail resolution: player exits quest without “justice” beat.

Node B2.2: Lina Follower

- **Trigger:** Player informs Lina (*Map003*) that Marta’s spirit remains and requests final words.
- **Conditions:** Player has met Marta and reached a state where Marta asks for Lina.
- **State Changes:**
 - Set Switch 0010 Lina Following = ON (party follower).
- **Leads to:**
 - Player escorts Lina to Cemetery (*Map004*) for resolution scene.

B3. Marta Leaves Willingly

Node B3.1: Marta Closure Without Violence

- **Entry Point:** Marta’s memory fully restored and Lina is brought to cemetery for farewell.
- **State Changes:**
 - Set Switch 0011 Marta Gone = ON to remove Marta events.
 - Set Switch 0010 Lina Following = OFF after cemetery scene.
- **Consequence:**
 - Spirit resolves peacefully; tone shifts toward grief and release rather than exorcism.
- **Leads to:**
 - Depending on whether Tomas was exposed, this can pair with either justice route or cover-up route.

Appendix B: Alternative Optional Event Flow

B4. Side With Tomas After Exposing

Node B4.1: Side with Tomas

- **Entry Point:** Tomas (*Map004*) is confronted with exposure active and attempts to push the player into silencing Marta.
- **Player Choice:** Player agrees with Tomas (“You’re right.”) vs rejects him (“No, you are the only wicked one here.”).
- **State Changes (if player sides with Tomas):**
 - Route player into Marta combat and suppress truth chain.
 - Set 0015 Tomas Exposed_Tomas Side = ON.
- **Consequence:**
 - Player becomes complicit, town keeps a false story, Tomas survives.
- **Leads to:**
 - Reward resolution with ethical stain, and Lina’s future remains controlled by Tomas.

B5. Optional: Cat Chase Encounter

Node B5.1: Town Cat Chase Event

- **Trigger:** Player engages the child/cat interaction in town.
- **State Changes:**
 - Set Switch 0021 Cat Chase = ON (or local completion switch).
 - Restore player MP to full.
- **Consequence:**
 - No mechanical impact on main quest. Adds levity and “life in town” contrast.

B6. Optional: Benchmark Skipped

Node B6.1: Player Never Consults Benchmark

- **Trigger:** Player focuses on spirit content and/or Tomas content only.
- **Consequence:**
 - Player can still reach endings via banishment or confrontation, but loses explicit medical confirmation of mercury link.