

# Rhyme with Dark Reason

## Introduction

Hey.

Before I begin, let me say thanks for taking the time to run this for me and for the LepreCon crew - your reward would have been great in heaven if you had ever had a snowball's chance in hell of making the cut for divine grace and forgiveness. 'Course, satan lovin' gaming schizo occult sucking freak that you are, your soul's a complete right-off, and so why not purge some of that victim mentality in a bout of righteous player torture with my fun-o-rama puzzle fest, thinly disguised with a paper thin plot as a CoC scenario. Yessir, piss all here to allow for interesting character interplay and thematic exposition; its abstract and mindless puzzle bashing galore, with the same chance of the players getting to the end of the maze as you have of being Pope by Gaelcon. (How's that going by the way?)

Okay, a brief run down of what lies within. After the overview below which tries to make linear the basic progression the PCs should make through the plot and help you handle your handouts, I have tried to lay the game out in detail, in a similarly linear fashion, and you should try to keep the players running in as much of a straight line as you can if they are to make it through the plethora of puzzle components in time. Most of them are based around deciphering the hidden meanings of well known nursery rhymes and poems which have a basis in occult ritualism. By working them all out they should hope to avert the raising of Dagon and Hydra in a secret room in the apartment setting, free themselves from a magically imposed imprisonment and survive. There are very few opponents in this storyline, but the PCs are already nasty pieces of work themselves and will have a fair whack of interpersonal conflict to keep the blood up and you should use this to urge them to keep moving at a decent pace. The plot stuff is written as if the game has already run so you do need to read through to the end before starting play, this one will not open up on the fly. Sorry.

There are also a fair number of handouts, so familiarise yourself with them now as you go along. The codes for them are arbitrary and are purely for indexing. Remind the players of this in case they think they have missed any along the way. Pace is important in this. It might also be useful to read the character descriptions in advance of reading the plotline below so you get an idea of the tone of their interaction with their environment.

Should you have any problems - deal with them. I'm not at the con and no-one has my phone number so I'll not be there to resolve jack!

Have fun - get them snarling at each other, keep the sense of frozen doom high and keep track of the bullets!

Damien.

## Overview

Talk them through the brief from Elliott

**Handouts: Character sheets**

Travel to Zanuck building

**Handout: player Map A1 - public domain plans of apartment**

Maguire should check the cleanup van waiting in basement carpark with Savage

Everybody up to the Penthouse by a private elevator, guards paid off in advance by Elliott

Meeting with Withers, drinks and chat

Withers retires to get book, found dead minutes later

PCs search body

**Handouts: R6 in left hand, T3 in the right**

When knife drawn from Withers' dead body the **Hydra** attacks and the PCs trapped inside by the ice spell which goes off simultaneously

Search apartment: the study containing Withers' library has Knapker's book

**Handout: Letter to publishers Z5**

and the book of nursery rhymes with the missing pages, in amongst which is a page from Withers' diary

**Handout: Diary page S2**

In the locked bedroom next door are the 4 dead bodies and broken mirrors.

The waste chute is a portal to hell.

Find Typhon statue and the spell to bring it to life,

**Handouts: Statue picture J2 and Rhyme J3**

then fight the Typhon statue and underneath is the clue to stop the rise of Dagon, Hydra and the Deep

**Handout: By Winter Shine Rhyme B4**

Find Poems pinned to back of closet in master bedroom, the back of the closet is a door to the ritual room, need the dagger to open it

**Handout: Mad scribbles G1**

Find ritual room and grimoire

**Handout: player Map A2, Rhymes in book H9 - Two little girls...; Bath-time...; Snow Riddle**

The Summons begins as they read the book - the Deep Ones are on their way

Work out from the *By Winter Shines* clue that a mirror is needed to trap Dagon and Hydra

Fight **Deep Ones** if they show up

Trap Dagon and Hydra or run and die

## 1. Robert Elliott

Robert Elliott is a very rich man. Head of his own publishing corporation and certainly as well photographed as any of the Hollywood celebrities that appear in his papers. And like any rich man he has a taste for the finer things in life. But Robert Elliott does not *prefer* the finer things in life, pleasant as they are. No. Robert Elliott *prefers* the seedier, darker trappings of a man with a great deal of money.

Robert Elliott likes power, but not just any kind of power; the kind of power that scares other people. Robert Elliott is seeking that which man was warned most stringently to avoid. Robert Elliott has an ambition for evil. Now that may not be unique: Robert Elliott is a bastard of the highest order, but there are countless bastards to match him. No, what makes him unique is the heights of Evil he hopes to achieve.

Robert aspires to demon-hood. Without qualms, without fear or delusion, he is seeking the devil. Not for any pact or favour. Just to join. Robert Elliott wants this dream very badly. He is a very bad man.

And he wants the players to realise his dream for him. Tonight. Though he's not telling them why...

## 2. Withers and the Book

He has sent the PCs - **An occult expert and canny bibliopole, a press-ganged witch, a grass green henchman, and a resourceful lawyer/cleaner** - to the home of Corky Withers, a collector of books, a writer on the occult, and (*Mr. Elliott assures them*) a very bad egg. Through select contacts Elliott has discovered that Withers has for sale a Book of Shadows, a witch's grimoire which, Withers has assured Elliott's contacts, grants its holder a direct audience with the Adversary himself. If this is true, Elliott wants this book.

Withers is very eager to sell it, but has recently announced that he is entertaining a number of other bidders, possibly to speed up the sale, possibly to force Elliott to act in haste. Elliott wants this book very badly, but is suspicious that it matching his requirements so precisely is a little too convenient.

After getting the location of where they are to go and what they are to buy from Elliott himself over drinks in his office the PCs will travel to meet with Withers to view the merchandise and authenticate it, with a view to placing an offer that Withers cannot refuse. They will offer him a healthy fortune for the book, and he will accept there and then, or they will kill him and take the book. You can tell the Lawyer Character she is authorised to go as far as \$2 million for the book, if the book expert and witch are happy with its authenticity.

Since the deal could well turn bloody, Elliott himself is not present and his name is not to be used. Though Elliott has only ever used contacts, who do not use his name, he fears that Withers knows who he is, and somehow knows what he wants, and is making the whole thing up, but just in case...

## 3. Location and Players

Withers' penthouse apartment is on the 18th floor of the Zanuck building in LA, isolated apartments for the rich and famous, or like Withers, the desperately secretive. The building was built by Darryl F. Zanuck, a film producer who helped guide Warner's studio into the sound era, co-founded Twentieth Century Pictures in 1933, and ran Twentieth Century-Fox at various times over five decades, before dying in 1979. It reeks of thirties style, and is immensely exclusive. Accordingly, it has a lot of security

personnel, and the remote location of the penthouse can make a cleaning operation difficult, but not impossible. The remoteness of the apartment also makes it less often patrolled as lazy guards shirk their responsibility to their richer clients, and luckily Withers is somewhat wary of the security invading his privacy with regular checks, and has demanded they do not call on him.

In addition, Elliott has paid off the front doormen to pay little heed to the be-hatted and dark glasses wearing party that enters tonight, and they will likewise ignore the disposal truck heading off rather late this evening, if the need arises. The security cameras are all unluckily positioned just at the wrong angle to get a good look at the people's faces if they take care not to show them much.

Plans of the guy's home (**Map A1**) show that there is a large waste disposal and the green Henchman (**Maguire**) is sent to drive the evidence away should there be any problems. He is also the hitter if necessary, but again, he's newly hired and untried. Only Emily Savage, the lawyer, knows this apart from Maguire, so avoid mentioning it in front of Lopez and Abigail's players, especially Abigail, since Maguire's char really doesn't want her to think him capable of such things, and also Lopez might not agree to the meeting if he thinks there may be murder at it. The floorplans are easily accessed from public records and should be current and correct because the building has historical significance and cannot be changed.

The Witch (**Abigail**) is a new girlfriend of Elliott, wined and dined for exactly this requirement. He's given her a rather tasty little cocaine habit and she needs him to keep it flowing.

The Bibliophile (**Lopez**) is in it for the money and the thrill of the chase.

The Lawyer (**Savage**) will do the money talk on Elliott's behalf, if the other two are satisfied with the merchandise.

#### **4. Death of a Salesman....and then Trapped!**

So they go to the apartment, and talk money with Withers. He is reluctant to show them the actual book when he hears the buyer him or herself is not present and instead produces photos of the piece, which reveal nothing but an odd leather tome with a bizarre lock built into it. Withers is fully aware that it is Elliott who seeks the book and will ask to speak to him directly, going so far as asking for him by name.

If the PCs phone Elliott then he will refuse to speak to the man, and press the PCs to get hold of the book and just deal with Withers quickly. They *must* return with the book or they are fucked. Use whatever threats you feel will silence your players the quickest.

The PCs should press to see the actual book and Withers will finally agree to show them and asks them to wait while he fetches the piece.

Any attempt to accompany him into his bedroom will bring fear and suspicion and threats of ejection. He will tell them that he does not wish to have his security situation compromised in any way: where his safe is, what type it is, what it takes to open it, that sort of thing.

If they try to force him to take them, or indeed try to force him at any time, then he will show his true strengths and cause, by will alone, a minor conflagration by burning a cushion on his sofa. He will also simply deflect bullets fired at him. Consider Withers indestructible by the PCs for the sake of ease and give him any power you need to to effect this. He'll be dead in a minute so it doesn't matter.

He in turn threatens to use his powers to burn the book if they do not let him fetch it unobserved. He has nowhere to go anyway, the PCs know as much from the plans.

They will have to let him go in alone, after a few minutes he still hasn't come out and they will follow. The door is locked but easily broken in.

He's dead on the floor, an ornate dagger down his throat and no sign of any book in his rather plain bedroom.

If they remove said dagger then it will unleash a binding spell that freezes the exits of the apartment and traps the PCs within.

Beg pardon?

Run that by me again?

### **Some background on Withers is obviously in order.**

Withers is as old as all buggery, a formerly formidable sorcerer and once a knight of the Esoteric Order of Dagon, Father deity of the Deep Ones race. He ruled this order for a short time in sporadic rivalry with one Johann Knapker, philosopher and occult writer of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Knapker and Withers' feud finally threatened to bring down the order and so they had most of their power taken from them and were cast out, each blaming the other. They have spent the intervening years desperately seeking some way to regain their powers and revenge themselves upon each other, until Withers finally saw the light, repented his evil ways and sought reconciliation with his former foe.

Knapker repaid him by taking advantage of this weakened position to curse him with a Book.

The book of Shadows that Elliott seeks, that Withers is selling and the PCs are soon to be faced with is actually a complex relic of Summoning, which will, this very night, summon Dagon and Hydra to the apartment with a host of really pissed off Deep Ones, and loose them on the city in an insane hunt for slaughter. A fine vengeance indeed by Knapker, afflicting Withers, his human conspirators and the now loathsome former masters in one fell stroke.

Since receiving the book in 1912 Withers has tried to resist its power over him. It compels him to complete the spells within so that the summoning will occur. On various occasions he has found himself doing some part of the requirements and it has taken decades of sheer will not to finish all the components. But tonight he knows he can resist no longer

He has tried to stop the spell from issuing from him but removing the dagger will free the spell to trap the sacrifices. What happens is: an icy wind will issue from the dead body that freezes all the internal surfaces of the apartment and seals the front door shut solid, beyond their ability to break through it or shoot the lock unfrozen no matter how they might try (keep track of the wasted bullets on any such attempt). Anyone of the four of them who may be outside the apartment at that time will be sucked back in by the wind, beyond their ability to resist, and the door will freeze thereafter, as above.

Withers had been hoping that in giving the book to its rightful new master he would free himself from its deathly touch and the pressure to free Dagon and Hydra, but Elliott not showing has snafu-ed his plans and he decides that suicide is a better bet. Now the PCs must seek a way out and a means to clean away the evidence.

So, either now, *or later if they do not pull out the dagger straight away*, the PCs will need to start searching about for a means of escape.

## Meanwhile, back at the plot...

Searching the room yields nothing really, the bedroom is plain apart from the ornate bed (see below) and they find nothing useful in the wardrobes or drawers, no sign of the book, no wall safe, no weapons. Searching his body, they will find in Withers' hands some clues, in one hand **the poem from Knapker (Handout R6)**, in the other **the little fish rhyme (Handout T3)** and from the strange feel of the paper...there is human hair in the weave... the witch smells a grimoire...

Withers' little finger is missing on his right hand. An old wound, they may have noticed it earlier. This is because he had to sacrifice it to open the grimoire in the first place as the PCs will see when they find it in the secret room later.

The Knapker text, a book of philosophy that shows how secret messages are hidden in common text, discovered by reading from the centre of sentences outwards, is on the bookshelf in the study which lies next door and **a letter (Handout Z5)** of complaint about this occult text lies within it. The bibliophile knows the Knapker text was withdrawn by the publisher due to complaints from the British Parliament and the Church, but knows little else about when or why, but it makes the Knapker text *very* collectible.

## 5. And so to bed...

Two images are carved into Withers' elaborate bed - one of Dagon and one of **Hydra**, the witch and occultist can identify these. It can be seen that the one at the head, Dagon, has been badly scored with the dagger and has blood on it, although the bottom image (Hydra) remains intact. If the dagger is drawn near to it the many-headed Hydra image will spring to life and only the dagger can damage it. Stats for the Hydra should it come to life are included at the end.

Reading the complaint letter (**Z5**) about the Knapker book leads to a means to decipher the poem (**R6**) that was in Withers' hand. It reads:

**The evil of the book is hidden in the songs of babes.  
Let it be banished by winter shine.**

*Songs of babes* refers to nursery rhymes and should urge the PCs to seek the rhymes from the nursery book, which is also in amongst the many books on the occult and Greek mythology also in the library next door where they will find the Knapker book.

When they find it there are **notes from Withers' diary (Handout S2)** amongst the pages of nursery rhymes. Some rhymes are missing, namely **the three mad scribbles (Handout G1)** which can be found in the closet in the hallway pinned to the back wall. This wall is a secret door into the ritual room. The **dagger (Handout D5)** currently either in the PCs holding and used to kill the Hydra heads, or shoved down Withers' dead throat and yet to be pulled out (remembering that this will cause the freezing spell to go off and the Hydra to come to life and attack) is needed to open the secret room - its serrated edge is an elaborate key which slides into a slot at the bottom - if it hasn't been pulled out before it'll be pulled out now and they are trapped.

If the waste chute is frozen it budes, and after some battering they can gain access to it, but a problem lies within. The chute is filled to the brim with icy black water, and who knows how deep it stretches...or what is within...

The other exits are frozen solid and will not budge at all. They need a magic exit point, and the witch will know that any spell can be undone if the grimoire can be found. If anyone decides to try to escape via the waste chute, the water is icy and does damage

when touched, the gate can be sensed, and there are yicko's in the water to boot that have a nasty bite...Add these as appropriate to force people out of the chute.

## 6. Salvation's Guardian

Out in the rest of the apartment is little of interest. There is another bedroom which is locked and in the sitting room is an ugly little statue of the greek god Typhon. These are the only items of interest, pad out the rest yourself as you see fit.

There is also a **scrap of paper (Handout J3)** under a little statue of **Typhon (Handout J2)** in the sitting room that they will find while hunting the house. The paper has a rhyme on it, and the rhyme is a spell. If they read out the little rhyme on the piece of paper then they bring the psychotic little Typhon to life and need to defend themselves from it/him/it (stats at end). This spell (**J3**) costs 2 MPs to cast, against the will of the caster of course, 2 MPs just fade away. Under the base of this statue is a base which becomes detached from Typhon when it comes to life. The base has tucked away within it a piece of paper with the **By Winter Shine (Handout B4)** clue that they have been looking for, as prompted by the last line of the hidden text in the Knapker poem - let it be banished **by winter shine**. By studying this poem they should work out that the writer of the poem is describing meeting a reflection of himself in a mirror. Remembering this they can use a mirror to turn back Dagon and Hydra by reflecting their gate spell back on them when they are finally summoned by the PCs later.

The other bedroom is locked, but the door can be bust in, or the lock picked - the key is missing. In here are remains of massive fight, two men and two women lie long dead, bled dry, all the mirrors in the room smashed and furniture broken. Make sure to mention the broken mirrors, a mirror is needed to end the summoning of Dagon and Hydra, that's the point of the By Winter Shine clue. These folks, innocents chosen at random by Withers, were needed to provide the cauldron of blood that is part of the sacrifice to summon Dagon and Hydra (See secret room below). It should not escape the PCs that they too are a pair of men and a pair of women, arousing suspicion that Elliott has set them up and reducing the chance they'll phone him for help. This is a red herring notion of course, but you needn't dissuade them of it. ☺

## 7. A secret room!

When they get the door in the closet open (remember the stuff about the dagger being a key?) it leads to a ritual room with a very deep pool of incredibly icy water. If the witch uses the spell Find Gate she will see it drops away into a gated location in the deep ocean, a similar finding to that of the waste disposal. **Handout Map A2**

Floating within the gate barrier is a large cauldron filled with the blood drawn from the four suckers in the second bedroom, which wisps out over the rim as it mixes slightly with the pool water. The grimoire is on the far side of this room on an altar.

It has an elaborate lock that lies open now; the bones of Withers' finger are still in it. Removal of these will close the book, and another will have to sacrifice a finger to open it again.

The text is gibberish, apart from the **nursery pages (Handout H9)** that have been bound into the book itself with human hair and blood, empowering the pages with the magic of the book. The witch can tell that the book draws power to act from its very reading, using symbol recognition magic, so they will be loathe to read it but have no choice.

**The 4 people sacrifice spell (H9a)** has already been cast, **the lullaby (H9b)** draws a POW point permanently from each of the PCs and begins the summoning of Dagon

and Hydra even from silent reading, and **the riddle (H9c)** is an ice spell. If they read out the riddle, it costs 5 MPs and 5 HPs to cast a blast of icy death from the hand of the caster. Which will be a nice surprise for whoever does it.

Knapker gave the book of shadows to Withers himself which is calling Dagon and Hydra. Inside the book reads:

**“A gift from me to you Withers. I hope the Father and Mother tear you apart you bastard. I enclose a moment of poetic justice, a sporting chance if you will. Rot in hell you filthy old goat. Cthulhu Ftangh.  
Johann May 6th 1912.”**

Needless to say it shows that Withers is a very old man indeed. Notes from Withers' diary have also been tacked into the book and read:

*The Tell-el-Amarna letters (about 1480-1450 BC) have yielded the names of Yamir-Dagan and Dagan-Takala, rulers of Ascalon, and also references to the god himself, witness to the antiquity of the Dagon-worship among the inhabitants of Palestine.*

*Halia - obscure sea deity mistakenly identified as daughter of Poseidon. Recent excavations of small temple to Halia shows possible site for legend of Heracles's battle with the Hydra. Daughter of Typhon and Echidna.*

## **8. Oops...Company!**

A constant run of Deep Ones will chase the holder of the dagger as they begin to come through with the summons of Dagon and Hydra that has now been set off. They begin to rise out of the kettle as soon as the summons has been activated.

Their ascent is slow, maybe 10 mins before the first one breaks through the gate that lies halfway down the depth of the pool. They begin to send forth a brilliant shaft of light out of the cauldron that weakens the gate barrier. Through this light they can travel through the gate. If any of them do get out to attack the PCs use the stats at the end for them.

The PCs need to realise that the clue in **By Winter Shine** refers to a mirror image of the poet, and that they need to reflect back the light of the cauldron to banish the summons, trapping the evil behind the mirror wall. This will end the spell and all effects and the PCs will be free. The only mirror large enough to cover the cauldron is in the master bedroom, and if they haven't killed Hydra by this point then she is waiting between them and it. Aren't I a creep?

The brilliant light can also be used to melt the ice sealing the front door and allow escape if the mirror shards from the second bedroom are used to bounce its power out to the front door, but if the cauldron isn't stopped then Dagon and Hydra come through and freeze the whole building. The place is over-run with Deep Ones and the PCs will most likely die on the run.



## **Deep Ones**

### *Lesser Servitor Race*

#### Description

'I think their predominant colour was a grayish-green, though they had white bellies. They were mostly shiny and slippery, but the ridges of their backs were scaly. Their forms vaguely suggested the anthropoid, while their heads were the heads of fish, with prodigious bulging eyes that never closed. At the base of their necks were palpitating gills, and their long paws were webbed. They hopped irregularly, sometimes on two legs and sometimes on four. ... Their croaking, baying voices ... held all the dark shades of expression which their staring faces lacked. ... They were the blasphemous fish-frogs of the nameless design - living and horrible.'

#### Information

Deep Ones are not only capable of breeding with humans, but are immortal, unless slain, and so are the hybrid young, giving a form of eternal life to their worshippers children. A hybrid begins life as a human looking child, slowly becoming uglier and uglier, and then suddenly over a number of months it undergoes the final change into a Deep One. This change generally happens at about 30 years, but it is possible that with dilute Deep One blood, or very concentrated, that the change can happen between 8 and 70 years. Deep Ones often interact with man, and globally have many cities submerged under the ocean in the deepest clefts, and do not inhabit fresh water as they are a marine race. They appear to have a monstrous lust to produce Deep One/Human hybrids, and will spend a lot of their time doing this. It is also known that Deep Ones acted as some form of slave for Cthulhu, and do inhabit R'lyeh waiting for their master to rise from below the oceans. Deep Ones also tend the living Star-Spawn of Cthulhu in the deep trenches of the ocean.

## **Father Dagon & Mother Hydra**

### *Great Old One*

#### Description

Deep Ones that have grown to enormous size, about 8 meters tall or more.

#### Cults

Father Dagon is worshipped almost everywhere Deep Ones are worshipped, there is also a special order called The Esoteric Order of Dagon that follows the orders of this giant Deep One. Mother Hydra has no such dedicated cult.

#### Information

Dagon and Mother Hydra serve as the king and queen for the Deep Ones.

## Deep Ones Stats

STR	14
CON	11
SIZ	17
INT	13
POW	11
DEX	11
HP	14
MOVE	8/10 swimming

Weapon	Attack%	Damage
Claw	25%	1D6+1D4
Trident	25%	1D6+1D4+1 impale, throw

Armour:	1 point
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Enemy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
HPs	14	14	13	14	13	14	15	14

I've included slots for eight Deep Ones, you aren't likely to need more. If the PCs get through 8 Deep Ones with the weapons they have, then let them off the hook for a while and then start again with 8 fresh ones if they still haven't figured out the mirror puzzle.

## Hydra Carving Stats (5 Heads, stats for each head)

STR	14
CON	11
SIZ	10
INT	13
POW	11
DEX	11
HP	10
MOVE	Fixed 5 foot range

Weapon	Attack%	Damage
Bite	45%	1D8+2
Daze	POW resistance	Both the head and victim frozen unmoving while the stare is maintained

Armour:	None if hit with the dagger 2 points for all other weapons
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Enemy	1	2	3	4	5
HPs	10	10	10	10	10

## Typhon Statue Stats: Stone Deep One

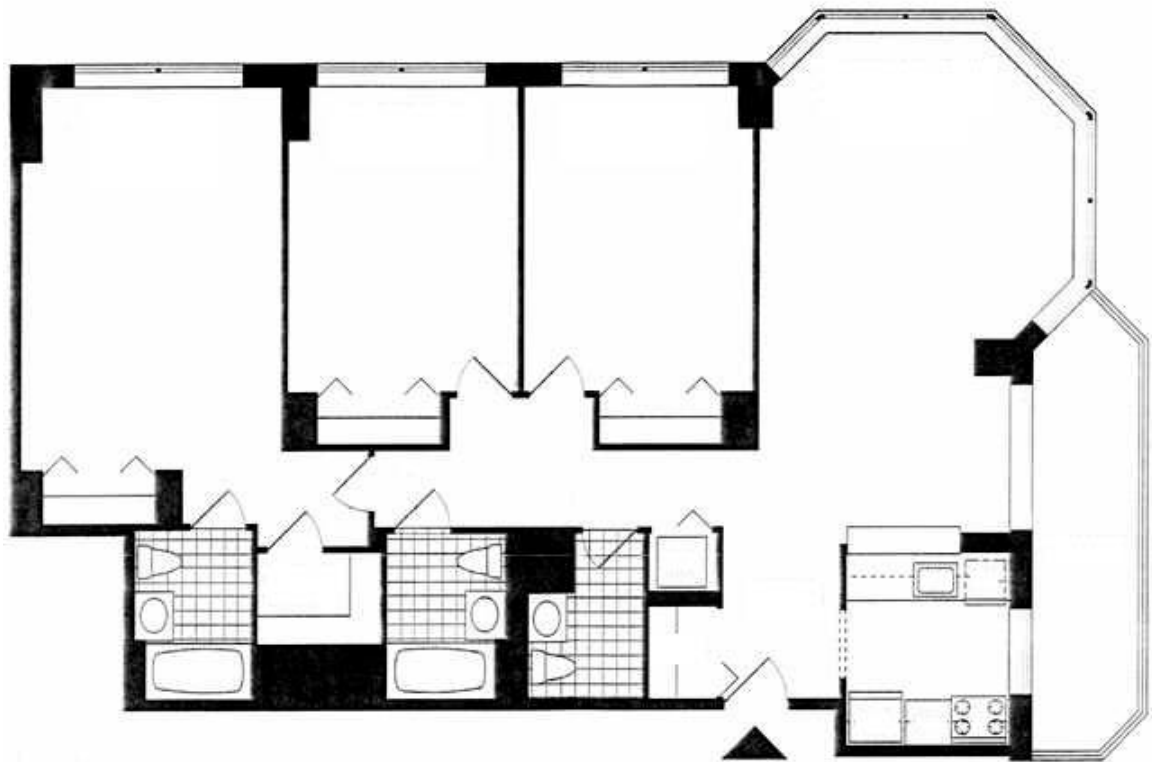
STR	14
CON	11
SIZ	17
INT	13
POW	11
DEX	11
HP	10
MOVE	6

Weapon	Attack%	Damage
Claw	35%	1D6+1D4

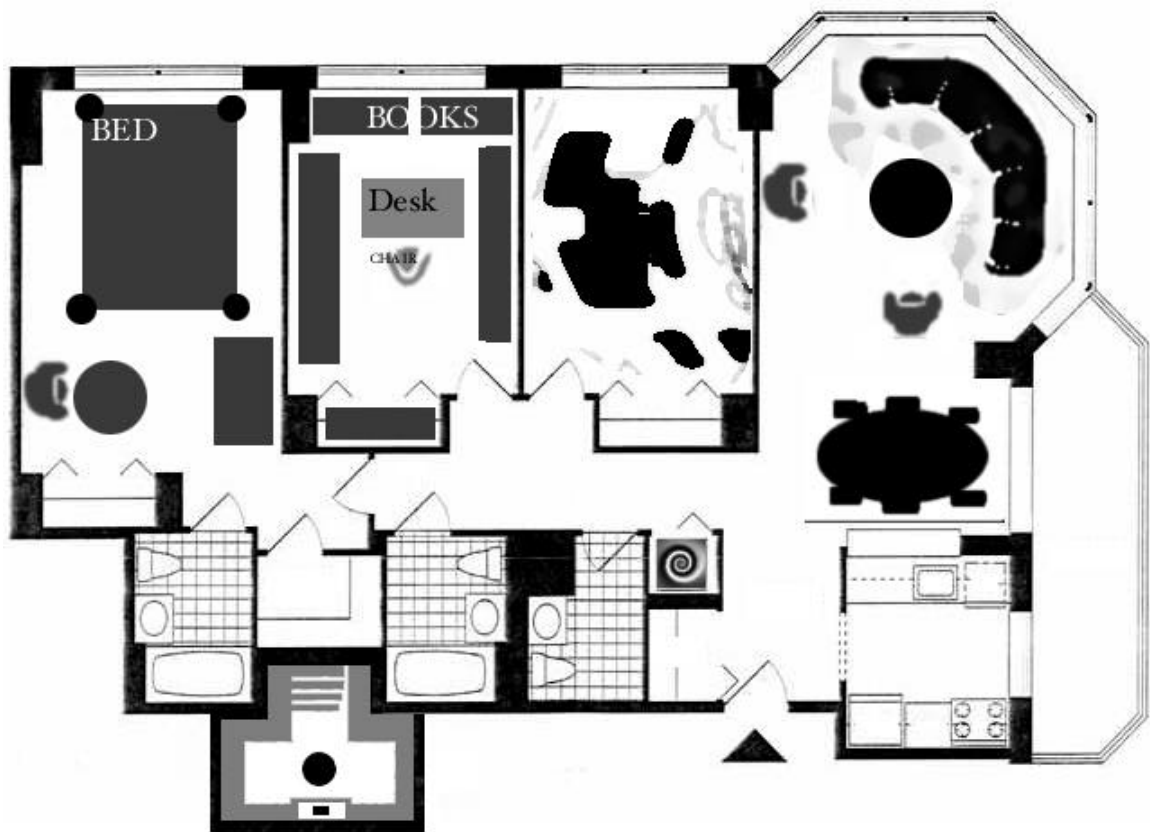
Armour:	3 point
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Enemy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
HPs	14	14	13	14	13	14	15	14

**Map A1 - Withers' Apartment**



**Map A2 - Withers' Apartment and the room behind the closet**



**Handout J2 - Statue of Typhon**



### **Handout R6 - Handwritten poem**

This poem is found in Withers' left hand:

Damn thee villain  
Of whom of the warned  
My taboo killer  
Hellish Id denizen  
We paint hell in  
Our song, softly  
And we plumb a bestial depth.

My wallet it begs but  
What I ban is hedonism  
Let a ruby win territory  
A gash in Eden.

Johann Knapker

### **Handout T3 - Nursery Rhyme**

This nursery rhyme is in Withers' right hand.

One, two, three, four, five,  
Once I caught a fish alive,  
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,  
Then I let it go again.

Why did you let it go?  
Because it bit my finger so.  
Which finger did it bite?  
This little finger on the right.



### **Handout J3 - Scrap of verse**

This scrap of paper is tucked under the statue of Typhon, stuffed between it and the base it is attached to, in the sitting room.

A jumper of ditches,  
On a box of thorns,  
A little grey man with  
Two leather horns.  
Halitus.

### **Handout D5 - Notched dagger**

This weapon was wedged down Withers' lifeless throat, the means of his demise. Once extracted it is icy cold to the touch. It is oddly notched down the sides of the blade in an irregular pattern.

*Hang on...what's that icy smoke pouring out of Withers' mouth....can anyone else feel a wind?*



June 14<sup>th</sup> 1998

REBECCAH'S DESK DIARY

Notes on "Sixpence" script. rhyme dated to 1743, possible origins in Colchester, England. Could this have been some solstice chant, or a harvest sacrifice? I remain reasonably sure that the evidence of cult activity in this region of England and at this time suggests a link to Hastur worship of the bloodiest kind.

Sing a song of sixpence

- promise of gold/gain

A pocket full of rye

- sacrifice for the growing season

Four and twenty blackbirds

- priestly robes?

baked in a pie

- pie=circle - Baked? Shudde Mell Fire circle

When the pie was opened

- opening gate

The birds began to sing

- chants

Now was not that a dainty dish

- human sacrifice

To set before the King?

- King in Yellow/Hastur



By winter shine, when the fields are white,  
I sing this song for your delight.  
I sent a message to the fish:  
I told them, 'This is what I wish.'  
The little fishes of the sea,  
They sent an answer back to me.  
The little fishes' answer was  
We cannot do it, Sir, because  
Our glassy brothers bar the way,  
who hover just beyond the spray'  
I sent to them again to say  
'It will be better to obey.'  
The fishes answered, with a grin,  
'Why, what a temper you are in!'  
I told them once, I told them twice:  
They would not listen to advice.  
I took a kettle large and new,  
Fit for the deed I had to do.  
My heart went hop, my heart went thump:  
I filled the kettle at the pump.  
Then someone came to me and said,  
'The little fishes are in bed.'  
I said to him, I said it plain,  
'Then you must wake them up again.'  
I said it very loud and clear:  
I went and shouted in his ear.  
But he was very proud and stiff:  
he said 'I'd go and wake them, if  
my brother did not bar the way  
As glassy moon doth bar the day'  
I took a knife from off the shelf:  
I went to wake them up myself.  
And when I found the door was locked,  
I pulled and pushed and kicked and knocked.  
My brother stood and barred my path  
his anger twining my own wrath  
I roared at him, he roared at me,  
I drew my knife and so did he,  
And matching mine own strength, he swore  
To keep my fishes evermore.



*From the Office of the Earl of Shrewsbury to Messers.  
Finderman and Gutch, Finderman and Gutch  
Publishing House, London.*

*May 4th, 1905*

*Dear Sirs,*

*I am writing to return to you this copy of "A Dissertation on a Hidden Language," by one Johann Knapker. I do so because I find myself unable to allow such drivel to remain in my home a moment longer and will thank you kindly not to send to me such base material in future. Knapker's notions give insult to the pursuit of philosophical thought, and that this publishing house has seen fit to help him spread his ridiculous theories must cast serious doubt on the character of Finderman and Gutch.*

*The man, who is no more a psycholinguistic philosopher than I am a fish monger, is quite deranged, spouting on about the real meaning of words and phrases being hidden inside what one actually says. To point out that at the centre of the word "exist" is the letter "I", signifying our central notion of existence lies with our individual selves, is the kind of harmless point of wit that would serve to raise a laugh at a philosophical society.*

*To give this man freedom, however, to suggest that all human expression is a game of word play, to point out, at such interminable length, that "eat" is the core message of the words "breathe" and "death", that the word "houses" is built around the word "us", while "habitat" is built about "bit", the controlling influence of a beast of burden, is all taking the joke too far. But as I am sure you know this is no joking text, but one of sinister content.*

*Knapker goes on to suggest that the phrase "special oneness" actually means, by finding the centre and reading out, "I alone". He chooses this phrase from a very beautiful sermon by the Bishop of Gloucester, from his recent book of essays, and makes the scandalous suggestion that this idea of forming a bond of oneness with Our Lord is actually some kind of magical matter*

*of coercion, words meant to bind the reader to the Bishop and his God alone, "I alone". By including this phrase the Bishop can overcome the reader as if they were some witless idiot. The Bishop is a very great friend of mine and I am horrified that such a fine man, a man of the cloth, can be slandered in this way. That Xnapker can then go on to suggest that a great many similar, innocent works can be shown to have more sinister message hidden within them, is the true evil of this book, and for this it should be banned.*

*You should be aware sirs that I am consulting with my lawyers as of today, on behalf of myself and the Bishop to see how such an outcome might be achieved. I am sorely disappointed that this fine publishing house has seen fit to sully its reputation by releasing this poppycock.*

*Sincerely*

*Lord Anthony Carmair  
Earl of Shrewsbury*

**T**wo little girls are better than one;  
Two little boys can double the fun;

Two little birds can build a fine nest;

Two little arms can love mother best;

Two little prayers does my darling say,

Twice does he kneel by my side each day,

Two little folded hands, soft and brown,

Two little eyelids cast meekly down,

And two little angels guard him in bed,

One at the foot and one at the head



Bath-time baby got no legs;  
They're soft and pinky, crumpled things.  
If he stood he'd fall off his pegs;  
But then, you see, he's used to wings.  
Bed-time baby, baby, bye,  
Close for me your little eye!  
When the dark things start to creep  
Tiny-wees must go to sleep.  
Yammer and tackla, lie,  
I am seven, I;  
Little boys must sleep and wait  
If they want their bed-time late.  
halia, halitus, hie,  
There's no need to cry!  
Soon you'll never dress in white,  
But sit up waking half the night.







## A Riddle

White bird featherless  
Flew from Paradise  
Ditched on the castle wall;  
Along came Lord Landless,  
Took it up handleless,  
And rode away horseless to the King's white hall.

DANCE to your daddie,

My bonnie laddie,

Dance to your daddie, my bonnie lamb!

You shall get a fishie,

On a little dishie,

You shall get a herring when the boat comes hame!

LITTLE  
FISH



FISH  
DADDY FISH

Handout G1a - this page from the book of nursery rhymes in the study has been pinned to the back of the master bedroom closet and scrawled on, seemingly irrationally.

DING dong bell:

Pussy's in the well:

Who put her in?

Little Tommy Thin,

Who pulled her out?

Little Tommy Stout

What a naughty boy was that

To drown poor pussy cat

Who ne'er did any harm .

But killed all the mice in Father's barn.



DROWN THE  
WITCH WITCH!  
WITCH

Handout G1b - this page from the book of nursery rhymes in the study has been pinned to the back of the master bedroom closet and scrawled on, seemingly irrationally.

# ~~Cutthroat's Lullaby~~

B

aby, baby, naughty baby,  
hush, you squalling thing, I say.  
Peace this moment, peace, or maybe  
Cutthroat will pass this way.

Baby, baby, he's a giant,  
Tall and black as Typhon's steeple,  
And he breakfasts, ~~dines~~, reliant,  
Every day on naughty people.

Baby, baby, if he hears you,  
As he gallops past the house,  
Limb from limb at once he'll tear you,  
Just as pussy tears a mouse.

And he'll beat you, beat you, beat you,  
And he'll beat you all to pap,  
And he'll eat you, eat you, eat you,  
Every morsel snap, snap, snap.



TYPHONS  
DAUGHTER

Handout G1c - this page from the book of nursery rhymes in the study has been pinned to the back of the master bedroom closet and scrawled on, seemingly irrationally.

## Keeper's Map - Not for the players.

