

Preface

The purpose of this portfolio piece is to showcase branching dialogue, worldbuilding, and a character-driven narrative emphasized through unique NPC voices.

Overview

Quest Name: *"Meet The Doctor"*

Quest Type: Main Quest

Quest Given: Triggered automatically at the start of the game

Quest Location: The "Coffer's End" tavern

Objective: Gather information on main quest

Setting: A low-magic dark fantasy world, similar to Barovia from *"Curse of Strahd"*. In addition to traditional fantasy races and supernatural monsters, realms outside of reality also exist where souls can reincarnate upon death, each themed as a specific "biome".

Synopsis

The player character is a mercenary responding to a job posting by Doctor Clathrus, a local physician that recently lost his son. In his grief, Clathrus sought a way to access the realm of the afterlife and bring his son back, eventually constructing a device capable of sending users across planes of existence. Now, Clathrus requires volunteers to test his invention, leading the player into the main storyline.

Characters

Marriott (*she/her*) - The goliath innkeeper of Coffer's End. A former soldier, Marriott comes across as cold, but is simply untrustworthy from her fighting days. She tries to see the good in people, but a strong set of morals lends itself to suspicion.

Benard (*he/him*) - A half-elf scholar from a distant city. Characterized by his journal and a nervous disposition, Benard finds it difficult to know when to stop talking, though his honesty makes gathering information far easier than most.

Doctor Clathrus (*he/him*) - A human physician that lives in the local province. Perpetually fatigued from both age and academics, his desperation to revive Luthor has thinned his patience, putting him several steps ahead of most conversations he finds himself in.

Dialogue

Marriott Dialogue

Character	Dialogue	ID
Marriott	Welcome in to the Coffe's End, traveller.	
Marriott	<i>(if first time talking to player)</i> Don't think I've seen you before. Now's not the time of day most folks around here come looking for a drink.	
Marriott	<i>(if first time talking to player)</i> Then again, I couldn't tell you what would bring outsiders to a place like this. Not a bad place to settle, don't get me wrong, but we're out of the way enough to tell me you're here for something.	
Marriott	Now, what can I do for you?	A
Choice 1	<i>I'm looking for someone. Goes by Doctor Clathrus.</i>	1
Choice 2	<i>I'll take a drink. What's for sale?</i>	2
Choice 1	<i>I'm looking for someone. Goes by Doctor Clathrus.</i>	1
Marriott	The doctor? He's sitting in the back corner. Been waiting for a good while. <i>[Return to A if choice has been selected already]</i>	
Marriott	<i>(if first time making this choice)</i> You here about the job? I doubt you have an appointment.	
Choice 1A	<i>What job?</i>	1A
Choice 1B	<i>That's none of your concern.</i>	1B
Choice 1C	<i>Actually, I've been having this pain in my side whenever I twist my hip...</i>	1C
Choice 1A	<i>What job?</i>	1A
Marriott	I wouldn't get any ideas if I were you.	
Marriott	Haven't seen the doc much since his son passed, but his	

	groundskeeper is a regular here. Apparently, he went off the deep end locked up in that study of his, barely taking meals or walks.	
Marriott	Never figured out what he was so obsessed over, but the kind of questions he's been asking those travelling scholars, and so soon after losing his boy...	
Marriott	Better not to get mixed up in whatever delusions he's gotten himself into, no matter the reward. <i>[Return to A]</i>	
Choice 1B	<i>That's none of your concern.</i>	1B
Marriott	Then forget I even asked. <i>[Return to A]</i>	
Choice 1C	<i>Actually, I've been having this pain in my side whenever I twist my hip...</i>	1C
Marriott	Well, pray it's not infected. A local farmer cut his hand a while back and paid the doctor a visit when it started to swell. Didn't bother with whatever operation he suggested, what with harvest season and all that.	
Marriott	And when the harvest finally came around? Let's just say two hands would've been better than one.	
Marriott	Now, was that an infection? That's a question for the doctor, not me.	
Marriott	Even so, better safe than dead. Or worse. <i>[Return to A]</i>	
Choice 2	<i>I'll take a drink. What's for sale?</i>	2
Marriott	<i>(if first time making this choice)</i> Could pour you a pint of amberfire...if the shipment ever came in. Just about out of everything else you might be looking for, so unless you're willing to stomach my cooking, you're out of luck. <i>[Return to A]</i>	
Marriott	<i>(if choice has been selected already)</i> Like I said, nothing's in stock. If you're that desperate for a drop, either stay in town longer or try the next one over. <i>[Return to A]</i>	

Benard Dialogue

Character	Dialogue	ID
Benard	<i>(if first time making this choice)</i> Oh, ah, good evening. Didn't see you come over.	
Benard	<i>(if first time making this choice)</i> Not looking for trouble, or whatever you might be selling. I merely stopped in while my caravan recuperates its supplies. Shouldn't be long now.	
Benard	Did you need something?	A
Choice 1	<i>What brings you to town? You hardly seem the farming sort.</i>	1
Choice 2	<i>Do you know a Doctor Clathrus? I'm here to speak with him.</i>	2
Choice 3	<i>(unlocks if Choice 1A was selected for Marriott) I was told Doctor Clathrus was asking your caravan some questions. Might telling me what about?</i>	3
Choice 1	<i>What brings you to town? You hardly seem the farming sort.</i>	1
Benard	<i>(if first time making this choice)</i> Astute observation indeed.	
Benard	Me and my colleagues are what you might call "nomadic academics". Our college encourages us to share our knowledge with those around us.	
Benard	After all, what better classroom than the world itself, and what more insightful professor than its people? <i>[Return to A]</i>	
Benard	<i>(if first time making this choice)</i> How about you? Here for the sights?	
Choice 1A	<i>I'm responding to a job.</i>	1A

Choice 1B	<i>Like I'd tell you.</i>	1B
Choice 1C	<i>Sightseeing is exactly the reason I'm here, actually.</i>	1C
Choice 1A	<i>I'm responding to a job.</i>	1A
Benard	I wish you luck, then.	
Benard	Wait, are you here for Clathrus? He's mentioned looking for someone to assist with his latest project.	
Benard	And before you ask, no, he never elaborated, nor was it something he seemed keen on enlightening me on. If you're curious, ask him yourself. <i>[Return to A]</i>	
Choice 1B	<i>Like I'd tell you.</i>	1B
Benard	Pardon me for attempting polite conversation. <i>[Return to A]</i>	
Choice 1C	<i>Sightseeing is exactly the reason I'm here, actually.</i>	1C
	Oh? Did I miss something on the way in? <i>[Return to A]</i>	
Choice 2	<i>Do you know a Doctor Clathrus? I'm here to speak with him.</i>	2
Benard	<i>(if first time making this choice)</i> Ah, Clathrus. A fellow student of the natural world.	
Benard	Clathrus usually meets us at the caravan proper, yet he and I often retire here to the tavern if our conversations ran late into the night.	
Benard	He always preferred the back seat, nearest the hearth. He said it was the most comfortable, but it seemed like he wanted to keep an eye on the door as well...for what or who, I couldn't say, though I never dared to ask. <i>[Return to A]</i>	
Choice 3	<i>I was told Doctor Clathrus was asking your caravan some questions. Might telling me what about?</i>	3

Benard	Well, he never did express the desire for confidentiality...	
Benard	While he was keen to learn of recent medicinal and pathological discoveries, most of his questions proved rather focused on the paranormal, far detached from what I would have expected of someone with his education.	
Benard	More specifically, he was interested in the reported sightings and manifestations. Near-death experiences, hauntings, visions from would-be prophets...even essays on reincarnation, which are admittedly few in number.	
Benard	If you ask me—and you needn't tell Clathrus—yet for all our time together, I still cannot believe in the existence of an afterline, let alone realms beyond our own. This world is that we have and all that we are.	
Benard	Why must we concern ourselves with such fairy tales? [Return to A]	

Doctor Clathrus Dialogue

Character	Dialogue	ID
Clathrus	<i>(if first time making this choice)</i> Good evening, stranger.	
Clathrus	<i>(if first time making this choice) (if Choice 1 was selected for Marriott and/or Choice 2 was selected for Benard)</i> You're looking for me, yes? I overheard you asking. I'm honored.	
Clathrus	Well?	A
Choice 1	<i>I'm here about the job.</i>	1
Choice 2	<i>(unlocks if Choice 2 was selected for Benard) If you don't mind me asking, why so curious about the paranormal?</i>	2
Choice 3	<i>(unlocks if Choice 1 was selected for Marriott) Marriott mentioned your son. I'm sorry for your loss.</i>	3

Choice 1	<i>I'm here about the job.</i>	1
Clathrus	Yes, you are.	
Clathrus	Tell me: do you believe in an afterlife?	
<i>Choice 1A</i>	<i>Yes. We carry on after death, one way or another.</i>	1A
<i>Choice 1B</i>	<i>No. This life is all we have.</i>	1B
<i>Choice 1C</i>	<i>What difference does it make?</i>	1C
Choice 1A	<i>Yes. We carry on after death, one way or another.</i>	1A
Clathrus	Ah, but where? That is the question. <i>[Continue to B]</i>	
Choice 1B	<i>No. This life is all we have.</i>	1B
Clathrus	An understandable answer, but not without its shortcomings. <i>[Continue to B]</i>	
Choice 1C	<i>What difference does it make?</i>	1C
Clathrus	More than you believe. <i>[Continue to B]</i>	
Choice 2	<i>If you don't mind me asking, why so curious about the paranormal?</i>	2
Clathrus	Ah, I see Benard loosened his tongue for you.	
Clathrus	To put it simply, my interests stretch outside of...provable science. Currently provable, at least. <i>[Continue to A]</i>	
Choice 3	<i>Marriott mentioned your son. I'm sorry for your loss.</i>	3
Clathrus	Don't. I've suffered enough pity. <i>[Continue to A]</i>	
Clathrus	You see, I do not possess either the patience or concern to soften why you're here: I have been delving into ways to breach the veil of life.	B
Clathrus	There are places beyond us, that I am certain of. Where	

	they go, and what they contain, are answers I hope to uncover. But not without help. Your help.	
Clathrus	Simply put, I've constructed a device that requires very specific circumstances to operate. Consider it...a door of sorts, and while it needs someone to keep it open, I need someone to step through.	
<i>Choice 4</i>	<i>Seems rather outside the norm for a physician.</i>	4
<i>Choice 5</i>	<i>What's in it for me?</i>	5
<i>Choice 6</i>	<i>This was a waste of my time. You're a madman.</i>	6
<i>Choice 7</i>	<i>And what exactly do you hope to achieve?</i>	7
Choice 4	<i>Seems rather outside the norm for a physician.</i>	4
Clathrus	You're not wrong, and you're not the first to point that out.	
Clathrus	No matter. My years as a doctor serve me well, even if you're unwilling to look past the apparent absurdity of my endeavors.	
Choice 5	<i>What's in it for me?</i>	5
Clathrus	Besides the chance to be the first to cross the boundaries of known existence and return?	
Clathrus	If that isn't enough, I still plan on compensating you in the traditional sense. In fact, should you make the journey up to my estate, I'll be more than happy to pay you for your time no matter your final answer.	
Clathrus	I know the journey into town can be difficult, and I pride myself to be a grateful host. <i>[Continue to C]</i>	
Choice 6	<i>This was a waste of my time. You're a madman.</i>	6
Clathrus	Then I don't expect to see you after tonight. Perhaps I overestimated your capacities. <i>[Continue to C]</i>	

Choice 7	<i>And what exactly do you hope to achieve?</i>	7
Clathrus	...I am not the only one to lose someone too soon.	
Clathrus	Too many lives have been ripped away from us, ushered into realms unknown and out of reach. How can we stand by and simply wait to join them?	
Clathrus	No longer. And no longer should we be expected to join them, but instead allow them to join us. I seek to build a bridge. <i>[Continue to C]</i>	
Clathrus	As much as I wish to ease your worries, however, there are things that cannot wait any longer. Time is, like always, not on our side.	C
Clathrus	Even so, I hope you join me at my home. I will eagerly await your presence, and with it, I pray our time together yields the impossible.	