

Banishers: Ghosts of New Eden

Design Document for Haunting Case 'til Death Do We Part

Quest Design document done in collaboration with Level Design

OVERVIEW

- **Estimated time:** 30min
- **Location:** Region 02
- **Members (2):**
 - John Rumball (50s, M, militia, to be saved) YORKSHIRE
 - Abigail Rumball (40s, F, housekeeper) YORKSHIRE
 - Abigail Rumball (40s, F, **deceiving Ghost**) YORKSHIRE
- **Microcosm template:** 2 Alive + 1 Ghost
- **Quest may need Echo Clear to reveal crucial hint:** NO
- **Quest needing specific setting:** YES (high rock where Abigail was found dead)
- **Quest availability:** as soon as MKC#2 is solved
- **Ghost tie:** Cursed Mirror

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

John and Abigail Rumball came to New Eden under indentured servitude. Bound by contract, the Bligh family paid for their costly voyage to North America in exchange of five years of work. John was to be foreman for the Bligh mines that were in dire need of excavation and supervision, while Abigail was to be a domestic servant for the family.

Gruff and bad-tempered, John is rough around the edges and well known for his gift of the gab. Not really a people-person, John prefers the calm of his paperwork and the company of stones and tunnels. Other colonists are not exactly fond of him either, as he never tried to be a part of the community, on top of being a critical quick mouth of everything and everyone. His wife Abigail used to be a housekeeper. She had been the help of a family in York for several years and had grown quite fond of the family she was working for. When John accepted the job in New Eden, she was forced to leave her own work, and has harbored a resentment for John ever since. She still tried to be a part of the community as best as she could, but her husband's bad-temper and asocial attitude turned into a weight on her efforts and ostracized them. As the years passed, her resentment grew, and the relationship between John and Abigail spoiled.

While the Rumballs settled well enough into their new lives, a mysterious accident happened to Benjamin and Ethel Bligh. A collapsing of tunnels in the mine led to them being completely drowned out, the water taking with it dozens of workers. On the very same day, Ethel's corpse was found in the manor in a pool of her own blood, while Benjamin was never to be seen again. Rumor had it that their business had been under dire economical constraint - Abigail had been a discreet witness of many of their fights - and all of it was taking its toll on their relationship.

(The truth is, Benjamin had gifted his wife an old, antique mirror, which turned out to be cursed by a Gallû. The creature turned their relationship sour and pushed Benjamin to the murder of his wife. Faced with his horrible actions, Benjamin hurried to the mines and into a tunnel that had been flagged as a flood hazard, and started digging by himself until water filled the tunnel and he drowned.)

The Bligh property was abandoned, and the Rumballs left to fend for themselves.

Abigail pushed John to join Captain Pennington's trainband ; after all, there was no more mine to work for, and they needed to make end's meet - while John would have preferred to follow Governor Haskell. Nevertheless, Abigail

ended up winning the argument and they followed Captain Pennington to Fort Jericho. Over the months, John has grown to dislike Captain Pennington, finding his leadership and decisions flaky at best. He hates his new boss and would gladly see Lieutenant Pierce take his place.

John being unable to do his work, and forced to turn into a military man, his mood swings have increased for the worse. Stepping on each other's last nerve daily, the resentment has grown between the couple so much so that they now agree about almost nothing. They often throw awful words to each other: Abigail openly claims she will poison his soup one day. John says one day he will push her from the highest rock around.

Between verbal abuse, passive aggressive stance, and constantly blaming the other for their trouble, the couple is on the quick path to a hellish marriage.

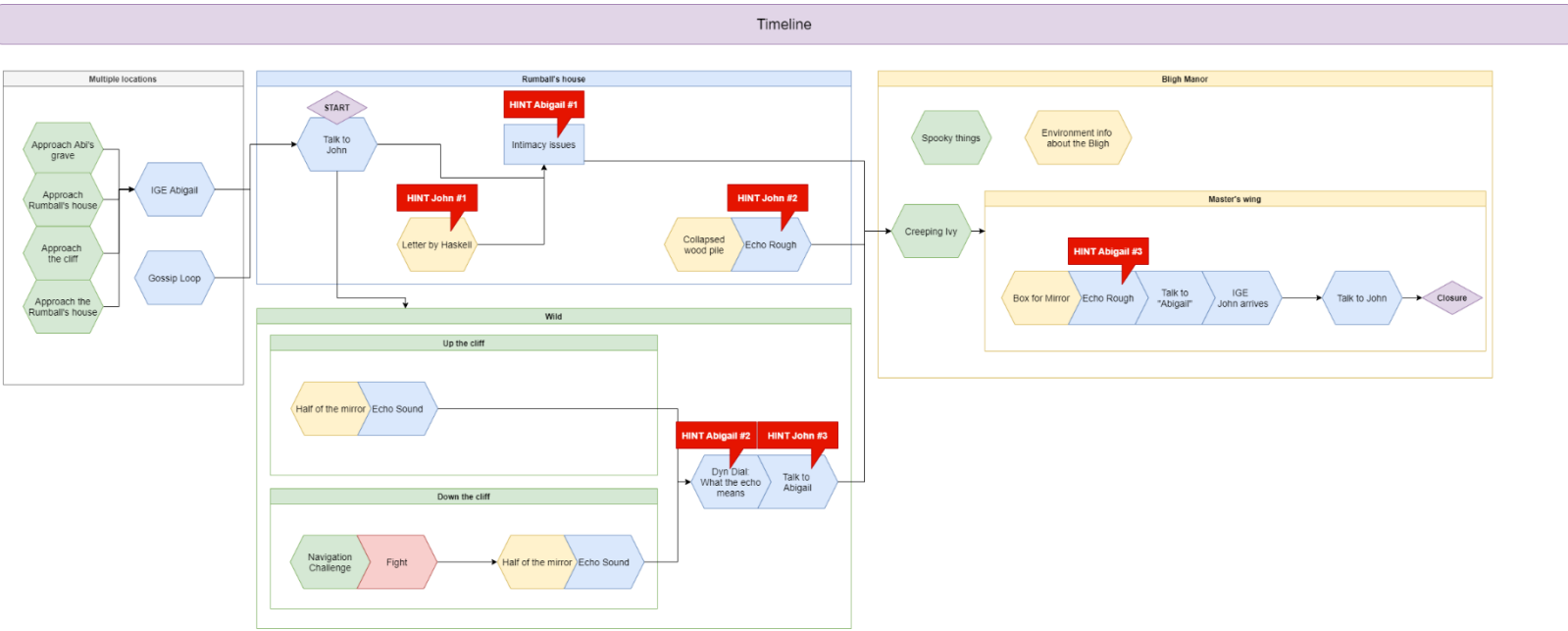
THEMES:

- Murder Mystery
- How lonely one can get inside a relationship, and how terrible communication can destroy genuine love
- The mirror serves as a metaphor for the two characters' pride
- "Be careful what you wish for, you might just get it"

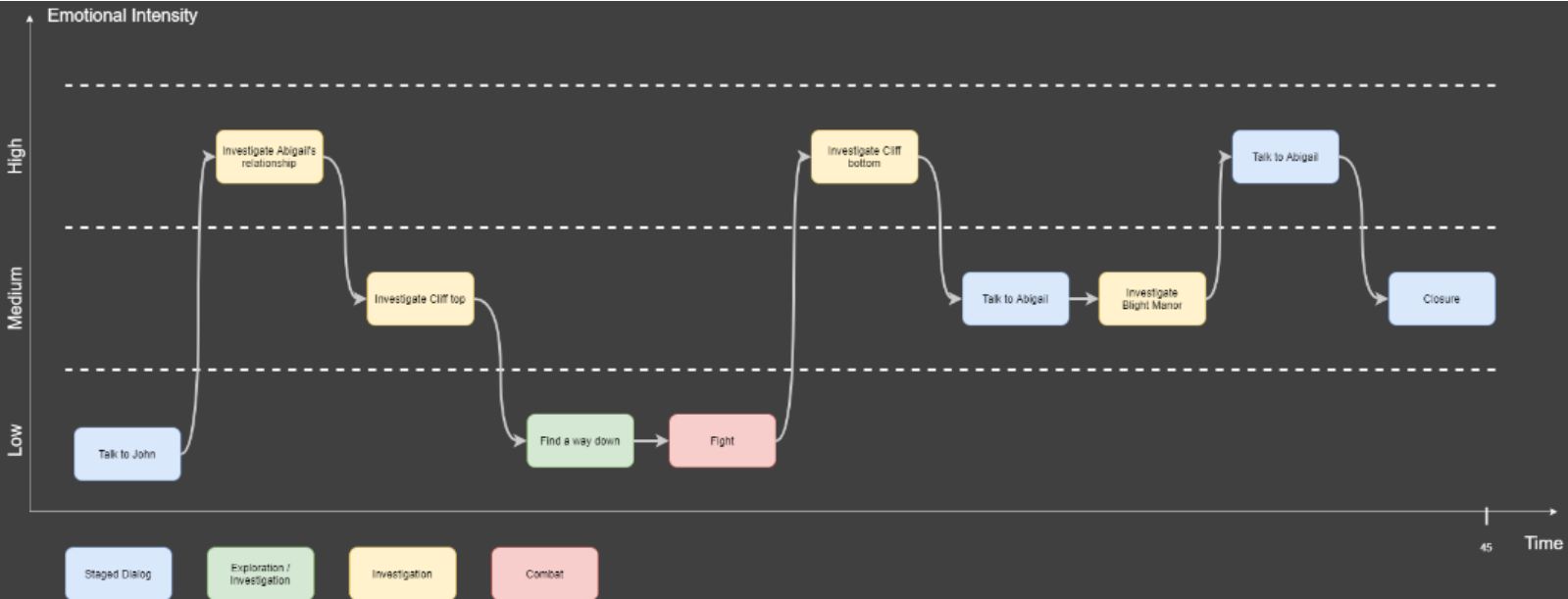
THE HAUNTING

<i>Characters</i>	<i>John Rumball</i>	<i>Abigail Rumball</i>
<i>Hint #1</i>	John Rumball was frustrated because wife Abigail refused to lie with him.	Abigail Rumball had stopped going to worship.
<i>Hint #2</i>	In a flash of anger, John Rumball told wife Abigail to kill herself.	Abigail Rumball told a friend that her marriage was in trouble.
<i>Hint #3</i>	When wife Abigail died, John Rumball was both shocked and relieved.	Abigail Rumball fought an entity that sought to possess her. She lost.
<i>Insight</i>	Angry and frustrated, John Rumball wished wife Abigail dead.	The manipulative entity that took Abigail's heart and mind now possesses her ghost.

TIMELINE



INTENSITY GRAPH



NARRATIVE-LEVEL DESIGN FLOW

Introduction (before MKC#2)

- **[CHIT CHAT / DYN DIAL]** John and Abigail form a couple who agree about almost nothing. For instance, they totally disagree about Captain Pennington: Abigail believes he is their best chance, while John would have preferred to follow Governor Haskell. Stepping on each other's last nerve on a daily basis, the couple often throw awful words at each other. Abigail openly claims she will poison his soup one day. John actually says one day he will push her from the highest rock around.

Quest Starter (After MKC#2)

The events of MKC#2 trigger the apparition of the quest in the player's journal:

- **[GOSSIP LOOP]**
 - *Bathsheba Ingersoll* has information about Abigail Rumball - they will tell the Banishers about her mysterious "accident", and mentions her husband, John, doesn't really seem to be affected in the "proper" way.
 - *Nathaniel Sather* has information about John Rumball - they will discuss how he is a recent recruit and used to be a miner in a nearby mine that got flooded.
- **[IGE] The banishers approach: Rumball's house, Abigail's haven, Abigail's tomb, Bligh manor**

When the banishers return to the colony #2 after the MKC, a ghost appears before the banishers. If they have interacted with the Rumballs before, Antea will recognize Abigail.
Abigail's ghost will remain behind John and raise one arm towards her husband and point her index at him OR point her finger at her grave/the banishers, and before disappearing, claim she has been murdered.
- **[Exploration - graveyard]** Abigail's tomb: environmental storytelling. The earth has been freshly turned. Small blue flowers – forget-me-nots- have been planted on top of it. But the flowers have already wilted and are already dead or dying. Another grave has wilted flowers, the Bligh's common grave.

The quest is considered "started" only once the Banishers talk to John about his wife's accident. Abigail manifests only once per time-lapse, until the quest is started.

- **[TALK - John]**
 - John seems upset, deep in thought, and bothered. He will bid the banisher to leave him be.
 - If Red presses him on :
→ John will explain that his wife recently passed - a terrible accident - where she fell from the highest rock around and was found dead. John refuses to talk more about it.
If players had talked to them before and press him on the fact that they had heard her threaten Abigail of pushing her off the cliff, John will claim that coincidences happen. He actually loved his wife, he claims. He gets defensive and continues saying it was an accident.

The banishers will need to dig out some information if they want to talk further with him.

Part I - The Rumball's marriage

The Rumball's house is a away from the rest of the fort, while still inside the protected area. The dark silhouette of Bligh Minor dominates it from a nearby hill. The Rumball's house is not ostentations, but furnished and in order, there is a bedroom and an office.

John is in routine outside the house. He's busy and doesn't pay much attention to its surroundings, *the Banishers can enter without being seen.*

- **[EXPLORATION - The Rumball's house]**

→ **The house is being well-taken care of.** A little odd, for someone who has just experienced a heavy loss. Only one person seems to live here, as if all of Abigail's belongings have disappeared.

→ **A bible** is opened on some sacred scripture about marital sexual intimacy and how Satan wants to hinder a married couple's intimacy through lack of it.

→ **Spectral traces** are heavy inside, most specifically **around two small, separated beds**. Spectral energy buzzes around one specific side of the bed. Recent bed scratches can be found on the ground.

→ **A recently written letter by Haskell to John** regarding impure thoughts and guilt. The letter implies John wrote to Haskell about terrible, unspeakable dreams he was having. Haskell bids John to pray and reflect.

John Hint #1 Acquired - *John Rumball was frustrated because wife Abigail refused to lie with him.*

- **[EXPLORATION - Behind the house]** Spectral traces will lead the banishers to a narrow path that ends on a small, high cliff.

→ **A chest** outside, behind the house holds several of Abigail's items as well as marriage related objects : **Abigail's carefully folded clothing, a marriage contract, a stack of letters (an old love correspondence between the two before their wedding) and a small painting** (signed Evelynne Fitcher) of the couple when they were younger, happy and genuinely in love.

→ **A collapsed woodpile**, covered by spectral webs. Once uncovered, the object will shimmer with the ripple of a memory.

→ **[ROUGH ECHO]** *An extremely intense argument between Abigail and John, where Abigail throws wooden kitchenware at John's head. They spit poison at each other until Abigail threatens John that he would be glad if she died. John gets even angrier and tells her to go kill herself. Abigail storms off, crying, towards the cliff.*

John Hint #2 Acquired - *In a flash of anger, John Rumball told wife Abigail to kill herself.*

- **[TALK - John] (New Topics after investigation)**

→ **(Acquired hint #1) If pressed about their intimacy issues**, John will remain defensive and tell the banisher that his marital life does not concern Red. Red will need to be careful with the way he speaks to him for John to admit that Abigail and him did not always have a terrible marriage.

They had fallen in love young and had married very shortly after that. Everything went spiralling down when they came to New Eden. The fights, the resentment, the distance. John will not give any details out of modesty and integrity.

John will avoid talking about the real intimacy problems and remain about prayer and religion. In truth, Abigail had stopped praying all together, and turned sour and bitter.

Abigail Hint #1 Acquired - *Abigail Rumball had stopped going to worship.*

- **(Saw Echo Rough) You told her to go kill herself.** John stays deadly silent. (he simultaneously furious at the accusation, ashamed because it's true, and terrified it might be the reason his wife died). He gets angry and defensive. He loved his wife.

→ **If player found the letter to Haskell and presses John about it, John will get angry at the banisher for snooping around his house and refuse to continue talking to him. For now.**

Part II - The cliff: Abigail's haven

This is an otherwise charming cliffside close to the camp, where Abigail had made herself a little haven of peace.

- **[Exploration - Up the cliff]**
 - **A piece of broken mirror** can be found and gives off another ripple of memory.
 - **A small wooden bench** has been built with a small stone where forget-me-nots have been left, looking down a vertiginous descent.
- **[Exploration - Bottom of the cliff]**
 - **Abigail's ghost** is visible from a distance. As the Banishers approach the area, it disappears.
 - **Navigation puzzle:** descending the cliff requires some navigation challenges [**Creeping Ivy Puzzle**] but once below, there is a way to unlock a faster way up.
 - **Fight** : specters appear in the area the first time the Banishers enter the zone.
 - **A big blood stain**, partially cleansed by the elements, is still visible in the center, where Abigail fell.
 - **Half of a broken mirror.** Can be found near the blood stain. Finding it triggers a **SOUND ECHO**.
- **[The mirror's SOUND ECHOES]**

First Half found.

Abigail is weeping and in distress and seems to be talking to herself. Or is she? She is having a conversation with someone whose replies are inaudible. She is in full confession and opening her heart out about her husband's hostility and relationship.

Second Half found.

The other side of the conversation you heard in the other echo from the broken mirror. Another female voice - different, but oddly similar from Abigail's - answers her, supports her, and insidiously urges her towards resentment and bitterness. The voice insidiously pushes Abigail to take revenge on John.

Abigail Hint #2 Acquired - *Abigail Rumball told a friend that her marriage was in trouble.*

Once the player has heard BOTH sound echoes: It is obvious that Abigail was being manipulated. But by whom?

- **[Dynamic Dialogue]** Red says it is obvious that Abigail was being manipulated by someone, but whom? Antea is worried. This is hitting a little too close to home. She tells Red they must be careful. Abigail's ghost could be more dangerous than she anticipated. Red suggests trying to summon Abigail through the mirror, but Antea tells him it won't work: The mirror emits the same kind of "vibe" but is not a ghost tie. There is a name on the mirror: Ethel Bligh. Abigail's deceased former employer. They might have more chance following this lead.

- **[IGE - Abigail's manifestation]** On their way out, Abigail's ghost is still next to her murder scene, and blocks the way forward.
- **[Talk - STG Abigail]**
 - She remembers when her body was discovered. John was so stoic. She didn't think he wanted to get rid of her so badly. He even packed her things so quickly

John Hint #3 Acquired – *When wife Abigail died, John Rumball was both shocked and relieved.*

→ During the dialogue, Abigail's ghost only concentrates on Antea, and tries to manipulate and sidetrack the conversation, trying to make Antea's feelings of resentment and anger come to the surface. She wonders how such a strong spirit like hers agrees to being bound - stripped of her freedom - by a living man. Antea argues against it, but the trickster's words are getting to her. "Abigail" disappears with an insidious laughter, happy of the seed of doubt she thinks she has planted.

→ If pressed on the mirror, Abigail says it doesn't concern the banisher, he should give it to John and leave.

The tension between Red and Antea starts being palpable. They press forward.

The player can either confront John about what he learned or continue to Bligh house.

[Talk - John]

(Found one piece of the mirror) When you show John the mirror, he is surprised to see it.

→ He talks about how Abigail found the mirror in the wild one day while she went out to pick some berries and came back with the item. They had their first terrible, horrible fight that night. He can't even remember what it was about. All he can feel and remember is that on that day, everything switched and changed between them.

→ If pressed on the possibility of a cursed mirror, John negates it all. And blames his wife's fragility. Only the devil could have been responsible for his wife's troubles. Only the devil is responsible for his trouble.

→ *Is John lying? Impossible to know - you have not come up with any proof.*

→ ***If John's Insight acquired***, John will finally collapse and let his true feelings and emotions show. Yes, he had secretly hoped and wished for Abigail's death. But he did not actually want her to die, but she was making him and their life miserable. He could not handle it anymore. Their lack of intimacy and sex was driving him over the edge, and their relationship was destroying him and his image as a man.

Part III - The haunting of Bligh Manor

The Bligh's Manor is an abandoned building, dusty, in ruins. The air inside is restless, there are weird noises and scratches, whispers, and plaints. Sometimes objects move on their own when the characters aren't looking.

- Hostile Will-O-Wisp enemies attack the player inside.
- The Manor is completely taken over by Creeping Ivy and other spectral webs.

NB : The manor can be explored and investigated at any moments in the game, but a wing of it is locked by a door until this stage of the mission.

As the Banishers explore the manor, they find signs that the tragedy hitting the Bligh seems awfully similar to the Rumballs'. They eventually find a proof that something darker is preying on them.

[Exploration] Investigate the Manor (Optional – can be found outside of the mission):

- **Dining room:** The table only has two chairs, as far away from each other as possible. When the Banishers exit the room, there is a rattling sound: the chairs turned towards them.
- **Mirrors:** There are mirrors in every room of the Manor. All of them are tarnished and broken. Some break even more as the Banishers walk by.
- **A broken guard-rail:** When the Banishers approach it for the first time they hear echoes of a dispute (the voices are unrecognizable) and the sound of broken wood and a fall.
- **Spectral writing on walls:** the words “murderer” are visible on some of the walls in spectral vision.

[Exploration] Investigate the Left Wing: The door was blocked by a Creeping Ivy, which is now destroyable.

A Simple corridor with a bedchamber at the end and an office on the side. Switching to Antea reveals the words “Kill her” on the walls.

[IGE] The ghost of Abigail is waiting for the Banishers in the corridor. She tells them to turn back, they are wasting time as John is probably trying to flee from their justice. Antea tries to talk to her, but she disappears.

Office: A note written by Benjamin Bligh, where he talks in feverish words about how he killed his wife in a fit of rage. About how he feels the Devil is pushing him towards sin and has succeeded. He says he has to flee this place.

Mrs Bligh’s Bedchamber: A box containing a slot for a mirror. If the Banishers have all the clues from the microcosm, it is useable as a Ritual (both parts of the mirror required).

[ROUGH ECHO]: *We see Abigail enter the room with the Mirror in her hands. She tries to put it back but the voice from the other Echo tells her to stop and turn back. She needs to keep this mirror. The Banishers realize she is talking to herself, in a classic Smeagol/Gollum fashion. She was clearly under some influence from the mirror.*

Abigail Hint #3 Acquired – *Abigail Rumball fought an entity that sought to possess her. She lost.*

Part IV – Dark Decisions in a Dark Room

[IGE] Abigail’s ghost appears in the room. Or rather, the thing that passes for Abigail. Described below as "The Demon", its exact nature is never made explicit for the player. We assume it is a Gallû, like Calendre.

[Staged Dial – Abigail] They talk to the Banishers, addressing Antea and Red, going from one to the other. Their demeanor is very different from other ghosts: subtle, on point, complex, turned towards them and not self-centered. They’re very destabilizing. The Banishers recognize they’re not Abigail. “Abigail has left us, my dears”.

The Demon will not explain what they are, nor help explain what exactly happened. They will admit that what happened to the Bligh was partially due to their “guiding influence,” “helping them face the true nature of their relationship”.

They know the Banishers are strong enough to hinder their plan but will take a lot of pleasure from making them suffer rather than fight them.

If the Banishers ask about Abigail breaking the mirror, the Demon will say she made a desperate attempt to free herself from their influence, but it didn't work. They will intentionally leave a fog around Abigail's death: was she possessed to jump, or did she jump by herself? And why?

The Demon says there is no ascension for beings like them.

[IGE] John arrives: He saw the Banishers enter the house, and heard Abigail's voice... The thing pretending to be Abigail moves next to him and tells him there is nothing to worry about. He seems as if in a trance and doesn't react.

[Staged Dial – Abigail] The Demon will explain the solutions at hand:

- They could be banished, but that would condemn poor Abigail's essence to "that dark and lonely place".
- The banishers could also sacrifice John. After all, he's to blame for Abi's loneliness. If they did, the demon promises to release Abigail's essence.
- In both cases, the demon cannot be defeated: they will be back, in a week, a year or a hundred. They have time.

Ending

There is no option for Ascent here.

	Sacrifice	Banish
Closure	<p>The real Abigail is the reason the Demon latched onto her couple in the first place. And she's already dead.</p> <p>Besides, the Demon cannot be trusted.</p> <p>Protect the living, says Antea.</p>	<p>Despite her possession, Abigail found reasons to fight the Demon and protect John. She doesn't deserve to be punished. If John had been more considerate, all of this could have been avoided.</p> <p>If this saves Abigail, then sacrifice the living, says Red.</p>
Immediate Outcomes	<p>John comes back to his senses, and recognize having been haunted by "a succubus in his wife's likeness". He thanks the Banishers for their help and says he needs to pack and leave.</p> <p>Antea says they must find a way to destroy that mirror for good: the Demon might use it to torment somebody else, in a year, ten, or a hundred...</p>	<p>The Demon says they have only one word, and we see the spirit of Abigail ascend. They disappear, retreating into the Void.</p> <p>Antea says they must find a way to destroy that mirror for good: the Demon might use it to torment somebody else, in a year, ten, or a hundred...</p>
Consequences	<p>John will go back to his in the next timelapse house, depressed.</p>	<p>John's house will be abandoned.</p> <p>The Demon has retreated into the Void, Hiding in wait.</p>

	The Demon has retreated into the Void, hiding in wait.	
World Mod	John's house is abandoned and looks like a smaller Bligh Manor. Forget-me-nots are blooming on Abigail's tomb.	Bligh Manor is cleansed of spectral activity. Forget-me-nots are blooming on Abigail's tomb.

POST-QUEST ACTIVITY

New Activity Unlocked: Find a way to destroy the cursed mirror.

This quest doesn't have a lot of Dyn Dial: we make it so the player will have to look for clues and follow the tracks to the end on their own.

- **Talk to a Witch**
 - If the Banishers don't know about the spirit unbounding ritual, Seeker instructs them to go learn it from the ghost of Fear-God Waterbury.
 - She also says this ritual will require specific ingredients, listing the Root of an old tree, the Hair of someone who was freed from the mirror's influence, and soil from the void from whence the creature came.
- **Assemble the materials for the ritual**
 - **Void:** a special resource only found in the Void linking the manor and R3's beach.
 - **Root:** To be found under the remarkable tree from the Beast Mission (*MQ2b*)
 - The **Hair** of someone who was freed from the mirror's influence:
 - If John is alive: find John and talk to him.
 - John reflects on his vision of Abigail, and the devil's temptation that ruined his marriage.
 - if John was sacrificed: Must get it on Abigail's tomb.
 - The Couple discuss the toxic relationship between the couple, of love long lost, of resentment, and Antea continues hinting at Calendre.
- **Execute the ritual**
 - In the Manor
 - When ritual is done, the mirror disappears from the inventory.
 - We hear the Demon's last words. they are angry and promise to be back. "It's not over, You know who is waiting for you in Kur".
- **Achievement Unlocked**
- This quest is meant to give the player the bittersweet satisfaction of having made the world a better place, fixing it for the next generation.