

Ye Olde Psoodough Transkripte

(part two)

R0: Meet Christabell (part 1)

N1: Tea Party (26)

R1: Naomi is Marked and Learns Some Spells (63)

N2: Teenage Carol Marks Naomi's Baby (part 2)

R2: Plotting Carol's Disruption (22)

N3: Boss Battle (30)

N2: Teenage Carol marks Naomi's Baby

{if the player walks to the mansion and enters the nursery from the hallway}

[HALLWAY M2F2]

>n

[Carol's Room]

The door to Carol's room swings open noiselessly and you walk into the room.

It is the same room as before, but no longer outfitted for a five-year-old.

A somewhat older Carol stands behind her table, her back to you, combing her long blonde hair.

{The player can have a few turns to poke around while Carol has her back to the player. If the player engages her in conversation, e.g., by greeting her or ask/tell, she will turn around and start interacting. If the player does not engage her after that number of turns, she will turn around spontaneously and the conversation will start.}

{see end of R1 for the parallel description if Naomi teleports in}

>look

{first time during N2, after the brief }

The room has changed since you last saw it: there are fewer toys and it is less cluttered; in a word, more mature.

The bed now sports a light blanket, pastel blue in color, pulled taut over the twin mattress, with two pillows stacked at the head of the bed. To one side of the window stands a small table with

a number of items on it, including a small mirror and some makeup. The large bay window looks out on the same scene as before, but leaves on the trees far below are just now beginning to sport autumn colors. To its side, the small writing desk has been replaced with a larger one and some books are stacked beside the same desk lamp you saw last time. A few pieces of artwork are stuck to the wall next to the desk. Nearer to the door, an old-fashioned turntable rests on a wooden stand.

Notably missing is the large framed portrait of President Eisenhower and its weighty golden frame. A single bent nail remains in the wall surrounded by a slightly discolored patch of wall where the picture once hung.

Below that space, three stuffed toys sit in a tight circle on the same tiny chairs that you saw last time.

>look

The room is surprisingly neat and tidy{first}, particularly for a teenager{first}, and the furnishings are sparse: a bed, table, desk, and a turntable.

A few toys are gathered neatly in one corner beneath a blank patch of wall{first}, where a large framed portrait once hung.{/first} A few pieces of artwork are affixed to the wall above the desk.

>look

The room is surprisingly neat and tidy, and the furnishings are sparse: a bed, table, desk, and a turntable.

A few toys are gathered neatly in one corner beneath a blank patch of wall. Some artwork is affixed to the wall above the desk.

>x floor

The blue carpeting has not changed{first}; it has recently been vacuumed{/first}.

>x walls

Plain white walls, monotonous except for the few pieces of artwork on the wall above the desk and the discolored spot in the corner near the foot of the bed.

>x bed

The bed is perfectly made and a light blue woolen blanket stretched drum-taut over it. The pillows are perfectly aligned with the upper edge of the blanket.

>x blanket

Light blue wool{first}. She will need a heavier one as Vermont slides into autumn{/first}.

>x pillow

Fluffy white.

>x patch | picture

The portrait of President Eisenhower is gone and has not been replaced.

>x nail

A rusted nail driven into the wall and bent up to support a picture with a heavy frame.

>x table

A small ivory-colored painted wooden table, just to the side of the window. A few items of makeup are arranged neatly on one corner, and a small, round mirror stands on the other.

>x mirror

Your face is distorted in the makeup mirror and items behind you are a blur.

>x makeup

A modest selection of products, nothing unusual. The brands are familiar -- ones you would typically find at high-end department stores.

>x window

{same as previous}

>x trees | cliffs | search window | lookout window

The scenery outside has not changed significantly, except a few trees are fringed in orange leaves, indicating the very end of summer or beginning of fall{first}. Last time you were here, everything was in bloom, so it must have been earlier in the year{/first}.

>x desk

A large dark wood desk and matching chair, very grown-up in appearance. Several books are stacked on the desk, along with a piece of newsprint and a desk lamp. A few drawers run down the side of the desk. Above the desk some drawings have been Scotch-taped to the wall.

>x newspaper | clipping | masthead

{first}Your eye is first drawn to the date, November 22, 1963, and the curious fact that the paper is not yellowed at all. Below the newspaper masthead is a black and white photograph, stippled with tiny dots as they were in those days, of a number of people crowded around a convertible. Below that, a title, "Tragedy in Dallas".

You don't have to read further. You know what this is.{/first}

>x newspaper | clipping | masthead

A newspaper clipping from the Boston Herald recounting the assassination of JFK.

>read clipping

You don't need to. You know what happened there{first} and have an uneasy feeling of who might have had her hand in it.{/first}

>x drawers

You can no more yank open these ephemeral drawers than touch any other ghostly item in this room. They are closed, and absent some divine intervention, they will stay closed.

>x lamp

{earlier description}

>get lamp

{as N1}

>x books | colonial | heritage | fundamentals | algebra | modern |
etiquette | primer | hardcover | spines

Several hardcoverl books are stacked on one side of the desk and topped by a stapled bit of looseleaf paper. Reading along the spines from top to bottom, the books are: "Our Colonial Heritage", "Fundamentals of Algebra", and "Modern Etiquette: A Primer".

>x looseleaf | report | more | modest | proposal

{first}The cover page of a school report. Centered in the upper third of the page: "A More Modest Proposal, by Carol Cragne, Grade 9, Miss Porter's School." In the lower right corner, she has written "Introduction to Social Studies, March 2, 1963."{/first}

>x looseleaf

Carol's high school social studies paper, "A More Modest Proposal".

>x record player | turntable | phonograph

{same as earlier}

>x stand

{same as earlier}

>x record

{first}The center is black, with silver writing. You can't make out much beyond "Wagner" and "Die Walküre".

{if in already in discourse with Carol}"Wagner -- that sounds kind of heavy, isn't it? Should you be going crazy for the Beatles?"

Carol rolls her eyes, "The Beatles? Why would I listen to that rubbish? In ten years no one will ever have heard of them, but Wagner is for the ages."

"I wouldn't bet the farm on that," you reply.{/discourse}
{/first}

>x record

An opera by Wagner.

>x door

The door has been painted in the same off-white as the room. It is closed.

>x toys

Three of the stuffed animals you met earlier sit immobile in a corner of the room, their heads bent together conspiratorily.

>x chair

{does the player mean the desk chair or the toy chairs? Probably the desk one in this scene}.

A high-backed wooden chair with no cushion{first}. It looks sturdy, but not comfortable{/first}.

>x sweetpaws

{first}The monkey sock puppet looks considerably more realistic than last time, no doubt because some taxidermist has sewn the head of a real chimpanzee to its tubular shoulders. The specimen is well preserved, but lacks the glass eyes normally inserted in display trophies.{/first}

>x sweetpaws

An eyeless sock monkey with a sewn-on chimpanzee head.

>x mister snortles

{first}The toy elephant appears much the same as previously, except whereas his leathery skin was dry and flaking before, now it is moister, and areas that were previously flaking or peeling are covered in ugly, suppurating wounds, raised and and red at the edges, but necrotic and white at the center, with a foul-smelling milky green discharge.{/first}

>x mister snortles

A rotting toy elephant covered in purulent wounds.

>x malice the clown

The clown is dressed in the same primary color outfit as before, but there is something about his head -- it is too small, and his bright polyester orange hair sticks out at all angles.

Getting a better look, the clown's head is now tiny, maybe a third the size that it was and instead of plastic, the skin is dark like charcoal and full of wrinkles. It also looks like it has been somewhat flattened on the sides, giving it a taller, thinner appearance. Its lips are sewn together by a strip of leather and it looks like the eyes were sewn shut too, but being the only parts of his face to retain their former size, they have torn through the lacing that held the eyelids shut. When you can bring yourself to look at those eyes, their pupils are jet black dots, surrounded by brilliant white orbs. The unblinking eyes stare straight ahead.

>x malice

A clown doll with a shrunken, human head.

>a misses winkelbottom

{will need to implement as background and intercept any action dealing with her other than examine?}

The well-worn lamb doll is nowhere to be found.

>look out window

Aside from the change in season, the view is the same as the last time you visited Carol:
{previous description}.

>look under rug

{as earlier}

>open desk | drawers

{as earlier}

>hello

{this reply is given after conversation is started by Naomi in any manner}

{if Naomi left on good terms -- i.e., not thrown through the door}

"Oh, my heavens and stars," says Carol, wide-eyed, "if it isn't Auntie Naomi! What a pleasant surprise."

"Did people really talk like that?" you ask, incredulous.

"No, but I thought it would add flavor." Carol pulls out the chair behind her desk and sits down.

"I'd offer you a chair, but you would just go right through it."

"Thanks, it's okay, I'll stand."

"So it's been, what? About a decade? Well, nice of you to look in on me again. What have you been doing with yourself?"

Since smalltalk seems to be the object of the day, you reply in kind, "Oh, same old, same old, fritting about here and there."

Carol grins and crosses her legs.

{if Naomi and Carol didn't part on good terms:}

“Don’t you people even knock!” screams Carol as she realizes someone is in the room. “You?” she screeches, and then, settling down, “Not as tall as I remember.”

“No? Maybe I got a little shorter when you threw me through your door last time.”

“I suppose I did have a bit of a temper as a child,” says the teenager as she sits down at her desk. She flips through a school book and tosses it back on the pile with more drama than you thought possible. “I suppose it isn’t entirely horrible to have someone to talk to, who can hear me. You might as well stay. I haven’t throw anyone through the door lately.”

{this reply is injected last in the turn order if Naomi hasn’t started conversation X turns into this scene}

>open door | s | exit

The door seems stuck.

{if not already engaged in conversation this will trigger it as well, follow with the appropriate “hello” text above}

>ploughver {if not recharged}

The air around you wavers; the spell must not yet have had time to build back up for another teleport.

>ploughver {recharged, first}

You utter the magical incantation and briefly the scene begins to shift to that of the hillside. The cliffs waver in front of you and you can see the pile of railroad tracks taking shape, but in an instant you are snapped back to Carol’s room.

{if already in discourse with Carol, the following paragraph also applies, as if the player had attempted to open the door}

>ploughver {recharged, subsequent until marked}

The air flickers, but you remain where you are.

>open door | s | exit

{first time}“I’ve learned a few things since you were here last time; surely, you must know that **Christabell** taught me every chance she got. She’s such a generous soul, and so starved for company out there on the hill.” Carol glances out the window towards the cliffs.

“Seems like you are the one who can’t get enough of company. No wonder you don’t get a lot of visitors, if you trap everyone in your room. Not many teenagers would want to lock adults in with them.”

“Well, you are the only one who can see me, so you’ve got that going for you. No, I’m happy to let you go, I just want to be able to find you again, you know, if I need you for something.”

“It’s nice to be needed.”

“So I understand. I will {if the current action is open door or exit or go out, etc.},unmagic the door{otherwise}lower my barrier{endif} for you just as soon as you agree to bear my mark. The good news, it’s painless, the downside: it is a stain on your immortal soul. There’s no such thing as a free lunch, after all. So, what’ll it be, shall I mark you?”

She extends an index finger towards you.

{/first}

{does the player consent?}

>yes

“Thank you for being so reasonable. This will only bring us closer,” says Carol as she pokes you gently with her finger. You do not feel pressure where she touched you, it was more like air blowing gently on your shirt.”

Carol withdraws her finger and stares at it, puzzled. “That’s odd.”

“Problem?” You say.

“No, not really a problem, more of an inconvenience. It seems like you’ve already been marked, presumably by **Christabell** for your own protection. That makes sense, I suppose. Can’t be too careful.” Carol looks out the window. “As you probably know, a person can only be marked by one spirit.”

“Oh?”

“Yes, so I had no choice, since you were already marked, I placed mine upon your daughter.”

“I don’t have a... wait a minute, what?” You glance at your belly where she touched you, “You mean, I’m...” Come to think of it, you have had a lot of nausea lately, in fact, Peter had to pull over on the drive up. And you’ve been feeling tired, which is unusual for you.

"Yes, so congratulations on that, I suppose. Anyhow, you're free to come and go as you please now."

>no

"Well unless you know some way out of this room that hasn't occurred to me, we're going to be here together until you do agree, but no hurry on my account. We can come back to the marking issue later."

{continue the rest of the turn}

>open door | s | exit

{2nd attempt if Naomi not marked}

Carol stands right in front of you, hands on her hips waiting for an answer, "Listen, due to the metaphysics of complicity or some such, before you go, I need an yea or nay from you -- shall I place my mark?"

{if yes, as above, if no}:

"Okay," sighs Carol, "but you're not getting out of here without a mark and I can be very, very patient about these things."

>open door | s | exit

{after 2nd attempt if Naomi not marked}

"Not to be a bore," say Carol, "but I need to ask your consent to mark you before you split; can I place it?"

{yes as above, no:}

Carol goes about her business, ignoring you.

>ask portrait

"What happened to Ike?" you ask.

"Democrats!" Carol huffs. "That's what happened. First that lout **Kennedy** (father says the entire **Kennedy** is a pack of criminals), and now that useless geezer, **Johnson**. There is absolutely no way I'm putting **Lyndon Bloated Johnson** on my wall."

>ask Johnson | Lyndon | Bloated

“Kennedy’s lucky. Not even worth discussing,” replies Carol.

>ask portrait

“I’m waiting for us to get a real man as President. Someone like **Nixon**{first}. **Dad** says **Nixon** is the only one who knows how to run **America**.{/first} ”

>ask Christabell

“How do you and **Christabell** get along?” you ask.

“When I was young, back when my parents didn’t want a toddler underfoot and they pushed me off on the Backwater Cragnes, she was sort of like a **mother** to me. More than any of the decrepit Cragnes, at least. That’s why she put her mark on me -- to protect me from them, I think. But also so she could work her magic through me.”

“So you were close?”

“Sort of, until it got creepy.”

“Because she’s a five-hundred-year-old spirit?”

“No, because like a year or two ago, she started staring at me strangely, and asked me to take my clothes off for a ritual. I’m pretty sure that wasn’t a real ritual. And she had me do things, which were difficult. To myself, since not having a body we couldn’t touch. I didn’t like it, but **father** said to let her have her way, because we needed her magic and cooperation of the **Deep Ones** for his **plans**.”

“I am so sorry.”

>ask Christabell

“I don’t want to talk anymore about her; she’s a perv -- you know that’s the reason she and her mother were kicked out of their settlement, right? Because she liked girls. The Indians didn’t care because they were themselves depraved and uncivilized.”

“Maybe,” you suggest, “they just had a different culture that was more accepting?”

“It’s disgusting.”

>ask Christabell

“I have nothing more to say about her.”

>ask plan

“**Father** says that the Cragnes were meant for greatness, and that they should be running **America**, not rotting away in this miserable excuse for a mansion.”

“They have kind of let it go.”

“When I got old enough, I told him about the **Deep Ones** and the **Third Covenant** of **Mattanit**, but he already knew. He said that’s why he sent me here -- to learn more. He already knew about **Christabell** and the railroad tracks and everything. He said that the **Deep Ones** are all that’s left because people have spread everywhere -- mostly poor, dirty people, like Africa and other countries like that. They all had newer gods, and the **Elder Gods** left in disgust.”

“And his **plan** is to protect the world from them?”

Carol answers with all sincerity, “No -- his **plan** is to bring The **Elder Gods** back in order to ‘Make America What It Once Was’ as he says, but we need to build, what does he call it? A political base. So, that’s what we’re doing. **Father** creates the opportunities, and I call upon the **Deep Ones** to write the **Runes** that make things happen.”

>ask Deep Ones

“I’ve only seen flashes of the **Deep Ones** in my dreams, which is good since people can’t look at them and not go crazy. I can tell you they are big, have lots of tentacles, and mouths, and eyes, and other parts that I’m not sure what they do. They hang out in parts of the oceans so deep that nobody bothers them there, except maybe my father’s **submarines** when we need something. And when we need to work some magic, we wake them and they do their stuff, and that’s how we get things done -- a plane goes down, someone is hit by a bus, whatever. But mostly small things. The better I get at seeing the **future**, the more I can pick out the little events that will push history in the right direction.

>ask future

Carol asks what the future is like.

>tell future

“I would like to tell you we’ll have flying cars, but sadly no.”

“I didn’t really think we would,” Carol admits. “I can’t see too far, but I’m getting better at it. Right now, I can see another maybe five years before things get fuzzy. That’s why I’m holding out to

put up the **Nixon** portrait. But there's a lot coming in that time, and a lot that needs to be fixed if we're going to save **America**."

"**America** will do fine," you assert.

"Oh, I know you're from the future, what, the mid-90s or so? Don't look surprised, I know a lot of things. But first of all, you don't know where's **father's plan** is going. What we've set in motion doesn't even begin pick up steam until a good twenty years after your time. Like the **Elder Gods**, we can bide our time."

>tell future

You reassure Carol that the world has not been destroyed, at least not by the 1990s.

>ask Third Covenant

"That was what **Christabell** called it -- it's essentially a roadmap to bring about the return of the **Elder Gods**."

>ask Mattanit

"That's one of his many names."

>ask Mattanit

"Let's not keep saying that, okay?"

>ask Mattanit

"It's not like saying it three times will make him appear. There is nothing more I could say about him that would make any sense to you."

>ask Mattanit

"There is nothing more I could say about him that would make any sense to you."

>ask America

"**Father** says that **America's** place in the world is on top, and that's part of **Mattanit's Third Covenant**, that we assume our rightful place as the Seat of the **Elder Gods** and bring all other nations to worship them."

"He does?" you ask, trying to humor her.

“But there is a lot wrong with **America** right now because people don’t follow tradition: drugs, music, people who don’t understand how some people are meant to be above other people, and that some people are meant to be their servants. That sort of thing. Don’t worry, though, **father’s plan** will fix it all.”

>ask America

“**Father** says that **America’s** place in the world is on top, and that’s part of **Mattanit’s Third Covenant**, that we assume our rightful place as the Seat of the **Elder Gods** and bring all other nations to worship them.”

>ask Elder Gods

“Naomi, please don’t take this the wrong way, but your mind really isn’t strong enough for me to talk in any detail about them. Just accept that they exist and that soon enough the **Deep Ones** will help us restore them.”

>ask Elder Gods

“I can say no more without turning your brains to jelly.”

>ask father

“**Father** has a brilliant **plan** and everyday he works to make it happen.”

“Does that pay well?” you ask.

“Well, it’s not his day job, of course.” Apparently, Carol does not recognize sarcasm. “He works in Connecticut in the Electric Boats Division of General Dynamics. That’s a company that makes **submarines**. He used to be an engineer, but now he’s a supervisor, so he tells other people what to do.”

>ask father

“As I said, he has a **plan** to bring back the **Elder Gods**. When he’s not doing that, he works at a company that manufactures **submarines**.”

>ask mother | joan | wife

“She is a proper wife, and serves **father** as he desires; she is entirely committed to **father’s plan**. For her, that means mostly hosting cocktail parties and luncheons, and sometimes being

on wives' committees and the like. **Father** says that he has made a lot of important deals because she is such a good entertainer and knows what men like."

"Also," Carol adds, "she makes a mean cucumber sandwich."

>ask mother

"She is a proper **wife**, and serves **father** as he desires; she is entirely committed to **father's plan**."

>ask Nixon

"**Nixon** is a linchpin in **father's plan**. He should have won against **Kennedy** in 1960, but I wasn't strong enough then to make it happen."

>ask Kennedy

"**Father** says that **Kennedy** would have ruined **America** and destroyed his **plan**, and that even though I did my best" -- here she glances at the press **clipping** on the desk -- "it will take years to undo the damage that he did in his first three years in office: filling the heads of drug-addled youth with crazy ideas, letting the Blacks think they might be worth something, and weakening the institutions and traditions that kept **America** in the hands of her rightful masters."

>ask Kennedy | Kennedys

"**Father** says that **Kennedy** would have ruined **America** and destroyed his **plan**, and that even though I did my best, it will take years to undo the damage that he did in his first three years in office."

>ask submarines | subs | boat | boats

"My **father** chose his profession specifically to advance our rapport with the **Old Ones**. For instance, **Kennedy** is a strong node in history; to put **father's plan** back on track, we had to give them one of the **subs**, the Thresher, a few months back."

"That's horrible!"

"No, just another **Rune**. I still have to stick it in the **scrapbook**, but I'm afraid I left it at **school** in **Farmington**."

>ask submarines | subs | boat | boats

My **father** chose his profession specifically to advance our rapport with the **Old Ones**.

>ask grand-uncle

“**Grand-uncle** is extremely old and just as irritable, and the less I see him the better. When I’m up here on breaks from **school** or over the summer, he thinks it’s funny to lock me in my room. That used to really steam me, until one day **Christabell** taught me a way to magically move back and forth between here and where she is. The **Rune** cost is not so great, and you should have seen how surprised **grand-uncle** was to see me walking around outside when he had just locked me in. Priceless.”

>ask grand-uncle

“**Grand-uncle** is extremely old and just as irritable.”

>ask Rune

“**Runes** are the price of magic.”

>ask scrapbook

“I’d show it to you, but I am really a blockhead sometimes. I have some great new stories in it, but I’m afraid I left it at **school** at the end of term when I came up here. It’s in my dorm room. So annoying!”

>ask newspaper | clipping

“Some parts of history have to change for **father’s plan** to take root. A **submarine** was a small price to pay.”

>ask book

“They’re my **school** books. Boring stuff, mostly.”

>ask essay | modest | proposal

“A few thoughts I had about ridding **America** of its unnecessary people.”

“What about the rest of the world?” you ask.

“Oh yes, and all of them.”

>ask essay | modest | proposal

“A few thoughts I had about ridding America of its unnecessary people.”

>ask school | farmington | porter | porters

“Right now I’m going to a private boarding school in **Farmington**, Connecticut and just get up to Backwater on holidays. The worst thing is that it’s a all-girls school and the one date (kind of) that I’ve had, my **father** set up. He says it’s part of the **plan**. He set me up with freckle-faced **lech** at the New York Military Academy. It was his senior dance, and I was only a freshman, so it was pretty awful.”

>ask school | farmington | porter | porters

“I didn’t see **mother** or **father** much until I started going to school because they stuck me up here, but I went to the local school in **Stonington** up to eighth grade, and then transferred to Mrs. Porter’s **School** in Farmington. **Mom** had gone there, so I was legacy. She thought it was important that I learn to be a lady, and frankly, I think they just wanted me out of their hair. So, during the school year I board there, and I’m back here on breaks and over the summer.”

>ask school | farmington | porter | porters

Carol says that she is currently attends a private all-girls school in **Farmington**, Connecticut.

>ask lech

A lumbering orange-haired oaf with withering halitosis and tiny hands that he tried to put all over me. I wouldn’t have gone out with him at all except that **father** said he was the key to his **plan**; what the **Deep Ones** took from **Kennedy**, they gave to him, except sort of inside-out and warped.

>ask lech

To further her **father’s plan**, Carol recently went on a date with a guy that she didn’t really like from the New York Military Academy.

>x drawing

Three drawings are taped to the wall above Carol’s desk, the top one in crayon, the middle in ink, and the bottom one painted with watercolors.

>x top | crayon

Primitive technique, limited palette, crayon on manila paper.

There are three stick figures on the left, generously, as man, woman, and child. The man drawn mostly in gray, the woman wearing a red dress with large skirt, and the child wearing a blue dress of the same style, her blonde hair done up in braids. The figure in the middle is more of a jumble: recognizably human with a hat and beard, stooped over with a cane. On the right, are a bunch of brown lines, behind them great masses colored in black vertical lines, and in from of all that the outline of a woman, not a stick figure, but just back and forth strokes of yellow crayon.

In the corner, it is labelled "Carol, Age 5."

>x top | crayon

A picture of Carol and her "family": **mother, father, grand-uncle**, and **Christabell** done when she was five years old.

>x middle | ink

India ink on hot press bristol board.

It has the quality of being drawn hastily to capture the event. In places, the ink is smeared suggesting that the artist lacked practice with fountain pens. The drawing does not have much in terms of perspective, but some cross-hatched shading does give it depth.

Three creatures are outlined, their backs towards the viewer, each leaning towards the center of the drawing where another creature lays on the ground surrounded by a dark pool, suggestive of blood. The three creatures appear to be dismembering the poor creature on the ground, some sort of animal, which struggles desperately, flailing at them with its three remaining limbs. Its fourth has already been wrenched away by one of the attackers, who chomps into it with sharp simian teeth.

In the corner, it is labelled "Carol, Age 10."

>x middle | ink

A quick sketch capturing the dismemberment of **Misses Winkelbottom** by the other toys done by Carol when she was ten years old.

>x bottom | painted | watercolor

Windsor & Newton series 1 watercolors on 140# cold press Arches paper using wet-on-wet technique. Limited palette: ultramarine blue deep, burnt umber, burnt sienna, mars black with touches of alizarin crimson.

At first, the paint-saturated paper looks like nothing more than muddy splotches, but as you stare at it, forms begin to emerge. There is something in the lower right hand corner that you can't quite bring yourself to look at, but in the center, a long, black tubular thing fights a losing battle to escape, its back cracked and red-tinged bubbles escaping.

>x bottom | painted | watercolor

A somewhat abstract painting of a **submarine** being cracked open like a dropped watermelon, its hull crushed by... something. Carol was fourteen years old when she painted it.

>ask top drawing

"That's **mother**, **father**, and **me**, and in the middle, that's **grand-uncle**, in fact, that's a somewhat flattering version of him, and on the right is **Christabell**, back when I thought I could trust her."

>ask middle drawing

"Ah yes, I recall that day. I had come up here from **Stonington** for a three-day weekend, and as soon as I stepped into the room, **Master Sweetpaws** was having some sort of argument with **Misses Winkelbottom**. She was insisting on some abstruse point of parliamentary procedure -- I don't even know where the conversation started or what they were doing -- but Sweetpaws was irate and swinging around the room, screaming. **Mister Snortles** tried to talk him down, but also didn't want to stick his neck out too far."

"I sat down to watch and got out my sketchbook."

"The argument went downhill, and **Malice the Clown** said he had had enough of listening to the pointless bickering and just sliced her open from her mouth to her groin. **Master Sweetpaws** and **Mister Snortles** were on her immediately. Within about three minutes, she was nothing but lint and some bits of wire. It is very hard to convey all of the motion when you're drawing quickly like that."

>ask middle drawing

Carol says it depicts the other three stuffed toys slicing up and devouring Misses Winkelbottom, her toy lamb.

>ask bottom drawing

"That's the Thresher last April. The **Old Ones** took it in exchange for **Kennedy**."

>ask Thresher

"It's the **sub** that the **Deep Ones** asked for in return for **Kennedy**."

>ask baby | pregnant | daughter

"Oh don't worry, Naomi. The **baby** will be fine. Oh, and I guess, congratulations in advance."

>ask baby | pregnant | daughter

Carol says you have nothing to worry about -- your **daughter** is doing fine.

>tell drawing | top | bottom | middle

After perusing the **drawings**, you comment, "Carol. I'm a little concerned about these **drawings**. I think you might need professional help."

"No, Naomi, I don't think so," she replies. "The **Deeps Ones** are all the help I need for now."

>tell drawing

You make some minor technical criticisms about the **drawings**, but considering her age when she drew them, her technique wasn't bad.

>tell Christabell

"Earlier today, I had a chance to chat for a while with **Christabell**. We talked a bit about you," you mention.

"I could care less," sulks Carol.

"She's concerned about you -- she thinks you might have started down a dark road, but said that you can still fix things and maybe free your spirit from its cycle."

"Bullshit, Naomi." You are stunned to hear this from such a young and proper girl. "She's a hypocritical centuries-old child molesting monster, who is welded to a pile of steel for good reason. Let her rot there."

>tell Christabell

You start, but Carol walks away, angry and not wanting to hear anything more.

>ask winkelbottom

Carol mentions that Misses Winkelbottom had an accident, but everyone else is in good spirits.

>ploughver {when ready to leave, after having received Carol's mark}

You are thrown end over end in slow motion, sinking into darkness. A red light pulses on and off in the distance. Suddenly, your head breaks the surface, into warm, humid air and you gasp for air.

"There are still men in there!" shouts a voice followed by a heavy metallic clanging sound, the deep creaking of fatigued metal bending, and the sound of steam escaping into water.

You fall to the ground panting. When you look up, you realize you are at Christabell's hillside.

>open door | exit | south

You walk out of Carol's room and the door closes behind you.

{this next part in the hall is same as at the end of N1}

>n

You proceed down the short side hallway and come to a dead end.

R2: Plotting Carol's Disruption

{having either teleported or walked back to the hillside}

[Hillside]

As the day has progressed, the shadows over the hillside deepen, but you easily perceive Christabell, every bit as substantial as you last saw her, walking briskly over to to greet you.

>look

You are in a hillside hollow flanked on three sides by sheer granite cliffs and on the other by gnarled vegetation.

You see Christabell here.

Vaguely distinguishable trailheads lead off to the north, southwest, and southeast.

>hello {or whatever starts conversation}

"My Greetings again, Naomi. Were you able to lifte the Burden of **Carol's** Runes and set a-free her Spirit?"

"No, not so much," you admit. "She didn't have the **scrapbook** with her. In fact, the whole thing didn't go that well. She's has some **resentment** towards you, and her **dad's plan** sounds bonkers."

"I have something very important to ask you, Christabell. **Carol** touched me..." You take a moment to compose yourself, "**Carol** touched me here, and said she had marked my **baby**, a **daughter**."

Christabell looks askew. "Oh?" She holds her hand palm out. "No. There be no **Baby**. Nor even so much as Thowt of one in your Entrayls. Not this Daye. She doth Laie most Cravenly to seeke Infleurance o'er you. I had hoped to save her, but History does itself repete -- for the Sayke of All, we must see to her **Disruption**."

>ask mark

"Christabell, you said that a person can only be marked by a spirit once, right?"

"That is the Waie of it."

“Is there any way to remove a **Mark**?”

“Nay, Friend Naomi, there be not, even with Deathe.”

>tell mark -> tell pregnancy

>ploughver {if not recharged}

The air around you wavers; the spell must not yet have had time to build back up for another teleport.

{attempt to leave prior to Christabell informing Naomi of the plan for disruption meetings with the following}

>ploughver {recharged, subsequent}| go sw, n, or se

You are held in place by Christabell's mark.

“Sorry I am, Naomi,” she says, “but e'er you depart, I must tell you how to **disrupt Carol**, after that, our Fate does reside in your two Hands.”

{continue with “ask disruption” response; subsequent attempts to leave the location succeed.}

>ploughver {recharged, subsequent}| go sw, n, or se

You are held in place by Christabell's mark.

“Please, Naomi. For both our Saykes, we must needs devise some Method for the **Disruption** of **Carol**, e'er you depart.”

>ask disruption | disrupt | destroy

Christabell asks, “How old of Yeares was **Carol** when you did see her?”

“About fourteen, maybe fifteen, I'd guess.”

“I see.” Christabell says self-consciously. “Yes, at that Ayge her Weale outstrove her Wisdom. Already had she devised a **Blockayde** against my Powers despite my **Mark** upon her.”

“Then there's nothing we can do rein her in?”

“I did not that say, quite,” replies Christabell. “If you open the **Windowe** where she doth dwell, the **Blockayde** will be breached, and I can work a **Disruption** spell.”

“And what would become of **Carol**?”

“Nothing. Not a thing. And that be a better Fate than hers now.”

>ask disruption

Christabell reiterates the plan to make sure you have it down pat, “Get you to **Carol**’s Bedchamber, and there cause her to be distracted, by such Diversions as you may, and so avoiding her constant Attentions, slyly do heave open the **Windowe** that I may werke my Magicks past her Wardes.”

“Right, got it,” you acknowledge.

>ask window | windowe | blockayde | blockade

“The **Windowe** in that room be a Thing of her Minde; nothing moore. Open it, and you do Open her Mentally a Crack, and into that I shall slippe my Magicks and thereby her **Disruption**.”

“You think this will work?”

“Mayhap. If we do not dally, for her Power groweth like unto a Balle of Snouwe rolling downward upon a Hill -- But, you will needs be clever, for onely distracted will her Eye’s Gaze not catch you and all be lost.”

>ask window | windowe | blockayde | blockade

Christabell reiterates that opening **Carol**’s **window** will give Christabell a chance to cast a spell that will once and for all destroy **Carol**.

>ask resentment

“Aye, there be some Truth in what she does say. Blossoming in her young Womanhood as she was, my Weale sorry tried by Tymme, I did luste after her with Desires carnal.”

“How is that even a thing? You first of all being dead and second not having a body?”

“These are fine faire Questions, dear Naomi, and I would entreate you explore them further with me hence -- and in great Detaile -- if your Appetites so leaneth, but this is the Howr to talk not of Love but Action{if disruption topic has not been brought up}. No alternative do I see but to see to **Carol**’s **Disruption**{/endif}.

>ask resentment

Christabell admits to lusting after Carol when the girl was a teenager, but now urges you to disrupt her.

>ask Carol

“**Carol** was led falsely by her **Father** who did twist the Werdes of Mattanit and harness her rapport with the **Deep Ones**. He did conspire to remove the Constraints that have for Tymme endless held at Baye the **Elder Gods**, what with the Misperception most grievous that gracious of their Libertie, they would Accorde him Dominion oe’r the Worlde.”

“And you don’t think that’s how that would go down?”

“Down would it go, most surely, but in no desirable Direction for him, for their Fury pent would burne All, before even a Werde he could say to ask his Rewarde (thow I opine it be served wel in that Manner).”

>ask Carol

According to Christabell, Carol’s **father** has been pursuing a plan to use **Carol** and her relationship to the **Deep Ones** to free the **Elder Gods** from their Eternal Sleep.

>ask Elder Gods

“There be few Things we did not speake of, even those of us bonded in the **Longhouse** -- first amongst them, the **Elder Gods**, who be so alien to ouwr Minde, that nary a Glimpse of the Shadoe would rupture the **Knotte of Reason**. Ancient they are; ancient and cataclysmic and mad.”

“So, they’re evil?”

“Nay, for I do not believe they do have the Concept itself, that being Artefice of Man’s Minde. No, Destruction they provoketh onely by theyr unwitting, horrid Indifference. Ouwr Existence is not even Perceiv’d by them, I doubt me not.”

>ask Elder Gods

Carol describes them as beings so alien that they are not even aware we exist or that their mere presence threatens our existence.

>tell Carol

“Christabell, I think that **Carol** is a danger -- maybe to the world itself. I don’t know how much of it is real or she’s just crazy. Or maybe I am. After all, I’m discussing with the Salem witch ghost whether the little girl ghost that thinks she’s responsible for the Kennedy assassination is

insane. Maybe I need to be the one on the couch. That would explain a lot about the way today's gone."

"Perhaps short Slumber would be helpful, yes, but I do assure you, **Carol** be every bit so vitall a Danger as you do perceeve. It were e'er so when she did live, as she did grow in Power with Ayge, there came a Tymme where I, even loving her so, did bring her to End herself."

"You are the reason she committed suicide?"

"And she does to this Daye count it sorely against mee."

>tell toys

"Surprised am I not, for in each telling of her Unfolding, they do fall one upon the other, the Order not mattering to the Tayle."

>tell resentment

"**Carol** seemed quite angry at you, Christabell."

"I do suppose she does have summe Reason, but know you that she did lead me on and I do think appreciate my Attentions. I am given to wonder if it was not she who did lead mee about wrongly."

"That's no excuse."

>tell resentment

Christabell brushes aside you mentions of how she might have wronged Carol.

>tell father

"Carol's **father** seems to have his own agenda -- Carol said he had a **plan**, and it sounds like it revolved around manipulating politics. I'm not quite sure how everything plugs together, but he's been intentionally shaping nodal points in history with **Carol's** help."

"That be not an impossible Task for One so endowed with both her magickal Aptitudes and sharpness of Witte. She could with the Aide of the **Deep Ones** bring to pass an Event, or though their Interventions divert the Unfolding so the said Event never did occur."

>tell father

{see second ask Carol reply}

>tell Deep Ones

"Whatever **Carol** and her **father** are up to, the **Deep Ones** are doing the dirty work."

"Nay, they do reshape the Worlde by more subtle Means that you can comprehend and so are Agency, but the Runes are written in Carol's book; she is Author."

"That sounds semantic. She couldn't do it without the **Deep Ones**."

"No Occasion do I have to make Argumente against you, as I wish that our Conversation remain amicable, but to my Poynte I do must needs sticke."

>tell Deep Ones

You go over how the Deep Ones seem to be directed by **Carol** and her **father**.

>tell drawings

"I saw a number of really creepy drawings in **Carol's** room -- she's profoundly weird."

"To the Weirdness of Minde, aye. But being her Instructress in the fyne Artes from her earliest Ayge, I do take some Pride in the Faithfulness of her Renderings."

>tell drawings

You describe to Christabell the strange drawings in Carol's room.

>tell scrapbook

"Carol said she had left her scrapbook at her school -- I wonder if that's true or if she was hiding them from me."

"So distracted was she as a Gyrll, it is not unthinkable that she did simply leave it. You must watch for another Oppourtunity to present itself."

>tell scrapbook

You mention that Carol's scrapbook wasn't in her room when you paid your last visit, so you had no opportunity to destroy it using the "kwisatz haderach" spell.

>tell clipping

“On her desk, I saw a clipping of the assassination of President Kennedy -- we have Presidents now, like President Dukakis -- they are in charge of the whole government. Let me back up, the American government is divided into the principal branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The president...”

“I do know what a President be; **Carol** had explained it to me upon a Tymme in much the excruciating Detaile as upon whych I did feare you do embark.”

“Fine. So, she had this **newspaper**...”

“Yes, I do know what be a **News Paper**.”

“Right. So, she had this newspaper article about the assassination of President Kennedy -- is that one of her Runes?”

“Nay, that be the result of her calling upon the **Deep Ones**; the Rune that doth have Relation to it would of its own Accord enter into her **Book**.”

>tell clipping

You tell Christabell about the newspaper clipping about the **JFK** assassination that **Carol** had on her desk and your suspicion that Carol was behind it, likely with the help of the **Deep Ones**.

>tell Elder Gods → tell plan

>tell plan

“From what I was able to piece together, **Carol’s father** has been using **Carol** and her connection to the **Deep Ones** to influence key points of history. It sounds like their end-game is to bring back the **Elder Gods**.”

“That surpriseth mee not and might do explain the circular Nature of her Unfolding, if in altering History she does send her Spirit back upon itself.”

>tell plan

You posit that **Carol** is intentionally affecting nodal points in history to alter the future and restore the reign of the **Elder Gods**.

>(ask | tell) (pregnancy | baby)

“Are you absolutely sure I’m not **pregnant**?” you ask nervously. “I did have some nausea, and I was tired. And earlier in the week, I had an entire pint of Cherry Garcia.”

“Aye, and of all these Signes does not any living Person not have similar Experience from Tymme to Tymme?”

“Yes, but. It’s hard to believe she was just screwing with me.”

“That be her Manner, indeed. Rest your Conscience soundly, for in mei Daye even wee Gyrls of tender Ayge did know summe faire Skill of Midwivery. In this Matter there is no lack of Surety.

{after any sort of attempt to leave, having discussed “disruption” -- ploughvering out, or walking away}

>(ask | tell) (pregnancy | baby)

Once again you ask Christabell’s reassurance that you are not pregnant, and once again she tells you that you are not, and that Carol was deceiving you.

>ploughver

Christabell wishes you good luck and waves as you depart.

Mens voices, people shuffling around frantically, things moving, falling.

“The brazing is blown, pressure is down to ten percent!” The voice is just slightly louder than the blaring klaxon.

“Dive planes up 30”.

“Moderators are full in, it’s no good, I’m scrambling.”

“All hands. Prepare for emergency blow. Larsen, in five and then hit it.”

“Aye. Five. Four. Reactor quenched. Three. Two. We’re pitching. One. Blow!”

“Tanks are good, but no blow. Sir, I think we’re iced up.”

“Crushing depth minus 200, minus 300.”

And then silence.

>sw | n | se

Christabell wishes you good luck and waves as you depart.

N3: Boss Battle

{player can enter from hallway without a problem or teleport in}

Carol stares out the window, her back to you. She's a bit taller and dressed in a sharply tailored turquoise shift. Without bothering to turn around, she addresses you, "I have been expecting you, Naomi. I knew you would come once more before I die."

[Carol's Room]

The room is brighter, but colder. A fluorescent fixture fills the room with blue-white light, which reflects harshly off the newly painted white walls. The stubby light gray carpet dulls the sound in the room, but contributes no warmth. At least one item in the room has not changed: the bed, same frame, although the blanket is now a darker blue, and there are no pillows. A small reading light is clamped to the headboard and there are a couple books on the nightstand. At the foot of the bed, the heavy gold frame is back, this time occupied by Richard Nixon. On the ground far below the bedroom window, a heavy padding of snow has covered the ground. To the left of the window, the desk is now a steel and chrome affair, very modern. A computer terminal occupies about half the desk and a notebook lies next to it. Above the desk, two rows of metal shelves have been installed. The record player is gone, replaced now by a reel-to-reel tape machine on the same table.

>x Carol

Carol now wears her hair in a tight, efficient bob, giving her a more mature appearance, but you would put her age at nineteen or twenty.

>x shift | dress

Turquoise and well-cut, ending above the knee.

>x fluorescent | light

It flickers just enough to give you a headache if you were here long enough.

>x carpet

Industrial{first}. Probably indoor-outdoor. It will never wear out.{/first}

>x bed

Functional, but of questionably comfort{first}. Surely, she could afford better.{/first}

>x lamp

A cheap, plastic clip-on lamp; it is off.

>x books

A few books are stacked next to the bed, but you can read the titles, *How to Make Friends and Influence People*, *The Compleat Manual of Wardes and Seales*, and *The Indian grammar begun: or, An essay to bring the Indian language into rules, for the help of such as desire to learn the same, for the furtherance of the Gospel among them*.

>x blanket

Thin and [one of], if you're not mistaken, starched and ironed within an inch of its life[or]surely not adequate for Vermont in the winter[stopping].

>x portrait

Nixon's lascivious grin is the first thing that greets Carol every morning.{first} Just think about that.{/first}

>x frame

{as previous}

>x window

{as previous}

>look out window

A smothering blanket of snow drapes the landscape, crushing shrubs, bending trees, and masking any remaining signs of life.

>x desk

Curved, tubular polished steel tubes support a single sheet of glass, about a half inch thick. A matching chair is right next to the desk. Only a couple items sit atop the glass surface: a computer terminal and a notebook.

>x drawers

{need proxy object for this}

This desk doesn't even have drawers.

>x computer terminal

A bulky affair, larger and deeper than your Viewsonic monitor back in the office. Most of the terminal is a white plastic case, except the front, which is a dark green and mostly occupied by a glass screen, upon which white text glows on a black background. The lower portion of the front panel features an integrated keyboard. Above the keyboard and to the right of the screen, the case is marked in white lettering: "Computer Terminal Corporation" and "DATAPOINT 3300". Between those words, the case is stamped with an arrow in circle logo. You notice a sticker applied to the side of the case, near the bottom. It reads, "Property of General Dynamics". A large red rocker switch on the bottom right side of the keyboard emits a red neon glow.

>x keyboard | keys

The keyboard is arranged in three groupings: a more or less standard typewriter arrangement on the left, then a numerical keypad to its right, and finally, all the way on the right next to the power switch, another bunch of cursor control keys.

>x switch

The switch is pushed upward and you can read the word "ON". It emits a flickery red neon glow.

>x/read screen | tube | text

White characters on a black background:

OF THE ARTIFACTS IDENTIFIED BY ZOND-3 AND HAVE BROUGHT
THEM BACK TO THE LUNAR EXCURSION MODULE. THEY ARE EN-
CRUSTED IN REGOLITH, WHICH IS FIRMLY ADHERENT. BLETCHLEY
ADVISES NOT TO MANIPULATE FURTHER WITHOUT PROPER TOOLS.
UNTIL THEY ARE RETURNED TO EARTH. IT WAS POSSIBLE,
HOWEVER TO IDENTIFY TWO OF THE GLYPHS THAT YOU HAD
DRAWN FOR US: A-73 AND TO ITS RIGHT A-14.

THE SURVIVING TEAM HAD TO LEAVE THE UPPER UNIT IN PLACE
DUE TO LIMITED OXYGEN SUPPLY, BUT WERE ABLE TO SAMPLE
ONE OF THE FUNGATING MASSES NEAR THE THORAX. I WILL
ADVISE WHEN THESE SAMPLES HAVE CLEARED DECONTAMINATION
PROCEDURE AND ARE READY FOR YOUR EXAMINATION.

[CARRIER DROPPED]

A blocky cursor blinks below the last line.

>x notebook | scrapbook

A black and white composition book with the hand-printed title "Carols' Scrapbook, Volume 10". The notebook is a more solid looking than the other items in Carol's room.

>read notebook

You flip open the notebook into which some green and white fan-fold paper has been pasted on several pages. The first page seems to be an index, written in the same blocky letters as on the cover. The index reads:

1. INS Dakar (Israel), 25 January
2. S647 (France), 27 January
3. K-129 (Soviet), 8 March
4. USS Scorpion, 22 May

>read Dakar

DOSSIER PENTACLE DOSSIER DEEP1 DOSSIER CATACON
25 JAN 1968 1601Z AUTHENTICATED RMX-998-LPO
SIGINT ATHENS REPORTS ENCRYPTED CW DISTRESS
SIGNAL FROM ISRAEL NAVY DIESEL-ELECTRIC
SUBMARINE DAKAR STARTING 1001Z ENDING 1003Z TODAY.
NO FIX BY RADIOGONIOMETRY. VESSEL LAST OBSERVED
BY TRAWLER AT 2301Z ON 24 JAN 1968 AT 35.005N
BY 26.954E APPROXIMATE HEADING 135 AT 7 KNOTS
BELOW PERISCOPE DEPTH WITH FLOOR AT 3000M. NO
OTHER SUBMARINES WITHIN 100NM AT THAT TIME. NO
HYDROPHONIC EVENTS REPORTED BY UK WESTERN
SOVEREIGN BASE AREA CYPRUS. LOSS OF VESSEL
CONFIRMED BY IDF AT 1430Z. WILL DELAY SEARCH
UNTIL 2200Z 25 JAN 1968. EOM.

>read s647

DOSSIER PENTACLE DOSSIER DEEP1 DOSSIER CATACON
27 JAN 1968 1800Z AUTHENTICATED TTU-851-YAZ
NATO BRUSSELS MILCOORD FRANCE CONFIRMS LOSS

OF FRENCH DAPHNE-CLASS DIESEL-ELECTRIC
SUBMARINE DESIGNATED MINERVE NUMBER S647 AT
0830Z TODAY. VESSEL WAS RETURNING TO PORT
IN TOULON FRANCE UNDER SNORKEL MAKING 8 KNOTS
ON A NORTHERLY HEADING. LAST CONTACT RELAYED
VIA BR1150 ATLANTIC ON N AFRICAN ELINT REPORTED
SITUATION NOMINAL. FLOOR DEPTH 1100-1700M. NO
OTHER UNACCOUNTED SUBMARINES WITHIN 100NM. NO
HYDROPHONIC EVENTS REPORTED. FRENCH NAVY HAS
COMMENCED SEARCH 5 NM EAST OF ESTIMATED LOSS
ZONE. EOM.

>read k-129

DOSSIER PENTACLE DOSSIER DEEP1 DOSSIER CATACON
8 MAR 1968 1800Z AUTHENTICATED SDX-851-AAW
POPEYETSM ADVISES LWAH OF SOVIET GOLF II CLASS
DIESEL-ELECTRIC PROJECT 629 STRATEGIC BALLISTIC
SUBMARINE DESIGNATION K-129 HULL NUMBER 722.
USS FLASHER (SSN-613 PERMIT CLASS) INTERCEPTED
AND DREW OFF ACCOMPANYING VICTOR II CLASS
NUCLEAR ATTACK SUBMARINE ONE HOUR PRIOR TO
CONTACT. SOSUS CONFIRMS HYDROPHONOLOGY
CONSISTENT WITH IMPLOSION AT 40N BY 180 AND
QUOTE SOUNDS LIKE OUTER SPACE MOVIE ALIENS
UNQUOTE AT 1436Z TODAY. CARRIER GROUP HANCOCK EN
ROUTE FOR INTERDICTION AND MARKER PLACEMENT TO
FACILITATE SALVAGE WHEN CLEAR.

>read scorpion

DOSSIER PENTACLE DOSSIER DEEP1 DOSSIER CATACON
REVCO 217
21 MAY 1968 1000Z AUTHENTICATED FOW-037-LOS
SUBLANT REPORTS LOSS OF USS SCORPION (SSN-589)
SKIPJACK CLASS U.S. NUCLEAR ATTACK SUBMARINE.
LAST CONTACT VIA NAVCOMGR1 IN NEA MAKRI,
GREECE AT 0020Z 20 MAY 1968 REPORTED PURSUIT OF
NOVEMBER CLASS SOVIET SUBMARINE, THE INTENDED
TARGET, EASTWARD AT 15 KNOTS DEPTH 350FT. MEDCAR
COUNTERMEASURES WERE INSTITUTED IMMEDIATELY TO
PROVIDE ACOUSTIC COVER FOR THE EVENT WHICH LASTED
APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES.

>x shelves

The metal shelf immediately above the desk displays a few pieces of artwork. Above the art, the two stuffed dolls you have come to know as Master Sweetpaws the Monkey and Malice the Clown sit menacingly on the upper shelf, their lower legs dangling over the edge.

>x art | sculpture

Three small sculptures, none of them over about eight inches high stand on the lower shelf: a opalescent one on the left and a jet black one in the middle.

>x opalescent | left

Opalescent pastel blotches swirl lazily over the ovoid sculpture. Unable to tear your eyes away, you feel yourself losing a grip on this reality.

“Rover, they’re gaining on us -- cut in the Casimir Drive,” orders the woman strapped into the acceleration couch to your right. She is of medium height, dark hair, and wearing an orange space suit with a MARSPACE insignia.

To your right, a cybernetically enhanced Dalmatian leans forward from his customized couch to paw at a few buttons on the command panel. The view out the windows suddenly changes, as the slowly moving stars are replaced by the chaotic discharge aura of the zero point transition.

Suddenly, one of the pirate ships flanks you, its cutting beams chewing through the lateral ablative plating.

“It must have tracked our Condensate discharge,” yells Janet.

The dog spins his couch, deftly tracking the enemy vessel and lets loose with the rail guns, slicing the marauder into two glowing red halves.

“Good boy!” Janet reaches across to scratch Rover just where he likes it, behind the ears, and pushes the Synch Regulator all the way forward, revving the ship to full Asymmetry.

>x opalescent | left

Opalescent pastel blotches swirl lazily over the ovoid sculpture. Unable to tear your eyes away, you feel yourself losing a grip on this reality.

“I do reckon this might just be my best plan yet,” observes a dust-covered cowboy, slowly stirring a pot suspended above a carefully concealed cooking fire.

“Muddy, I can’t rightly believe you sunk all our loot into them rusting rail tracks. The metal’s plum awful -- cracked, lumpy -- anybody what knows anything ain’t going to buy them for nothing.”

“I’ll give you that, Rick, that’s why I done gone found us someone what don’t know nothing -- some mill owners up in Vermont. Greedy and dumb -- it don’t get no better.”

“Vermont? Geez, I weren’t hankering to leave the country.”

>x opalescent | left

Opalescent pastel blotches swirl lazily over the ovoid sculpture. Unable to tear your eyes away, you feel yourself losing a grip on this reality.

You slam the tiny tray table upwards pinning the lobster that just landed there. Applying pressure to the bottom of the tray table with your knees, you hear the crustacean’s carapace crack. As you let the tray back down, its ugly claws stop their frantic waving.

“Mommy, it took Misses Winkelbottom!” cries a tiny blond-haired girl two rows ahead. A large, barnacle-encrusted Maine lobster makes it way along the aisle back towards the business cabin dragging some sort of stuffed lamb doll.

As the plane banks steeply to the left, a man bursts from the lavatory, brandishing a stick. Suddenly lightning flares within the cabin and the lobster is reduced to dust. The man picks up the doll and hands it back to the little girl before running towards the cockpit.

“Thanks, mister!”

>x opalescent | left

Opalescent pastel blotches swirl lazily over the ovoid sculpture. Unable to tear your eyes away, you feel yourself losing a grip on this reality.

You hop along a barely visible trail, which leads upwards to a craggy, windswept patch of dirt atop a small mountain. Just ahead, the land drops off precipitously. You peer past the plummeting black granite cliffs towards the tilled fields between you and the river and think of how many delicious carrots must be growing in that rich soil.

Next to you, some sort of anemone-like polyp grows atop a lichen-covered boulder. It’s pulpy fronds emerging from a thick central stalk wave passively in the wind. Just to the side of this creature, a severed human arm lies on the ground. It appears to have been gnawed off at the shoulder.

This place gives you the shivers. You are not sure what possessed you to come here and decide to head back to the warren.

>x opalescent | left

Opalescent pastel blotches swirl lazily over the ovoid sculpture. Unable to tear your eyes away, you feel yourself losing a grip on this reality.

The thin metal wall of the upturned garbage bin glows red for an instant before slagging. Another laser bolt blasts through the pin-sized hole, just above your left shoulder.

Whatever Professor Igneous is ranting about, the words are muffled in his power armor helmet and drowned out by sound of heavy machinery on the factory floor. You keep moving, one step ahead of the laser blasts, jumping to a precarious perch on a swiftly moving conveyor belt.

Ignoring the fountain of sparks raining down on you, you try to focus your blurry eyes enough to draw the unlock pattern on your phone. After three failed attempts made more difficult by the rough ride along the conveyor, the screen locks for another thirty seconds. You roll under a spinning riveter and finally manage to unlock the phone: three missed calls from Amelia and one from the wedding planner.

You panic when you realize that no one has told the photographer what time to show up for the ceremony, but are brought abruptly back to the present as razor sharp disks cut through the girders next to you, bringing down a section of the ceiling.

>x opalescent | left

Opalescent pastel blotches swirl lazily over the ovoid sculpture. Unable to tear your eyes away, you feel yourself losing a grip on this reality.

You walk out of the cafeteria to join Elon on the metal deck that rings the upper floor of the Nyantech Tower. After handing him a poptart and his guacamole-carrot detox, you rest your hands on the railing and join him to watch the sun's crimson disk dip down over Superhighway 17 at the edge of town.

Two stories below you, the company's mascot, a giant animatronic cat, makes another revolution around the building with a mechanical purr.

"I've reviewed the proposal," Musk says, absently fanning the pages of the thick document. "Tell Igneous, I'll back him. His proposal seems entirely reasonable."

"Yes sir," you reply, making a note on your clipboard. "We'll get right on that."

>x opalescent | left

Opalescent pastel blotches swirl lazily over the ovoid sculpture. Unable to tear your eyes away, you feel yourself losing a grip on this reality.

The air around you stirs with unfulfilled probabilities: a lab-coated woman trapped under a desk beats back a zombie with a crowbar, a man many thousands of years old lifts his arms in prayer to a volcano god, a squirrel in samurai armor runs through a restaurant, a pointy-eared technician makes adjustments to the very fabric of reality...

>x jet black | middle

It looks like a brick. How is that art?

"It looks like a brick," you say, pointing at it. "How is that art?"

"It is a brick of sorts," replies Carol. "But it's a particularly important one. It's made of a ceramic with special properties that make it an excellent insulator. Father could explain it better than I."

"So it is valuable?" you ask.

"Valuable? It has no value in the here and now, but for a certain few individuals in 2003, the fact that it is on display here in 1969 rather than installed in its proper place will be a matter of some worth, at least to them."

>x jet black | middle | brick | tile | insulator | heat shield | shuttle

It looks like an ordinary brick, one side of which is glossy smooth.

>x right

(which of the three sculptures do you mean, the one on the left or one in the middle?)

>x toys | dolls

The two dolls lean forward slightly, giving them a predatory quality.

>x sweetpaws

The malevolent monkey stares down at you, its mummified face holding up reasonably well, although the skin has started retracting near the corners of its mouth, baring its teeth and reminding you that chimpanzees have large, sharp canines. Not wanting to look any more at the

eyeless face, your gaze drifts downward to a its pink sweatshirt emblazoned with some sort of heraldic crest, below which a motto is written on a scroll. You squint to read it.

Noting the object of your curiosity, Carol volunteers, "It's the family coat-of-arms and motto. The background of the shield, diagonal gold stripes on a blue field, is derived from that of the village of Frolois in France, and the skull in the center commemorates Duke Regnus d'Acraigne, who was born in the 13th Century. All of the modern Cragnes are descended from him."

"Fascinating," you murmur.

Encouraged, Carol continues, "And the family motto, it says, 'Qu'il me craigne', which means 'that he fears me', which is apparently something that old Regnus was fond of saying, but in English it is pronounced like 'Kill me Cragne'. Isn't that too much?"

"A real hoot," you manage.

"So I had it made into a shirt for Master Sweetpaws, and he thinks it's delightful too. Don't you Master Sweetpaws?"

The doll leers blindly ahead with its vicious grin.

>x sweetpaws

The sock puppets arms end in thick, four-fingered talons with nasty claws, like those of an emu, but not as friendly. Those oddly matched claws grip the edge of the shelf tightly, and he eyes Malice the Clown with anticipation of a reward for too long denied.

>claws

Think and powerful, ending in sharp talons.

>x malice

The stuffed clown has seen better days: His dessicated head has been shedding its too-orange hair for some time, having become essentially a bald polished black leather ball at this pointt, and strands of orange polyester hair decorate his tattered clown suit. Through the moth-eaten holes in his soiled,. shredded clown suit, his rachetic ribs and emaciated frame are visible. His fear-filled eyes are subtly turned towards the doll next to him on the shelf, who in turn looks back at him with unconcealed hunger. There is no question which will succeed the other.

>x malice

The clown doll is looking particularly ragged.

>x reel-to-reel tape recorder

The reel-to-reel tape recorder is switched off. Magnetic tape is threaded through the mechanism and about half the tape remains on the supply reel, which is labeled only "Project Nekton", and below that "Singing 00:30 to 00:60".

>table

{as previous}

>ask Nixon

"He stands for everything I believe in: integrity, tradition, and the natural destiny of **America** to lead the world into the coming millennium. That's why I decided to work on his campaign rather than take my acceptance to **Middlebury**."

>ask Nixon

Carol tells you she is his biggest fan. He can do no wrong by her.

>ask America

"After seeing everything going on in **America** this past year: the long-haired free love freaks, drugs, the degenerate culture of rock-and-roll, people too self-entitled to defend their country from the Gooks in Vietnam, Blacks riding busses and voting -- all of it, I just couldn't sit on the sidelines. I wanted to do more than *just* bring about the Ascendance of the **Elder Gods**. That's going to take time, and I know that I only live another few months before my **suicide**, so I decided to join the **Nixon** campaign and make a difference."

>ask America

"It's going to hell in a handbasket," replies Carol, "and not in a good way."

>tell America

"Carol, I am from the future, I assure you that this plan of yours fails. The idea that the country could be ruled by a bigoted, narcissistic miscreant like you is unthinkable."

Carol smiles smugly.

>tell America

You try to convince Carol that her plan does not succeed in the future, but her confidence is not shaken in the least.

>ask Elder Gods

“With **father**’s guidance, we have set history in the right direction. It took a lot of effort, more nodal interventions in the last year that I ever tried before: Two assassinations, scuttling the Vietnam peace talks, and the founding of Intel. It was a busy year for the **Deep Ones**.”

>ask Intel

“I’m not sure how, but the company’s founding seems to have just as much influence on the future as all the **assassinations**.”

>tell Intel

“I’m not sure how this all figure into it, but in my day, in the 90s, most of the computers that we use have Intel chips in them. I have long suspected a diabolical cause.”

>ask vietnam peace talks

“The timing was wrong for **Nixon**, so I sent **Sweetpaws** to make sure they didn’t happen.”

Carol looks over at the shelves above her desk. “What’s that **Master Sweetpaws**? Oh yes, the geopolitical ramifications would indeed have been thorny.”

>ask vietnam peace talks

Carol explains how Master Sweetpaws craftily manipulated global interests to ensure that the 1968 peace talks to end the war in Vietnam collapsed, undermining President Lyndon B. Johnson’s re-election campaign.

>ask Elder Gods

Carol claims that most of the important events of 1968 were part of her and her father’s plan to alter history to bring about the dominion of the Elder Gods.

>ask assassinations | RFK | MLK | robert kennedy | martin luther king

“As soon as you swat one, another pops up. First **JFK** -- I thought that set things right. But as soon as he was fixed, up steps **RFK** and everything drifts back towards the same futures. And don’t even get me started on **Martin Luther King**.”

>ask assassinations | RFK | MLK | robert kennedy | martin luther king

Carol claims that she orchestrated the assassinations of both Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King with the assistance of the Deep Ones.

>ask Middlebury | school

"I was accepted to **Middlebury** last term; turns out I have some aptitude for languages. I was going to major in linguistics with a minor maybe in history, but the more I looked at the school, the more I realized how unhappy I would be there. Do you know that they are actually trying to promote enrollment of everyone but Whites? I decided to volunteer for the **Nixon** campaign instead."

>ask Middlebury | school

"I decided not to go there and decided to volunteer for the **Nixon** campaign instead," replies Carol.

>ask suicide

"As I've matured, I've gained some insight into what is happening, both in my life and in this unfolding. I remember all your visits now, for instance, clearly. And with the aid of the **Elder Gods**, I'm even beginning to be able to see around the corners and branches of things that haven't happened yet -- some will, some won't. That part is hard to sort out, of course."

"My **suicide**, however is unavoidable. If it hadn't happened a few months from now, we wouldn't have been talking now and in the past."

"I can see what **Christabell** did to me then, but can't change it. She was jealous of my power and future place with the **Elder Gods**, but even more so, she felt spurned because I chose my **boyfriend** over her."

>ask suicide

Carol says **Christabell** is responsible for driving her to **suicide** before the end of 1969. Carol suspects that Cristabell was jealous that she had a **boyfriend**.

x

>ask boyfriend

"In retrospect, he's a bastard. If I could tell myself that when I was my age -- with the 20-20 hindsight of temporal paradox, of course -- I would have walked away from him regardless of the what the **Elder Gods** saw in him."

“But at the time, I couldn’t see that. He had just graduated from Wharton and entered into the family real estate business in New York City. There was no question that he would go places, especially with the inchoate horrors of primordial chaos pulling for him as they were.”

>ask boyfriend

Carol recognizes that her boyfriend back in 1969 was a clod, but it’s likely that **Christabell** pushed her to **suicide** because of jealousy over Carol’s relationship with him.

>ask father

“I don’t like to brag,” Carol brags, “but **father** has done quite well for himself, not only is he Senior Executive Vice-President in charge of the Electric Boat Division of **General Dynamics**, but he is now an advisor on President **Nixon**’s National Security Council.”

>ask father

Carol says her father has worked his way onto President **Nixon**’s National Security Council, where he is privy to the even the most secret machinations of the **American** government.

>ask General Dynamics | Electric Boat

Carol informs you that General Dynamics is the nation’s lead defense contractor for **submarine** construction.

>ask submarine

“Oh, I don’t know all that much about them. **Father** knows all the technical stuff. I just help coordinate what we do with the **Deep Ones**.”

>ask submarine

Carol admits she isn’t up on the technical aspects of submarines, but they do play a role in her business with the Deep Ones.

>ask mother

“Oh, **mother** expired some time ago, actually. **Father** says that her hostess skills were helpful earlier in his career, but she really had nothing to offer these last few years and was getting to be something of a drag.”

>ask mother

Apparently, Carol's **mother** died some time ago; the cause isn't really clear and Carol doesn't seem disposed to elaborate.

>ask computer

"I told **father** that sometimes I felt left out, so he had it set up for me. It helps me keep abreast of what's going on here and there."

>ask computer

Carol seems to be plugged in to a high-level government information feed. The technology is astounding considering the era. There must be a mainframe somewhere within the mansion.

>ask scrapbook

"It was getting heavy, so a couple years ago I started dividing them up into volumes. Feel free to peruse the latest Runes -- we've been very busy lately!"

>ask scrapbook | notebook

"Feel free to peruse the latest Runes -- we've been very busy lately!"

>ask Mister Snortles

"Poor **Mister Snortles** was getting on in years, and had some health issues, and **Master Sweetpaws** thought it best if we put him down. For his own good, really."

>ask Mister Snortles

Carol says that **Master Sweetpaws** suggested doing away with **Mister Snortles** the **Elephant** when he became too weak to defend himself.

>ask Misses Winkelbottom

"Haven't seen her for years," Carol replies. "I don't recall whatever became of her."

>ask Misses Winkelbottom

Carol seems to have repressed the memory of **Misses Winkelbottom's** gory demise and subsequent consumption by her other stuffed dolls.

>ask Malice the Clown

“**Malice** hasn’t been quite himself lately; he isn’t eating like he used to -- I think he may be a little down.”

>ask Master Sweetpaws the Monkey

“Am I my **monkey**’s keeper?” Carol asks rhetorically. “He keeps himself busy and comes and goes as he pleases. I try not to micromanage him.”

>ask Master Sweetpaws the Monkey

“He’s a busy, little **monkey**, aren’t you, **Sweetpaws**?”

>ask Master Sweetpaws the Monkey

Carol neither knows nor cares what her bloodthirsty little familiar has been up to. All that matters to her is that he does what needs doing.

>ask moon | artifact | fungating | thorax

“That need not concern you. Soon the last traces of the usurping gods will be swept away and the **Elder Gods** restored to their glory.”

>ask moon | artifact | fungating | thorax

Carol evades your question.

>ask regolith

“It’s moonrock,” replies Carol helpfully.

>ask zond | zond-3 | zond3

“It was a Soviet probe that photographed the far-side of the moon at high resolution and saw some things... that needed to be dealt with.”

>ask zond | zond-3 | zond3

“It was a Soviet probe that photographed the far-side of the moon.”

>ask “lunar command” | “lunar escape” | “lunar ascent” | LEM | LAM | module | apollo | rocket

“When **Apollo** astronauts land on the moon, the part of the rocket that lands on the moon is the **LEM** or **lunar escape module**. When it’s time for them to leave, the upper part of the **LEM** called the **lunar ascent module** separates and flies up to dock with the **lunar command module** in lunar orbit.”

```
>ask "lunar command" | "lunar escape" | "lunar ascent" | LEM | LAM |  
module | apollo | rocket
```

“All part of the moonshot.”

```
>ask Project Nekton
```

“The Navy’s ill-considered attempt to deal with the **Deep Ones** without consulting me or my **father**.”

```
>ask glyphs
```

“I have mastered only a few of the symbols of the language of the **Elder Gods** -- the ones that can be drawn without going insane.”

```
>ask decontamination
```

“You can never be too careful; best to disinfect everything -- with fire.”

```
>ask Dakar | ask s647 | minerve| k-129 | scorpion
```

“When we ask the **Deep Ones** for help, there is always a price.”

```
>ask sigint
```

“Short for ‘signals intelligence’, basically eavesdropping on radio signals.”

```
>ask elint
```

“Short for ‘electronics intelligence’; the plane overflies an area snoops around.”

```
>ask cw
```

“It stands for ‘continuous wave’, but means morse code.”

```
>ask idf
```

“I think it means Israeli Defense Force.”

>ask pentacle | deep1 | catacon

"If I told you, I'd have to kill you." Carol smiles, kind of.

>ask pentacle | deep1 | catacon

"Actually, I don't know. Very official and hush-hush. The military does love their abbreviations."

>ask br1150 | atlantic

"It's a kind of plane. British, I think."

>ask hydrophone | hydrophonic

"A hydrophone is like a microphone that you can put in water so you can hear what's down there."

>ask milcoord

"The person who liaises between the US and French Militaries at Nato Headquarters."

>ask navcomgr1

"Our listening post on the coast of Greece."

>ask medcar

"A network of sonic transducers that line the Mediterranean basin and can generate sounds to fool enemy submarines."

>ask sosus

"Strings of underwater sensors that help the military track submarines."

>ask bletchley

"I don't know where it is, but they coordinate the American and Soviet space programs," replies Carol.

>lwah

"It is short for 'lost with all hands' in military-speak."

>a popeyetism

"It's the code name for our navy's global intelligence network of enhanced dolphins."

>ask art

"Various trinkets I've picked up here and there. I think the one on the right is my favorite."

>ask opalescent | egg | *Megalokyniklosaurus* | vernalis

"Ah, yes, the **egg** of the ***Megalokyniklosaurus vernalis***. Those who have stared into its swirling mysteries have reported visions from other realities."

>ask opalescent | egg | *Megalokyniklosaurus* | vernalis

Carol reminds you that the only known ***Megalokyniklosaurus vernalis*** egg in existence is rumored to reveal visions of other realities.

>ask jet black

"It's not quite as real as the other pieces of art in my collection, because of course it does not exist yet."

>ask jet black

"It's a thermal tile from the space plane Columbia some years from now."

>ask ploughver

"You realize that every time you use that spell, you're complicit in what you experience, right?"

"No, **Christabell** didn't mention anything about that," you plead, alarmed.

"No, I wouldn't suppose she would. It's funny how she only tells parts of things, isn't it?"

>ask ploughver

Carol explains that the person casting the teleport spell shares in the responsibility for collateral damage that it causes.

>(ask | tell) Christabell | Mark | pregnant

“Carol, we need to level. About that **mark** that you allegedly placed: **Christabell** says I’m not **pregnant** and that you are try to manipulate me.”

“Does she now?” Carol says with a sly smile. “Well, I suppose it’s just a matter of which of us you trust. How is it that I’m supposed to have manipulated you?”

“Well.” You think for a minute. “I thought it was some kind of a threat. Against me, or maybe against the baby.”

“That’s not how it works, Christabell. **Marks** are Wardes of Protection. The only benefit I derive is being able to work magic through someone who is bemarked. The person themself is merely the medium and comes to no harm at all.”

“So, am I **pregnant** or not?”

“There’s nothing I can say that will convince you one way or another, Naomi, so why ask?”

>(ask | tell) Christabell | Mark | pregnant

Carol sticks to her argument that you are indeed **pregnant** and that you **baby** bears her **mark**, but that she means no harm by it.

>kwisatz haderach

You join your fists together and aim at the scrapbook, letting loose a blast of reddish energy by speaking the invocation, “kwisatz haderach”.

Carol tries to get between you and the scrapbook, but is too slow. As the book dissolves progressively to dust to small to see. Carol sags, as if suddenly exhausted.

“You idiot,” she scolds. “What was that for? I’ve done nothing to you.”

“You were growing too powerful; it makes me uncomfortable.”

“I thought you were a little more rational than that, Naomi. I am disappointed in you. That was, of course, just one of many volumes -- my power is little diminished.”

“Also,” Carol adds as a petty afterthought, “the word is Maud’dib. I at least read the book. When he used the weirding module, the thing he yelled was Maud’dib, not Kwisatz Haderach. You could at least get that one detail right.”

>kwisatz haderach

You see no other Books of Runes to destroy.

>s

The door is wide open but an invisible barrier holds you back.

“What gives, Carol? Am I your prisoner now?”

“Naomi, it’s not me holding you back -- honest!” pleads Carol. “It’s the universe. When you’re here, some part of you is in my time. The future is written from your perspective, but not mine; all is fluid and potential. Apparently, you have some decisions to make, and the universe can’t get on with its business until you make them. I urge you to think carefully on your choices, as this is apparently a nodal moment, the sort of historical linchpin that I have long labored to bring about at great cost.”

“You’ll understand if I choose not to believe you.”

“Believe what you want, but think carefully about your next actions. There is no reason we need be enemies.”

>s

An invisible force blocks your exit. Carol again shrugs her shoulders and claims it is none of her doing, but somehow related to the universe and unwritten destiny.

>s

An invisible force blocks your exit.

{the same applies if you want to ploughver out instead:}

>ploughver

{assuming enough time has passed to reset the spell; if not you get the usual message about it not having recharged}

Dark purple sparks fly from the four walls, ceiling and floor of the room as you cast, but you go nowhere.

“What gives, Carol? Am I your prisoner now?”

“Naomi, it’s not me holding you back -- honest!” pleads Carol. “It’s the universe. When you’re here, some part of you is in my time. The future is written from your perspective, but not mine; all is fluid and potential. Apparently, you have some decisions to make, and the universe can’t

get on with its business until you make them. I urge you to think carefully on your choices, as this is apparently a nodal moment, the sort of historical linchpin that I have long labored to bring about at great cost.”

“You’ll understand if I choose not to believe you.”

“Believe what you want, but think carefully about your next actions. There is no reason we need be enemies.”

>ploughver

{same as >s, 2nd time}

>ploughver

{same as >s, 3rd and subsequent times}

[fork1: slyly opening the window]

>open window

{but not having had a dialogue response from Carol on the previous turn}

Carol is watching you too closely.

{after 3 such responses, we get the clue bat out:}

Except when Carol is blathering on about something, she watches you too closely to afford you the opportunity to approach the window.

{if really dense:}

You need to distract Carol with some conversation in order to get to the window.

>ask/tell a topic to Carol

blah blah blah response

>open window

She is so distracted by your conversation about [subject of conversation on previous turn] that you are able to get near the window without her noticing.

You pull up on the window and it slides only a fraction of an inch up in its gritty track.

{window is open an inch after successful first attempt}

`>ask/tell another topic to Carol`

The window slips down a bit during your conversation, but is still open a crack. [now the window is open just a crack]

`>open window`

You give the window a good heave, and the sash flies upward, the frigid outside air pouring inward.

{had the player not talked immediately after the first successful window opening, the window would have closed completely, resetting that mechanic with the following message:

Left unattended for too long, the window slides all the way back down and is now firmly shut.}

JUMP TO [unfork]

[fork2: siding initially with Carol, while unlikely, implemented: -- sets CarolSurprised is false]

`>tell disrupt | disruption | window | blockade`

You're not entirely sure it's a good idea, but you spill the beans about Christabell's plan. Both spirits seem untrustworthy, but Carol does in some ways seem the more maligned of the two, and perhaps absent Christabell's influence, she would have grown up to be a different person.

"Listen Carol, there's something I need to tell you: Christabell wants to 'disrupt' you. Do you know what that is?"

"Of course -- she's not content with just killing me once, she wants me gone always. See what I have had to deal with for so many decades? And you... I suppose she would have you serve a role in my disruption?"

"Yes, she wants me to open the window. She says it will be a hole in your magical barrier."

"Thank you for trusting me, Naomi. You have given me a chance. Please proceed as she has asked, but when you open the window, at least I will be prepared and will have a fighting chance. I still have some potency left from our bestowance, whereas she must be waning after all this time."

`>open window {if window entirely closed; if window open a crack, start with next one}`

You pull up on the window and it slides only a fraction of an inch up in its gritty track.

>open window

You give the window a good heave, and the sash flies upward, the frigid outside air pouring inward.

[unfork]

{now ask/tell is suppressed}

>ask/tell/hello/goodbye

{does not count against number of actions, below}

Words fail at a time like this.

>close window

{counts against number of actions, below}

You lean on it with all your weight, but it is jammed fully open.

>{1st free action}

Christabell pours in through the window. Not literally as a person, but her powers, which you have greatly underestimated to this point. In your spectral vision, you perceive a crimson stream flooding into the room -- and into you.

{if Carol has not been warned}Carol is caught unaware and backs to a corner, for once stripped of her air of superiority. "Naomi," she screams, "by the Elders Gods themselves, I swear you have sealed your doom!" The crimson energy flings Carol left and right, but she pulls herself up again leaning heavily on the wall.{/end carol has not been warned}

{if scrapbook destroyed}Through force of habit, Carol reaches behind herself to draw energy from her book of Runes, only recalling too late that you destroyed it. Instead, temporizing, with a flick of her hand she signals her minions to attack. Master Sweetpaws backhands the raggedy clown as he bounds off the shelf, his talons outstretched and jaws wide, leaping straight towards you from his perch. You reflexively lift your hand to shield your face and are surprised as raw magic pours from, constricting to a narrow beam that slices through the ferocious sock puppet, and then continues through his charred fabric to impale Malice the Clown.{/end scrapbook destroyed}

You throw a spinning, glowing glob of magic at Carol and it engulfs her; she agonizes within it like a bug in molasses, her screams drowned in its crackling energy as she falls to her knees. As she struggles to her knees, she manages to push one hand clear of the swirling crimson miasma and with that hand she sends her own reverberating wave of cobalt blue magic towards

you, more specifically, towards you belly. Something within you shudders and kicks, an innocent caught in unaware in a cosmic conflict.

>2nd free action

Thundering energies wind through you in opposing directions, pitting you helplessly against your own unborn child.

The air vibrates, “Carol, I do forbid your Apostasy! You shall not unwrite the Third Covenant; the Servants that overthrew the Elder Gods will not abide their Return. I do command you: abandon forthwith your senseless Attack, for if you do destroy the Woman Naomi, so do you destroy the Vessel of your own Mark.” The words are punctuated by a renewed tide of crimson force.

Carol only redoubles her efforts, “Not so, Christabell. My Vessel need only survive a heart beat beyond that of its mother for me to break from my circular prison. Then we shall see how the Elder Gods reshape the world.”

>3rd free action

Unbidden words pour from your mouth, “Such an End the New Gods will not permit; now with their Powers adjoined to mine, I do slay your Instrument and disrupt your Fusion.” Suddenly, all of Christabell’s power and infinitely more turn inward.

“No!” screams Carol, as she tries to push a wedge of her own powers through the crimson fist tightening on your belly.

But it is not enough. Within you, there is a final fluttering, and then nothing.

As Carol fades, you read her final silent words on her lips, “I’m sorry.” And she too is gone.

“Your small Part in this be now Complete, dear Naomi,” whispers Christabell. “Carol’s Cycle is broken, but long will the Fruits of her Deeds despoil the Earth. In this Struggle I have been emptied of my Potence and do take my Leave, my Fusion finally untangled.”

{remove the rail road track object from the hillside, replacing it with the altar stone}

>{do anything}

Before you can do that, a book appears in mid-air and drops to the wooden floor. Clouds of dust waft up around it.

>look

Shafts of sunlight filter through the filthy window, which is now closed.

The room is empty: the carpet has been taken up, all furniture removed, and nothing left on the walls. Dust hangs in the air of this room so long abandoned.

A book lies on the floor.

>look

A dusty room, unvisited for more than two decades.

A book lies on the floor.

>clean window

The filth on the windows resists your best efforts.

>x book

As you take the book to examine it, a photograph falls to the floor.

>read book

A thin, leatherbound tome. A title is embossed on the cover: "Naomi's Runes".

>read book {the number of items listed will depend on the number of spell used}

The book has a number of entries, each corresponding to a faded newspaper clipping:

For Gluttony of the Bestowance {number of cups of tea -- first 3 runes are shared with Carol}
Boat Wreck On Sable Island {article 3}

For Gluttony of the Bestowance a second time
Watery Fate for Convict at Execution Rocks {article 4}

For Gluttony of the Bestowance yet a third time
Body Found {article 5}

For Sloth of Mouvement the first time {number of times ploughver successfully used}
Orphan Survives Boat Collision New York {article 6}

For Sloth of Mouvement the second time
Boardwalk Tragedy {article 7}

For Sloth of Mouvement yet the third time

Wilson Hargreaves Remembered {article 8}

For Pride in Erasure of the Runes of Another {if kwizat-ed successfully}

{article 9}

For Murder of Your Own Childe {if this ending is reached}

{article 10}

>(x | take) photograph

[First taking the photograph]

{whatever description Matt has provided for the key item of next section of Jupiter Track}

>undo within six turns of the 3rd free action

{back to to final scene if player isn't willing to tolerate that outcome}

>exit | jump out window | n

You hurl yourself out the window and both Carol and Christobell push the last of their reserves into you. But gravity wins first. You meet the frozen ground so many stories below, bare of snow in just the spot where you land and die.

{any key}

Somewhat.

{any key}

More accurately, the only thing that truly died that day in 1969 was the smouldering embers of two entangled spirits, who had been locked in an endless cycle of their own making. With their energies finally exhausted, the loop at last was broken.

You find yourself standing on the hillside just as it appeared when you first encountered it early today, except the railroad tracks are gone.

Instead, a large, flat black stone stands in the middle of the clearing, and on it, a book.

{move the player silently to the hillside without printing a room description}

>look

You are in a hillside hollow flanked on three sides by sheer granite cliffs and on the other by gnarled vegetation.

A stone altar stands in the middle of the clearing.

Vaguely distinguishable trailheads lead off to the north, southwest, and southeast.

>x altar | stone | slab

A large, roughly rectangular slab of the same black granite as the surrounding cliffs.

A book rests on the altar.

>x book

{as above}

>read book

{as above}

>(x | take) photograph

{as above}

>ploughver | kwasitz haderach | xizzi

Your mark never having existed, not a thing happens.

>{walk over to the nursery, the door is open to the hallway}

Shafts of sunlight filter through the filthy window, which is now closed.

The room is empty: the carpet has been taken up, all furniture removed, and nothing left on the walls. Dust hangs in the air of this room so long abandoned.

{if player walks back to the nursery}

>open window

It is frozen shut with age and neglect.

>read Orphan Survives {article 6}

Orphan Survives Boat Collision, New York

{first time}Finally, a feel-good story.

You unfold the article to give it a full perusal.{any key}

Orphan Survives Boat Collision, New York
City Police Frogman Dies Horribly.

Six-year-old Samantha Monteleone was thought lost earlier today after The Knickerbocker, a commercial touring boat with 230 persons aboard, came to an abrupt stop just south of Battery Park. The child was later found trapped below decks, but only after New York City Police Department Frogman Reginald Foster died in the search and rescue operation.

Forty of the passengers this morning were orphans in the first, second, and third grade at the Tuckeridge Home for Orphans in Yonkers, New York. They and their chaperones from the orphanage were enjoying the boat ride around Manhattan, many of them crowded along the starboard bow railing to view the Statue of Liberty, when the 2500 tonne vessel came to an immediate halt in open water.

Many passengers were thrown to the deck, and one orphan reported seeing Samantha go forward over the railing. Chaperones were able to locate all other children, and a shipwide search was organized while the ship returned to its berth on Pier 82. During the return to the dock, the crew swept the ship twice, but were unable to find the girl.

Meanwhile, NYPD frogmen were dispatched to position of the stalled ship using landmark bearings, putting them about a quarter mile south-west of Governors Island. The first vessels upon the scene reported no evidence of debris that would have supported the possibility of an earlier collision and no maritime accidents were witnessed this morning along this heavily trafficked route connecting Manhattan to the Atlantic. According to the coast guard, no ships have issued distress calls and none are known to be overdue in ports around New York City.

According to NYPD Frogman Unit Captain Peter Pizar, his ten man team began a standard search operating from two support barges, which arrived on the scene one within a half-hour, and the other near the one hour mark. Despite unusually poor visibility and brisk currents, the search proceeded normally until just before noon, when Sargent

Foster's air hose was hoisted to a barge, bringing with it only the upper half of the diving suit.

"You know there's a problem when the winch doesn't make the usual sound." said Jobber Thomson, one of Foster's squad. "It was just the top part of the suit, from the armpits up. When we opened the helmet, you should have seen the look on his face. Nothing got to Reggie, but I think he died of fright before whatever was down there cut him to pieces."

The NYPD has not release a statement at this time, but officers on the scene speculated that officer Foster might have come into contact with a rotating propeller, although he was working on the bottom the Anchorage Channel, at an average depth of greater than fifty feet.

The orphan, Samantha, was found in the early evening cowering in a normally sealed bilge section of the ship. Perry Sylvester, the director of the Tuckeridge Home for Orphans described the girl as "white as a sheet and catatonic, shivering in the dark, her eyes more white than pupil." Samantha was taken to the the Rosedale Psychiatric Center in White Plains, where she is recovering.

>(x | read) Boardwalk Tragedy {article 7}

The hunt is underway for two recent highschool graduates last seen on the beach in Lavalette, New Jersey. The youths, Vinny Bernaducci, age 19 of the Bronx, New York, and Sandra Thomas, age 18, of Perth, Australia, disappeared last evening after attending a clambake with friends on the beach.

Ocean County police detective Roger Gutterman who interviewed other teenagers on the beach that evening said that the two missing teens were last seen walking off towards a section of the boardwalk favored by youth, just down the beach towards Seaside Heights.

Investigators have identified the likely location, which contained articles of clothing and other materials that the couple was likely to have used that evening. They were puzzled, however, about the possible significance of a wide furrow leading from the ocean's edge to that spot under the boardwalk.

Detective Guttman described that furrow as "wide, maybe ten or fifteen feet across, pretty shallow, and flanked by tufts of moist

sand.". He also said, "The only thing I've ever seen like that was on vacation -- one evening I saw sea turtles hauling themselves up the beach to lay their eggs. It was kind of like that, except much, much bigger."

>(x | read) hargreaves {article 8}

WILSON HARGREAVES, REMEMBERED

Lieutenant Wilson Hargreaves, former Officer-in-Charge of the Winslet Point Lighthouse, was laid to rest today in the Restful Meadows Cemetery in Winksboro, Maine. Devoted husband of Delores, proud father of Katie and Linda, he was fifty-eight. A memorial service was held in Winksboro Town Hall, led by mayor Thomas Snideworth. The mayor praised Wilson's service to the community, both his constant watchfulness at the Lighthouse and his many projects involving town youth. The major also consoled the grieving family regarding his extraordinarily gruesome death.

>(x | read) xxx {article 9}

>(x | read) yyy {article 10}

==

[bold type]Commentary[roman type][paragraph break]Jack Welch and Ben Collins-Sussman[paragraph break]Thanks first of all to Ryan Veeder and Jenni Polodna for giving so many IF authors a chance to work together on this project. The best part of IF is the community and we all had a blast chatting with each other about everything from coding compliance to fungating masses while we were writing. We want to acknowledge just how huge a task R&J took on in not only trying to compile code coming from 85 different directions, but in herding us cats.[paragraph break]Of course, none of us would have been doing this at all had Michael S. Gentry not written Anchorhead in 1998 -- a foundational game, which we both enjoyed and were only too happy to have a chance to emulate.[paragraph break]As the time of writing this, as you can imagine, the deadline is a few hours away and the bug list still needs some swatting, so commentary here will be brief, but I'm sure we will add some additional commentary online. Interactive Fiction Professors of the 24th Century will probably have to pull this from the planetary cybermind, but for now, the URL is <http://blog.templaro.com/some-thoughts-about-cragne-manor/>. [paragraph break]But in case the internet evaporates, here are, at least, some initial thoughts about where our two rooms came from.[paragraph break]Having worked together on a number of IF projects, like [italic type]Rover's Day Out[roman type] and [italic type]Hoosegow[roman type], and some collaborative community projects like Speed-IFs ([italic type]Lobsters on a Plane[roman type])

and *Narrow Your Eyes* for the TMBG Apollo 18 20th Anniversary game, we asked R&J if we could have two rooms, but collaborate on plot. And they said yes.[paragraph break]So we did. The nature of the overall project meant that authors had to more or less isolate their games from each other to assure the whole thing would compile reasonably, so we figured that the best way to collaborate between to separate rooms without having items floatings around in circulation would be to focus just on conversation.[paragraph break]We've always enjoyed writing conversation and have tried to make NPCs interesting, but we've never really buckled down and used any of the conversation extensions. So, at the start of the project, we asked to include a conversation extension, and with some assistance from Zarf, R&J agreed to include a modified version of Eric Eve's Conversation framework.[paragraph break]Our task then was to come up with a plot that would involve an NPC in each room and a story that would bridge them together. We thought the player should have to interact with them a few times each so they could gradually reveal the story, but didn't want to force the player to spend too much time schlepping back and forth, so we limited it to three interactions with each character and added a spell to magically hop back and forth between the locations.[paragraph break]As for inspiration, most of it came from the original Anchorhead, but other bits were drawn from actual history. Most of the names and events in the game are real. As Christabell mentions, she's originally from Lyn, Massachusetts, which became known as Saugus. If that name is familiar, it's a homage to the long-running Halloween literary competition run by that town, which has always included interactive fiction. Here's one more ghost story to add to that collection.[paragraph break]Hope yoy enjoy it -- and remember, hints are enabled in our rooms for every scene, just type [quotation mark]hints[quotation mark].""