

HSI04 - The Pie Heist

quest overview

Summary: Ysalotta hates vegetables and refuses to acknowledge their existence. However, she and Elethe are sitting on top of a secret; fruit pies. There's a stash of them in the Settlement Stockpile that only Ysalotta and Elethe know about... or so they thought. They discover that someone has robbed the pie stash, and they need the player's help to find the sticky-fingered culprit.

Dramatis Personae:

- Ysalotta Stockus - Imperial female, EEC Quartermaster
- Elethe Mehr - Altmer female, scholar

Assets & Locations:

- **Interior**
 - Settlement Stockpile
- **Exterior**
 - Essential Island
 - Olaj Olo's Orchard (a location for the player to explore when hunting for the missing pies)
- **Unique Assets**
 - Crumbled paper (possibly with Settlement Stockpile sigil/marker)

After entering Settlement Stockpile for the third time, the player will encounter Ysalotta and Elethe having a heated discussion and the following scene will play.

Ysalotta:

1. What are we going to do? Do you know what'll happen if this gets out? We'll never hear the end of it!

Elethe:

1. Calm yourself, Ysa. They are all too lacking in the brain department to have even realized, as you well know.
2. Still, we don't want to draw too much attention to this, do we?

Ysalotta:

1. Yes, yes, you're right. Still, when I find out who did this, they won't eat for weeks. Someone on this island must know something.

Elethe:

1. The peons on this island know nothing, Ysalotta. It is both a curse and a blessing.
2. We will get to the bottom of it, do not worry. Now, I must get back to my studies.

After the scene completes, the player will be granted a misc quest.

Objective: < > **Talk to the Quartermaster**

Journal: *I overheard a heated discussion inside the Settlement Stockpile. They mentioned a need to keep something quiet from the other settlers. I should talk to the Quartermaster to find out more.*

While this objective is active, new dialogue will be available with **Ysalotta**:

1. Oh, see you there. That's... unlike me. I've been- let's call it busy.
 - 1.1. **That's fine, it looked important.**
 - 1.1.1. **[patronizing]** You have no idea. Although you don't look familiar to these parts, so perhaps you could prove useful.
 - 1.1.2. **[matter-of-fact]** Maybe you can do something for us. If you've got more between your ears than the rest of them, that is. **[back to options]**
 - 1.2. **What were you two arguing about?**
 - 1.2.1. Arguing? Ugh, you've got it all wrong. Elethe and I don't argue. She's the only one worth my time on these isles.
 - 1.2.2. **[secretive]** Though that's what got us into this mess. A shared love. Something we can't talk about out loud.
 - 1.2.2.1. **I see. That must be hard.**
 - 1.2.2.1.1. Again, you have no idea. We're both bound by a secret desire for pies. If word got out, there'd be chaos.
 - 1.2.2.1.1.1. **I'm sorry, did you say pie?**
 - 1.2.2.1.1.1.1. **[smugly]** Fruit pies, plural, cloth-ears. We're the only ones who get to eat them. Or so we thought. **[back to root]**
 - 1.3. **Is there something I can do to help?**
 - 1.3.1. **[aggravated]** We're the victims of a heist. Some thieving dog has discovered our secret and wants us to pay.
 - 1.3.2. Elethe and I kept a stash of fruit pies. If the others would be more useful, they might have gotten some, too.
 - 1.3.3. **[condescending]** We say that's not our problem. Those sweet dishes are a just reward for all our efforts with these simpletons.
 - 1.3.3.1. **That's a questionable move.**
 - 1.3.3.1.1. Maybe. Still, someone must've found us out. I went to check our supplies this morning and the secret stash was gone!
 - 1.3.3.1.2. **[dramatic]** Nothing left but sugared crumbs and the stench of theft. Someone knows our secret... and they ate our pies.
 - 1.3.3.1.3. **[sternly]** Vengeance will be mine. If you'll help me, that is. Go talk to Elethe if you want to help us catch the pie thief. She'll know what to do.**[end dialogue] [quest granted: The Pie Heist] [go to update quest]**
 - 1.4. **I can see you're busy. I'll come back later.**
 - 1.4.1. **[irritated]** Make your mind up, I don't have all day.**[end dialogue][quest not granted]**

Farewell:

- I'll start boiling some meat up for your next visit.

[quest not granted]

If the player does not proceed with the quest now, they will be able to obtain it through her regular standard dialogue:

1. I changed my mind. What can I do to help?

- 1.1. **[scoffs]** Took you long enough.
- 1.2. **[dramatic]** Nothing left but sugared crumbs and the stench of theft. Someone knows our secret... and they ate our pies.
- 1.3. **[sternly]** Vengeance will be mine. If you'll help me, that is. Go talk to Elethe if you want to help us catch the pie thief. She'll know what to do.**[end dialogue]** **[quest granted: The Pie Heist]** **[go to update quest]**

2. <standard dialogue>

[update quest]

The quest will be granted properly.

Objective: < > **Ask Elethe about the missing pies**

Journal: *I spoke to Ysalotta and discovered that a secret stash of fruit pies has been stolen from Settlement Stockpile. I should speak to Elethe Mehr to help find the culprit.*

The quest marker will be on Elethe, who will be at a given location on the island according to her NPC schedule. While this objective is active, new dialogue will be available with **Elethe**:

1. Ysalotta asked me to talk to you about some pies.

- 1.1. **[pretends to be shocked]** Pies? Nonsense! Meat pies at best, she is very strict when it comes to food.
- 1.2. **[sighs]** That glutton told you about our little secret, did she not? I see.
- 1.3. Well, as you might have already heard, this morning the stash was gone and someone needs to find out who did this.
- 1.4. **[condescending]** Make yourself useful for once and find them before anyone finds out!

1.4.1. Where do I need to look?

- 1.4.1.1. **[sighs, annoyed]** Right, I should have expected this from someone like you. Fine, I will give you a run down of the place where I think someone could hide them.
- 1.4.1.2. **[sighs]** And I need to make it simple so that even the likes of you understand.
- 1.4.1.3. **[clears throat, as if talking to a five-year old]** Look. Near. The. Spa. The big place with lots of hot water in it. **[back to options]**

1.4.2. Do you have any clues as to who did this?

- 1.4.2.1. The little rat swiped them from under our noses. Clearly, they must have been as powerful as the Sapirachs themselves.

- 1.4.2.2. No other being would be able to move around Nirn itself without me noticing. I have given you everything I know, now fetch the pies for me! [end of dialogue][go to update quest]

[update quest]

Objective: < > Search Olaj Olo's Orchard for clues

Journal: *I spoke to Elethe and learned that the pie thief may have headed for a local orchard. I should make my way there to locate the thief and hopefully, the pies.*

The player is now free to head to Olaj Olo's Orchard. They can search the area as they see fit, but they will be pointed to a bundle of paper by the questmarker. When the player interacts with it, a text box will pop up. Clicking the text box away will advance the quest:

There are some crumbs scattered around on the ground here, plus some empty crumbled papers. There are no signs of a thief anywhere around.

<Okay>

[update quest]

Objective: < > Return to the Settlement Stockpile

Journal: *I searched Olaj Olo's Orchard but there were no signs of a pie thief anywhere. There were, however, a large volume of pie crumbs and wrappers. I should head back and discuss my findings with Ysalotta and Elethe.*

The player is now free to return to Settlement Stockpile. Depending on the time of day, Ysalotta and/or Elethe will be there to interact with according to their NPC schedule. Markers will be around the building to meet the "investigate the crime scene" objective.

While this objective is active, new dialogue will be available with **Ysalotta**:

1. [matter-of-fact] You're back. Well? Did you find and hang that thief?
 - 1.1. **I found nothing but crumbs and paper wrappers so far.**
 - 1.1.1. [wistfully] You did? Hmm... that was careless. Of the thief, I mean. Guess they just couldn't resist those hot, fruity aromas--
 - 1.1.2. [clears throat] That dog will pay dearly for this! [back to options] [unlocks VAGUE]
 - 1.2. **The thief will be found eventually.**
 - 1.2.1. [nervously] Yes, yes. In the meantime, I think it's in our best interest if I were to... order more pies.
 - 1.2.2. [giggly at the end] To replenish the stocks, naturally. And to give the lazy bums another chance to earn themselves a slice.
 - 1.2.3. I should send word immediately! [back to options] [unlocks VAGUE]
 - 1.3. [locked - VAGUE] **You sound more interested in the pies than the thief.**
 - 1.3.1. What are you talking about? Obviously, it's important for the workers to have the.. uh, four basic foods!

1.3.2. Ale, Lard, Brandy, Meat and- and pies. And because pies are so special, I- I mean the workers need them the most!

1.3.2.1. You stole the pies, didn't you?

1.3.2.1.1. The pies. Their fruit, I... I had to have them! You don't know what it's like, toiling over this meat all day long!

1.3.2.1.2. You don't understand the cravings I've had! You know what they say, once you try fruit, there's no substitute.

1.3.2.1.3. **[annoyed]** Look, you found me out. Let me be the one to tell Elethe the truth. Here, have something for your troubles. **[end dialogue]** **[go to scene 1]** **[add 200 gold]**

1.3.2.2. Tell me the truth.

1.3.2.2.1. Fine. I'm a fruit pie addict who gorged on our entire secret stash in the orchard where no one could see me. Ugh, the shame.

1.3.2.2.2. **[annoyed]** Look, you found me out. Let me be the one to tell Elethe the truth. Here, have something for your troubles. **[end dialogue]** **[go to scene 1]**

1.4. I didn't find anything yet, but I will.

1.4.1. Good, good. You carry on searching. **[end dialogue]**

While this objective is active, new dialogue will be available with **Elethe**:

1. Well? Any trace of our delicious desserts? Or are you as inept as everyone else?

1.1. I found little more than some crumbs and wrappers.

1.1.1. **[outraged]** Crumbs and wrappers? That's impossible. When I left that area, it was so clean and spotless that even the Varlines would pale in comparison!

1.1.2. Do you doubt my proficiency with illusion magic? I'll have you know that even on Alinor, no one could--

1.1.3. **[bites her tongue, clears throat]** You should keep looking. That's all you're good for. **[back to options]** **[unlocks MAGE]**

1.2. [locked - MAGE] You turned the pies invisible?

1.2.1. **[affronted]** So what if I did? I am a renowned scholar and your arcane superior!

1.2.2. It is my duty to protect the pies, so that none of these lazy and useless workers could have them.

1.2.2.1. And where are the pies?

1.2.2.1.1. **[groans]** I have yet to find them. With my magical prowess that-- Ah, right. I doubt you simpletons would even understand.

1.2.2.1.2. **[mumbling, hesitant]** My spell rendered the pies not only invisible, but nonexistent. Poofed entirely out of reality, with nothing left but mere crumbs, it seems.

1.2.2.1.3. **[offended]** Fine! Fine, I will tell Ysa, so don't give me that look. You won't get any pies, though. However... you may

have this for your troubles. [end dialogue] [go to scene 2]
[add 200 gold]

1.2.2.2. You lost them, didn't you?

1.2.2.2.1. [sharp] Lost them? I did not! I merely turned them so invisible that they... that they vanished completely.

1.2.2.2.2. I have found the pinnacle of illusion magic! To where not only the minds of the simple folk- that means you, but the entire world will be deceived!

1.2.2.2.3. [offended] Fine! Fine, I will tell Ysa, so don't give me that look. You won't get any pies, though. However... you may have this for your troubles. [end dialogue] [go to scene 2]

1.3. I didn't find anything yet, but I will.

1.3.1. Then what are you standing around for? Quit being a waste of my time.
[end dialogue]

[scene 1]

The quest will complete. Elethe will approach Ysalotta and the following scene plays:

Elethe:

1. Ysa, is that true what you've just said? That you... ate them all in a frenzy?

Ysalotta:

1. [desperately] I can't stop, Elethe. I've had a taste of it, and I couldn't control it any longer. The cravings kept getting stronger!
2. Ele, please don't be angry with me.

Elethe:

1. [sympathetically] Oh, Ysa. I had no idea. Well, it's good that I now know. I thought I-- nevermind.
2. More importantly, though - I need to study this! A frenzy that does not make you rage until there's nothing left to be destroyed...
3. [thinking] But rather a frenzy that makes one grow hungry until there is nothing left to be eaten... What a discovery! They'll make me a Sapiarch!

[scene 2]

The quest will complete. Elethe will approach Ysalotta and the following scene plays:

Elethe:

1. [annoyed] Ysalotta, I have to be honest with you about something. Though it pains me greatly to admit it, I no longer have a choice.

2. You see, it was me. I took the pies. The pies were necessary, though. I was working on an invisibility spell, to make our secret stash even more secret.
3. [excitedly] I... I made an error in my spellcasting. I made the pies vanish, instead of just becoming invisible.

Ysalotta:

1. Oh! You mean the pies that I-- uh, don't worry, we'll just get an even bigger stash next time!
2. [enthusiastically] You can perfect your spell and we'll have these morons eating rat ribs while we feast on fruit in front of them! No one will ever know.

Development & Analysis

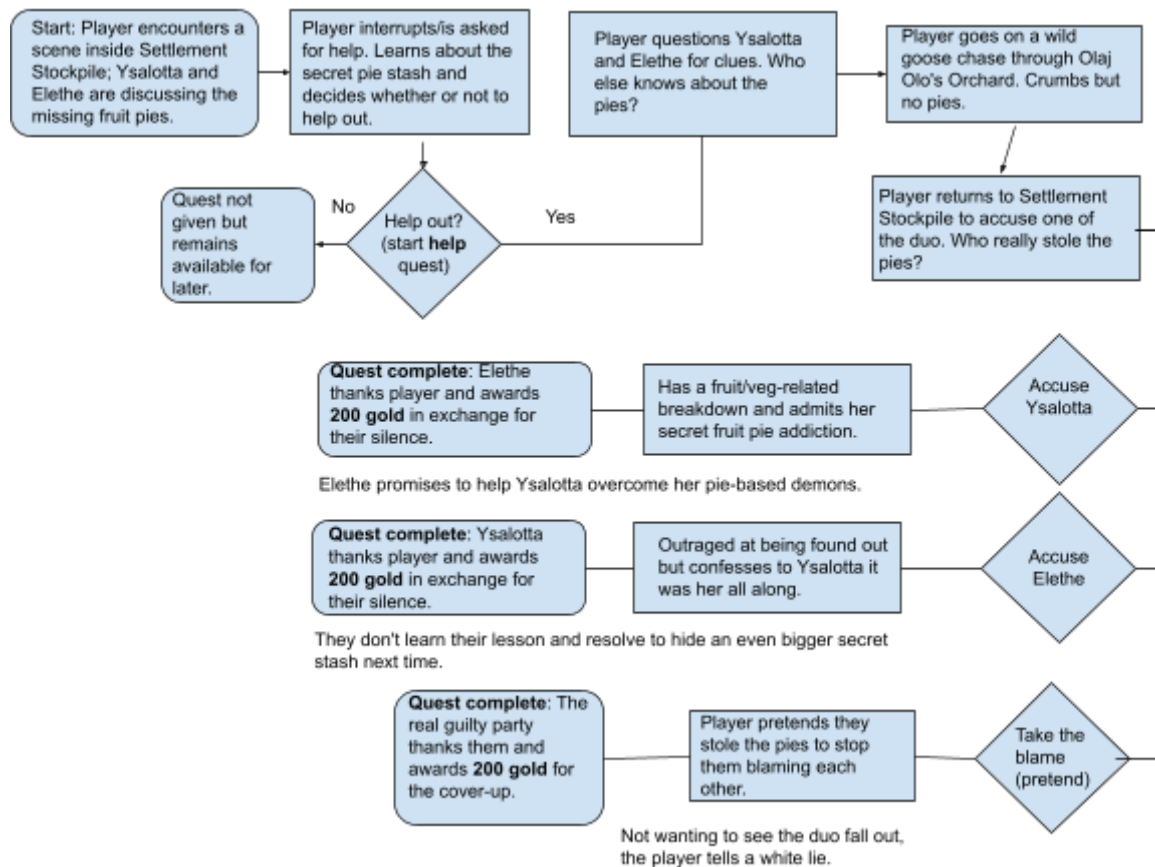
I wrote The Pie Heist part of my work with Beyond Skyrim's [Arcane University](#). It will be included in the AU's upcoming student collaboration mod for Skyrim, Harthstone Isles.

The quest itself was designed to feature two NPCs from a designated house on the island. I wrote Ysalotta and a co-writer created Elethe. After the NPCs and their standard dialogue were written, it was time to work on an accompanying quest. I wanted to ensure that the quest kept a light-hearted, humorous tone that revealed more about the quirky dynamic between the two NPCs of Settlement Stockpile.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, my writing partner was unable to contribute to the quest writing process. As he needed to take some time off from the project, I continued with the quest design by myself. This included writing Elethe's role and voice in the quest, despite her not being a character I created. Whilst challenging, this allowed me to interpret her characterisation and develop her quest-specific dialogue in the best way possible. The result was a fully written quest that was specific to the two NPCs, made sense with the wider experience offered in Harthstone Isles and provided two different outcomes for the player, depending on which NPC they opt to speak to.

I started by creating a quest outline and a prompt for the level design team. The outline needed to summarise the events of the quest and detail the locations that needed to exist for the quest to be implemented. I presented the outline as a flowchart and discussed how the events would work with the Writing Lead, to ensure that my idea was feasible for implementation into the eventual mod itself. This aspect of the process was particularly important to me, as I was working alone and wanted to ensure my design wasn't going to grow out of scope.

Flowchart:



Once the quest outline was approved by the Writing Lead, I was able to start on the dialogue. The quest went through a couple of rounds of revisions in collaboration with the Writing Lead. Due to hard limits on page length, I opted to remove one of the planned completion branches from the quest. This made things a bit more linear, but still gave the player a couple of different outcomes.

However, my work on this part of the project meant that my team's NPC and quest writing was completed ahead of schedule and allowed for additional ambient dialogue and short scenes to be written.

As a result of my work on this project and contributions to previous AU mods, I was recently accepted as a writer on [Beyond Skyrim: Expedition to Atmora](#).

Note: the quest is written according to Arcane University's Writing Style Guide. This details specifics on colour-coding for [voice acting notes](#), [implementation notes](#) and [identical NPC lines](#). It also denotes maximum character line limits for player dialogue and NPC dialogue, dialogue formatting in Google Docs, grammar and language (American English and the Oxford comma), amongst other important style instructions.