ELDEN RING

Design Document

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Design Document: Elden Ring Quest “A Gilded Lie”

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Sereth of the Crimson Flock
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Quest Flow

Sereth, Duke of the First Flame
- Phase One — 100% HP
- Phase Two — 50% HP

Summary: The player encounters a fallen lord and penitent, Sereth, who requests their aid in retrieving a relic from his former domain. Investigation reveals that the relic never belonged to Sereth, and is stored safely (at least, historically) within the fort to keep it away from frenzied flame heretics like Sereth, who would come to harm from accessing it.

Depending on player choices, Sereth is either transformed into a corrupted monstrosity, or is found dead later on within the fort after a failed attempt of his own to steal the idol.

Overall design goal: Emulate Elden Ring's typical quest structure: non-linear and missable, with narrative delivered through environmental storytelling and item descriptions rather than conveying explicitly. FromSoftware's common theme of tragic inevitability comes into play, with the NPC either transforming into a foul and corrupted creature upon receiving the idol, or being killed during his own attempt to retrieve said idol. No "obvious/good" ending.

Sereth of the Crimson Flock

An unusual figure who approaches from within a ruined shack when the player approaches. Sereth is dressed like a noble, though his clothes are dirty and torn.

His mannerisms and speech demonstrate a practiced eloquence, though a distraction in his voice betrays something deeper on his mind.

Due to limited exposure to the idol he seeks, he is currently still in (almost) complete control of his faculties, though his desire for the idol is unbearable.

Design goals

Sereth teaches that not all of the followers of the Frenzied Flame are ragged, crazed beggars. In keeping with common FromSoftware themes, helping Sereth leads to no direct reward as expected, but instead an optional boss battle which ends in new and interesting loot for the player.

If the player successfully gives the idol to Sereth and returns to him at a later time, they will find him transformed into a boss: Sereth, Duke of the First Flame.

Dialog

Upon first approaching Sereth:

> *Approacheth without fear, friend.*

Upon first talking to Sereth:

> *Ah, I knew thou would come.*
>
> *Tarnished or noble, we are but equal in the eyes of the flame which we are fain to serve.*
>
> *My... beloved Durant. She hath been stolen from me. And put on display like some... brazen souvenir!*
>
> *Thou wouldst be honored to bring her back to me, yes?*

Upon further conversation (repeats):

> *She lays within the fort to the west. Do hurry... friend.*

Returning later, no idol:

> *Thou doth test my patience... friend. Leave me until thy honorable task is complete.*

Returning later, with idol:

> *Ahaha... yes. My skin is tingling. Give me, hurry!*

Upon handing over idol:

> *... mm. Yes, thou are indeed a true friend. Oh, this is wonderful.*
>
> *Ah, but of course, to the matter of payment.*
>
> *Do return later. I'll have something special prepared for such a kind friend.*

Upon further conversation (repeats):

> (Ignoring the player, talking to the idol)
>
> *Yes, beautiful goddess...*

Returning later, Sereth transformed:

> *Raaauuuughhhh! Join... us....*

As transformed Sereth dies:

> *The Flame... never.... fades.....*

Item: Durant's Idol of Repose

This is the item Sereth wishes to be retrieved from the fort and returned to him. Equipping this item as a talisman causes a constant slow buildup of madness.

Design goals

A holy relic of the Frenzied Flame, equipping this leads to a slow but continuous building of madness, as expected by players familiar with the Frenzied Flame. Useful for madness builds, especially in PVP settings.

Description

A surprisingly lightweight idol of gold and ruby, a weeping priestess of the frenzied flame. The statue remains warm to the touch.

Those who owned such an idol were said to have known peace, though none remain to speak of it.

Holding this leads to numb fingers and a benign buzzing in the head.

Item: Sereth’s Smoldering Eye

A reusable item looted from the corpse of Sereth, Duke of the First Flame.

Design goals

A risk/reward item which grants a strong temporary buff to the player at the cost of a high amount of FP, as well as inflicting a high amount of madness. Designed to complement Durant’s Idol of Repose within a madness focused build.

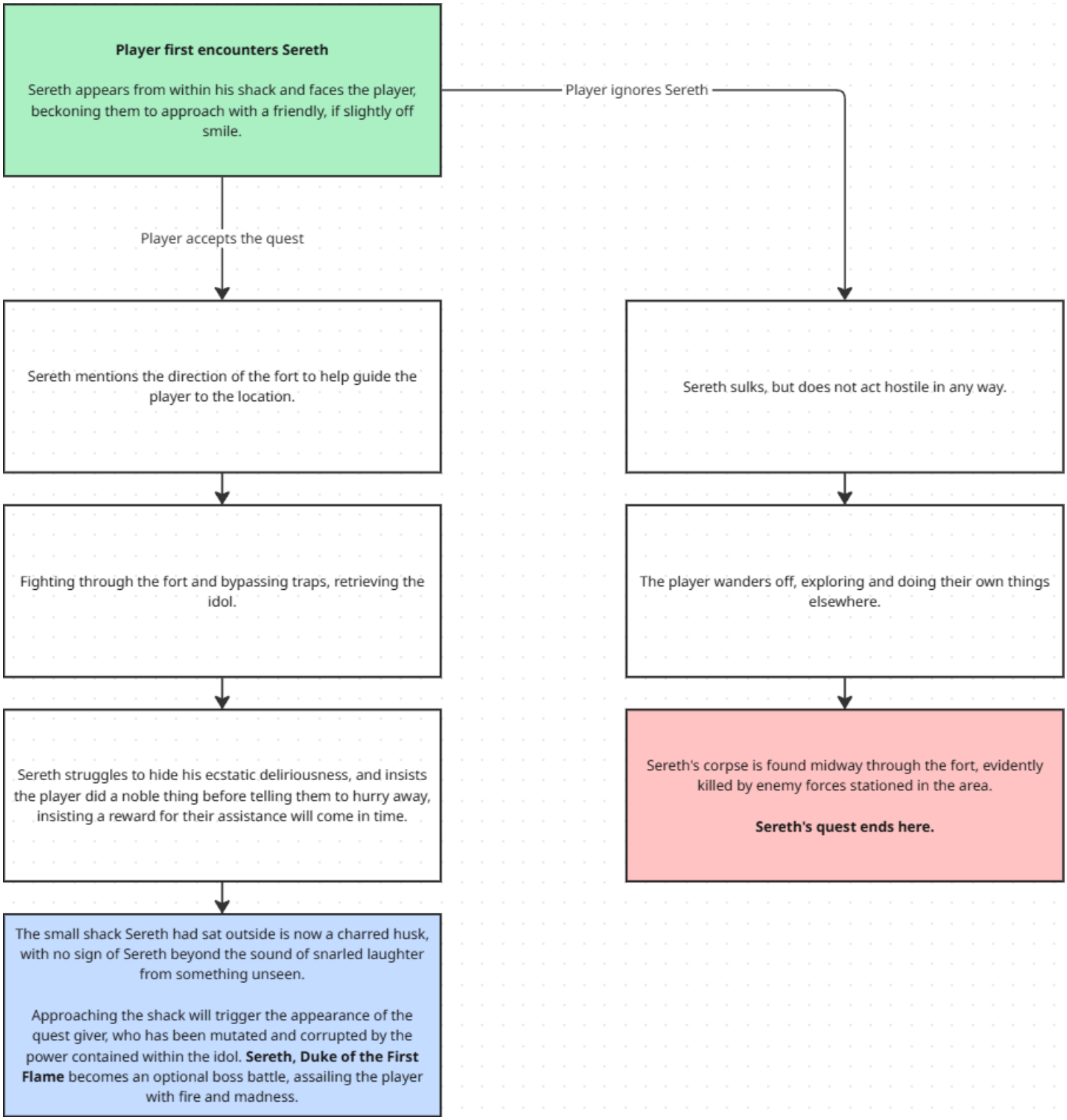
Description

An engorged eyeball of Sereth, Duke of the First Flame, found among his perished flesh.

Peering into its pupil bestows a burning confidence.

Uses FP to temporarily greatly increase size and HP, and cause a large buildup of madness.

Quest Flow


Player first encounters Sereth
Sereth appears from within his shack and faces the player, beckoning them to approach with a friendly, if slightly off smile.
Player ignores Sereth
Player accepts the quest
Sereth mentions the direction of the fort to help guide the player to the location.
Fighting through the fort and bypassing traps, retrieving the idol.
Sereth struggles to hide his ecstatic deliriousness, and insists the player did a noble thing before telling them to hurry away, insisting a reward for their assistance will come in time.
The small shack Sereth had sat outside is now a charred husk, with no sign of Sereth beyond the sound of snarled laughter from something unseen.
Approaching the shack will trigger the appearance of the quest giver, who has been mutated and corrupted by the power contained within the idol. Sereth, Duke of the First Flame becomes an optional boss battle, assailing the player with fire and madness.
Sereth sulks, but does not act hostile in any way.
The player wanders off, exploring and doing their own things elsewhere.
Sereth's corpse is found midway through the fort, evidently killed by enemy forces stationed in the area.
Sereth's quest ends here.

Sereth, Duke of the First Flame

If the player successfully retrieves the idol, gives it to Sereth, and returns later, they will discover that Sereth has been corrupted and is now a boss encounter.

Design goal: Sereth is a fairly straightforward boss battle, as this takes place in Limgrave, an early area for the player. This battle is designed as an early teacher of the madness debuff, as it would likely be the first enemy the player encounters which inflicts madness as a condition.

The madness status effect: Deals damage equal to (15% Max HP) + 100 to the target and causes FP drain of (10% Max FP) + 30. Upon being inflicted with madness, the target goes into a stun animation, clutching their head as tears of yellow flame spill from their eyes.

Sereth, Duke of the First Flame has two phases.

Phase One — 100% HP

Sereth fights in melee, using his polearm to assault the player.

Lunge: Sereth thrusts his polearm foreward in two slow stabbing motions.

Noble Strikes: Sereth swings with his polearm, sweeping in front of him two or three times at random.

Overhead Swing: Sereth raises his polearm above and behind his head momentarily before bringing it down in front of him, inflicting large direct physical damage on collision and spewing a brief cone of madness-afflicting fire from the point of impact.

Phase Two — 50% HP

Sereth starts adding a ranged attack to his arsenal, as well as upgrading his regular attacks.

Lunge: Sereth thrusts his polearm foreward in two slow stabbing motions, followed by three faster stabs.

Noble Strikes: Sereth swings with his polearm, sweeping in front of him three to five times at random.

Cleansing Flame: Sereth channels for a moment before sweeping with his free arm, releasing a slow and large area of burning madness-afflicting flame in front of him.