

## Das Malefitz Uhrwerk Quest Pitch

This is a pitch for a quest set in The Witcher Polaris. The purpose of this quest is to ask the player to confront the brutal reality of the fate all witchers face: an ugly death while on The Path.

Das Malefitz Uhrwerk roughly translates from German to mean "The Clockwork Sin." The premise is that a fellow Witcher has died under mysterious circumstances and the player decides to investigate his death. Throughout the investigation, the player unravels a twisted pact between The Nuckelavee - a terrifying sea demon - the Huldufólk - mysterious elves that live in a parallel world - and a small village. As the player later learns, the witcher was not murdered but instead sacrificed himself to atone for a mistake he made which nearly ended the pact.

The player initially follows a series of clues to track down the missing witcher, leading them to discover the witcher's corpse surrounded by Huldufólk and being subjected to a dark ritual. The Nuckelavee makes its presence known but does not fully reveal itself, only chasing the player to a freshwater spring which serves as a magical boundary the Nuckelavee is unable to cross. The player escapes with the corpse and, following journal entries left by the dead witcher, discovers a magically concealed village. The player enters the village with the body of the dead witcher slung across the back of their horse.

The player begins questioning the villagers and is brought to the druid who is currently in the process of performing an autopsy

on another corpse. Soon after, the Nuckelavee enters the village, escorted by the Huldufólk. The player is told not to interfere. The Huldufólk choose a villager who is to be “marked” by the Nuckelavee. The terrified villager willingly follows the Nuckelavee and the Huldufólk into the woods. The Huldufólk chant an eerie melody as they disappear into the woods.

The conditions of the pact dictate that the Huldufólk will use the power of their songs to tame the Nuckelavee and grant control from the Sea Mither to Teran. Teran ensures that the villagers and Huldufólk will regularly be chosen or “marked” by the Nuckelavee to undergo a series of rituals, which increase its power and grant Teran the upper hand in their eternal conflict, in exchange for the village, which has temporarily been forgotten in the confusion of ongoing warfare, to be magically hidden from the outside world, allowing the villagers to operate independently and undisturbed, and the Huldufólk, who’s realm has been poisoned by the bloodshed of human warfare, will be purified. The twist is that the method of ongoing peace and survival for both the Huldufólk and the villagers comes at a great cost. The villagers and the Huldufólk will be merged into new beings.

One sequence involves the village druid using dark magic to summon a shadow demon which reanimates the witcher’s corpse, replaying key moments in the events leading up to his death. The crucial information the player learns here is that a marked villager had temporarily escaped from the Nuckelavee’s rituals and returned to the village to meet his beloved. While in the village, the witcher deduces who he is and confronts him, realizing what the true result of the pact will be on the villagers and the Huldufólk. The witcher

grows furious that this villager had put both groups in danger by swaying from the conditions of the pact and, intending to scare sense into him, unintentionally kills him. The witcher had been drinking due to a loss of how he should proceed in this situation, if he should get involved at all. Realizing his mistake, he decides the best course of action now is to ensure events don't get any worse because of him and he confronts the Nuckelavee, eventually opting to willingly be subjected to a dark ritual which will kill him, but ensure the continuation of the pact.

After learning the important clues, the shadow puppet attempts to escape and possesses the dead witcher's body and attacks the player. The player manages to stay alive until the druid dispels the demon. The player, now with the same knowledge the witcher had before his mistake, buries both bodies in the woods. During the burial the Huldufólk reveal themselves and confront the player, asking what they intend to do. The player may decide to confront, but not outright attack the Nuckelavee, only resorting to combat if necessary, they may outright attack the Nuckelavee, they may try to persuade the Huldufólk to break the pact, they may try to convince the villagers to break the pact, they may try to convince both groups to break the pact, or they may decide that the witcher had the right idea and choose to not get involved.

None of these decisions lead to an ideal outcome for anyone involved.