

Landscaping Details: Ashlander Pilgrim Encounter



Overview

- **Writer:** Chris Korkos
- **Project:** *Skywind*
- **Links:**
 - [Script Link](#)
 - [Twine Link](#)
- **Summary:**
 - As a writer for *Skywind*, I wrote and designed the Ashlander Pilgrim encounter, in which the player meets a pair of elves making pilgrimage to the shrine of their goddess, Azura. During the encounter, the player receives a cryptic prophecy and learns about the intricacies of the Ashlander faith.
 - After writing the script, the writing team determined that the characters should be met at a particular in-game location rather than randomly generated along the road (as is the case with other encounters).
 - To ensure that the selected location best fit the narrative I had established, I worked with a level designer to place and design a campsite at which the player would meet the strange travelers.
 - This effort involved examining in-game locations and world maps, incorporating items specific to Ashlander culture, and placing personalized items to tell a story through the game's environment.

Camp Placement: Map Overview

- **Summary:** First, I selected the general region where the encounter should take place – specifically, the peninsula at the southern tip of Azura’s Coast where the Shrine of Azura is located. This placement would treat the pilgrim encounter as an introduction to the shrine area, and therefore set the tone of Azura’s following quest.



- **Step 1:** Determine a rough location for the Pilgrim camp to appear, such that:
 1. The ideal tone is set for the encounter.
 2. The encounter is not missed by a majority of players; the camp doesn't need to be obvious, but shouldn't be impossible to find.
- Areas ([Map Link](#))
 - **Azura's Coast Peninsula:** The most likely area that players will traverse when approaching the Shrine of Azura.
 - **Shrine of Azura:** The pilgrims' destination; the camp should appear far from this point.

Camp Placement: In-Game Locations

- **Summary:** After giving the general boundaries of where the camp should be located, the level designer sent a batch of 9 screenshots from the area. Out of the 9 images, I selected 4 suitable locations for the camp, including the pros and cons of each.



- Rough Location Candidates
 1. Along the main road, most likely to be within the player's path.
 2. High up on a coastal cliff, close to the shrine.
 3. High up on a small hill/plateau, close to the shrine.
 4. High up on a lakeside cliff, far from the shrine.



- Location 1
 - **Pros:** Most straightforward and accessible; highest chance for player to encounter the pilgrims. Would serve as “gateway” to shrine area.
 - **Cons:** None



- Location 2
 - **Pros:** Grand view of Azura’s statue (see #3) and surrounding lands.
 - **Cons:** More difficult to find, less likely that player initiates the encounter. Potentially too close to shrine itself.



- Location 3
 - **Pros:** Grand view of Azura’s statue and surrounding lands. Central to shrine area.
 - **Cons:** More difficult to find, less likely that player initiates the encounter. Potentially too close to shrine itself.



- Location 4
 - **Pros:** Most interesting location, including distant view of Azura’s statue. Could place a beached boat on the shore as a “breadcrumb” of pilgrims’ travels.
 - **Cons:** Toughest place to find out of all locations.

Pilgrim Camp Design

- **Summary:** The level designer selected a location out of the four candidates that I provided, then set up the Pilgrims' Camp based on my rough description.
 - **Level Designer's Selection:** Location 1
 - **Description Details:**
 - 2 small one-person tents or 1 larger tent, 1 bedroll for each pilgrim, and a small lit campfire.
 - Camp should have the feeling that it was put up with the bare minimum resources – essentially whatever the 2 pilgrims and guar (pack animal) could carry on their backs.
 - If there are any small Urshilaku or Ashlander-specific trinkets, we could use those to decorate the tents. We could also add one or two baskets with food and/or materials from around the Urshilaku region (trama & fire fern).
 - Things like big banners or effigies would be overboard, but maybe a single obvious symbol tying them to Urshilaku, like a small banner or flag, would be good.
 - Ideally the whole thing would despawn when they've left the region, but if not, maybe we can just put out the campfire.
 - A bag placed in the camp should have a set of Chitin Armor, to indicate that the older pilgrim (dressed in simple clothes) has removed it for the sake of comfort. The other pilgrim still wears his armor, as he is the more capable fighter.
 - A musical instrument should be propped against one of the tents, to indicate that the two often perform music. This would remain consistent, as the encounter starts with the older pilgrim singing/chanting while the player draws near.



- In-Game Camp
 - Placed at **Location 1**, along the area's main road leading to the shrine.
 - Incorporates scaled-down Ashlander camp awnings, chitin arches, lanterns, charms, and a small banner to form a smaller camp while maintaining Ashlander aesthetics.
 - After pilgrims have left the area, all but the campfire despawns, and the campfire is put out; this will leave a realistic and lasting trace of the pilgrims.