

CALL OF CTHULHU STARTER SET

PLAYER HANDOUTS PACK

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De Vermiis Mysteriis © copyright 2021 Sally A. Francy. Used with permission.

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Chaosium Inc. 3450 Wooddale Ct. Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Chaosium publication 23178-X ISBN-13: 978-1-56882-463-5

Dear Friends

In the years after the nightmarish events of that night in my youth, I have seen many strange things. Only now do I begin to grasp the truth of reality, and the scope of what is happening in the world. I've tried, in my small way, to combat the horrors and make amends for my part in bringing one to our plane of existence. What I have left to offer, what riches and wealth I have, I will put to good use in dealing with these abominations. It is the very least this old coward can do.

I could never make myself go back to that little farmhouse and put those events to rights. I too gravely feared that which my friends and I loosed upon this countryside. Nothing of consequence has yet taken place, but with my death I fear the bonds will be broken and that horror freed to come and go as it pleases. Lives not yet taken already weigh heavy on my conscience.

The method of delivering the thing out of this world is still in that accursed house—the translations made by Marion from the book, *De Vermis Mysteriis*. I was never strong enough to take on the task, but I have hope that you are. In ridding the world of this, perhaps you will save my soul from Hell. For I fear that my deeds have not been enough to release me from this heavy burden.

I do not expect your forgiveness for what I ask of you.

Rupert Merriweather

February 27th, 1877

HANDOUTS

Marion Allen has acquired an artifact, purportedly Egyptian. It appears to be a small sarcophagus of gold. Inside is a large piece of amber, which entraps a specimen of some unknown species of arthropod. Allen is very excited, as the box corresponds to a description he found in an ordinary reference volume in the university's Orne Library. Allen says that, in another book—*De Vermis Mysteriis*—is an explanation of the powers of the box. The text says the small animal trapped in the amber is actually the host to a bound djinn, a guide to the spirit world. Allen says the tome mentions that originally, there were four such pieces of amber contained in the box. There is no mention what happened to the other three.

We are agreed and a date has been set to conduct a ceremony intended to summon the djinn, which Allen assures us will be friendly. We have chosen the night of Saturday 18th March—the night before the New Moon.

March 19th, 1877

We began the ceremony as Allen instructed, according to that described in *De Vermis Mysteriis*. A fire is set in the fireplace and a pentagram chalked on the floor, marked with appropriate symbols and illuminated by two black tapers placed near the center, flanking the piece of amber with its entrapped spirit. The others sit in a circle while I, the designated "watcher" who guards for malevolent spirits, sit in the corner of the room. At least I get the comfort of a chair, while the others can look forward to sitting on the floor for hours.

Allen throws a handful of powder in the fire, producing an evil-smelling smoke and dampening the flames, which now burn a sputtering green and brown. Those seated on the floor begin the Latin chant Allen has transcribed from his book.

After nearly two hours I see a trail of smoke circling up from the piece of amber. Its surface seems to be bubbling and melting! Can this be? Have we finally achieved success? I can see a form...

March 20th, 1877

We have finished with our plans and have sworn a pact never to speak of what happened last night. We have satisfactorily explained the death of poor Robert, and in some manner the madness of Harold. The sheriff accepts the explanation of a carriage accident—we planned it well. Robert's neck was broken in the fall, we told him. Harold struck his head on a rock when the horse's leg broke and the carriage rolled. Would it be that it was only that. For the rest of us, we will be forever changed by what we experienced last night. I will write down the true events, so they are not lost completely.

The thing formed in the center of the pentagram, shapeless and nearly invisible. Its terrible voice should have given us a clue, but we were so foolish. It spoke, then Allen cast that damned powder on the djinn, the "Dust of Ibn-Ghazi" he calls it, and that's when we could all see it clearly.

Words cannot adequately describe the faceless thing with a thousand maws. It roiled and bubbled, never fully revealing itself at any one time. So terrifying was its aspect that I was frozen in place, my pen falling from my nerveless fingers. Cecil and Allen seemed as lifeless as myself, while a short, sharp cry issued from Crawford's mouth. Robert, however, rose to his feet, and before anyone could stop him, stepped forward as though to embrace our horrible guest.

With its arms, or those appendages that seemed most like arms, it took hold of poor Robert and twisted his head around as though he was a doll. The lifeless corpse was then thrown back in Harold's lap, and that's when he began that damnable shrieking—the shrieking that hasn't stopped since, even after we handed him over to the sheriff's men.

We still had a chance, apparently. Allen now believes that if we had kept our wits, we could have reversed the summoning and forced the creature back to wherever it came from. But Crawford panicked and, mistakenly believing that it would dispel the creature, reached forward and destroyed part of the pentagram, breaking the seal and ending its effectiveness. Released from that binding symbol, the thing, with a screech that could only have been unholy satisfaction, was ejected from the house—disappearing out the window as a roaring, screaming wind of boiling colors.

March 24th, 1877

HANDOUTS

Allen intends to leave Arkham and travel to find a solution to this crisis. He said that he intends to seek out occult scholars in New Orleans. I pray he is successful, but my hopes are not high at this point. He insisted that I be custodian of the gold sarcophagus, and not show it to anyone. What's even more odd is that he instructed me to not visit or even live in Boston. I can only guess as to why, as he will not tell me his reasoning, apart from his insistence that it is for my own safety.

Marion still thinks that the thing could yet be destroyed, or at least dispelled, but none of us who remain have the stomach for such an undertaking. I hope he can find a way to safely banish it without another of us falling to its malevolent grip.

March 26th, 1877

We now believe that the spell we cast to summon it inextricably bound the thing to the house. Allen went back this morning to retrieve some of our belongings, and store our ritual accouterments. He says that he heard it bumping around in the attic over his head, cursing him all the while. He said that it also told him that it only has to wait us out. When we who were present are all dead, it will roam the Earth freely, slaughtering and feasting. Thankfully, the warding signs carved by Allen during better times, times that seem so long ago now, apparently are effective and bar the thing entry except into the attic of the farm house. I might be able to sleep a few hours tonight knowing it is bound to the attic and cannot harm anyone else.

I am hopeful for the first time since we stupidly released it from the amber. If it told him the truth, then we have time to seek the answer. God be with you in your search, my friend.

October 14th, 1877

I just discovered that Marion Allen is dead, and has been dead for some months now. He was murdered in New Orleans this past August. I suspect that he spoke to the wrong sort of people about the things he has seen, and they killed him. The newspaper mentions the sarcophagus, so they may have been after the gold.

That is three of us gone now. I must do something. I've already begun ancient history classes at university, so I believe I will try to research the problem at the farmhouse in that manner. Perhaps I will uncover an ancient secret of how to rid our world of that beast in my own way.

August 14th, 1887

BRUTAL MURDER AT DOCKS

NEW ORLEANS. The body of Mr. Marion Allen, late of Arkham, Massachusetts, was discovered early this morning near the Gulf & Panama docks. A victim of foul play, the man was identified by local witnesses who said that Mr. Allen had been seen in the locale the evening before. Although robbery was the apparent motive, police report that the victim had gruesome marks carved into his forehead and his tongue had been cut out. Mr. Allen had reportedly gone to the police earlier this week claiming that he was being followed and that he feared for his life. He said his shadowy pursuers were after an Egyptian artifact, which he no longer possessed.

Robert Menkin, March 1877

Harold Copley, August 1877

Marion Allen, August 1877

Crawford Harris, January 1910

Cecil Jones, March 1919

Rupert Merriweather

HANDOUTS

NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Statement of Corman, Howard, Patrol Officer
Entered: Tuesday, August 14th, 1877

I was on my assigned route through the docks and warehouse quarter, nearing the Gulf & Panama docks at 5:47 a.m., when I saw sign of a person lying among some shipping crates. I first thought that it was a vagrant asleep. As I moved closer to rouse the subject, I then saw bloodstains. On closer inspection, the victim was dead. He was lying on his back, arms splayed. His chest was opened up, with the full contents visible, ribs opened. The head was thrown back, mouth open.

Since there was obviously nothing I could do to help the victim, I hurried to the nearest adjacent beat where I knew I would find Officer Wood. I told him what I found, and instructed him to get assistance. I would go back and secure the crime scene.

When I got back, some dockworkers had gathered around, and one was endeavoring to go through the victim's pockets. I stopped him and had the men move away from the body. I then inspected the man to make sure nothing was taken. At this time, it was light enough to see details more clearly, and I saw the mark on the victim's forehead. It was a symbol of unknown origin carved into his skin, as if with a sharp penknife or similar weapon. I found a tarpaulin nearby, which I carefully laid across the victim until detectives could arrive on the scene.

NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Statement of Warren, Harold, Detective
Entered: Tuesday, August 14th, 1877

I was assigned to the case and immediately went to the scene to gather information. Officer Corman was present, keeping the dockworkers back from the scene. He informed me that while he was getting assistance, one of the workers had started to rifle through the victim's pockets. He said that he searched the man but it appeared that no items were stolen. I found the victim's wallet still in his jacket pocket, identifying him as Marion Marcus Allen of Arkham, Mass. No money was found in the wallet or anywhere else about him.

The victim's head had characters carved into it. Bone was visible. The mouth was open and I could see no sign of his tongue, which looked to have been severed and removed. The man's rib cage had been torn open and the organs had been cut or mutilated in some manner. I request that the medical examiner verify the placement and count of all internal organs.

There were some footprints around the body, all on the side facing the opening in the pile of crates. There was some blood dried on the body and ground, but not enough to fit with the wounds. I surmise that the killing happened elsewhere, and the body was placed at the docks afterward.

HANDOUTS

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER FOR STATE OF LOUISIANA, CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Report by Dr. Wilbur Lawrence

The victim [Marion Marcus Allen] had been killed by a single, powerful, blade thrust to the bottom of the rib cage, cutting upward so as to separate the ribs from the breastbone. Hands were then used to pry the rib cage apart. The tongue was cut out, likely while the victim was dying. There was a symbol of unknown origin carved into the skin of the forehead. The cuts were deep enough so that the symbol was etched into the skull.

The victim's liver and heart were missing. Both organs were removed with a sharp blade, although the procedure was crude. Police corroborate that no evidence of the missing organs was found at the scene.

Abrasions and bruises to the wrists and legs indicate that the victim was tied up and beaten before death.

Handout: Edge 3 (part 2)

Seeker of wisdom,
Servant (son) of Yugr
(Yoag) Setheth,
Deliverer of the people
(slaves) of the water,
Bearer of the spirits of Nar-
Loth-Hotep,
Child of Thoth,
Seeker of wisdom.

Handout: Edge 4

HANDOUTS

23rd March 1877

I don't know why I'm putting this down on paper. It's probably a bad idea, but I feel the need to leave some kind of explanation for my actions and intent.

When I took the sarcophagus from my uncle I did not think it would be missed. I expected to be able to research it and return it later. I was such a fool. Despite believing in the powers we tried to summon, I grossly misunderstood the consequences. Now Robert is dead, and Harold a madman.

I'm going back to the farmhouse to organize our things. I dread stepping foot again in that place, but I must make sure that our materials will be available again when we need them.

Since the others are too shaken to attempt a banishment of the creature, I can only hope that the thing hasn't the power to remain in our reality more than a few hours or days. At least it's bound to the house itself. I shall search for a means to destroy it before the last of us passes from this world and its release from the house, if it is still there. I believe I know where I can find the knowledge I need to drive the creature away without assistance from others. I hear tales of mystics in New Orleans that know much of the true magicks of the world.

I am leaving the gold box in Rupert's care. I told him not to sell it or have it appraised by anyone, but did not tell him why. He also seemed puzzled by my insistence not to live in Boston, but I believe he trusts my judgment not to go into danger unwittingly. My uncle does not know about our "Dark Brotherhood," so Rupert and the others will be safe from anyone looking for it. I'll be back to put things right again.

Marion Allen

P.S. I write this before I close the lid on the trunk. The thing is still in the attic of the house. It seemed to recognize me, and spoke foul curses at me. I will carve protective wards on the trunk to prevent any tampering with its contents, just in case.

HANDOUTS

O Spiritus, vos per Pontentiam Sapientiam Virtum exorcizo, per scientiam divinam inanemque tenebrosum, per nomen Veterum, per radicem, truncum, fontem, originem alium nominum divinorum omnium, unde vitam potentiamque suam traherunt.

Vos per Nomen Nyarlathotep exorcizo, sapientiam optime ferentem, cuius maiestas tam excelsa, clarius quam sidera inanis.

Vos per potentissimum Nomen Azathoth exorcizo, Omnipotentem, scelesti puniendum.

Te exorcizo, O daemon, omninoque impero, quacumque in parte sis Universi, per omnium horum nominum virtutem. Audi et pare me!

Handout: Edge 6

O Spirits, you I exorcise by the Power, Wisdom, and Virtue, by the Divine Knowledge, by the Dark Void, by the name of the Old Ones, the root, trunk, source, and origin of all the other Divine Names, whence they all draw their life and their power.

I exorcise you by the Name Nyarlathotep, signifying the most excellent bringer of wisdom. His majesty so high, and brighter than the stars of the void.

I exorcise you by the most powerful Name of Azathoth, the All Powerful, who shall punish the crimes.

I exorcise you, and I command you absolutely, O demon, in whatsoever part of the Universe you may be, by the virtue of all these Names. Hear you and obey!

Handout: Edge 7

HANDOUTS

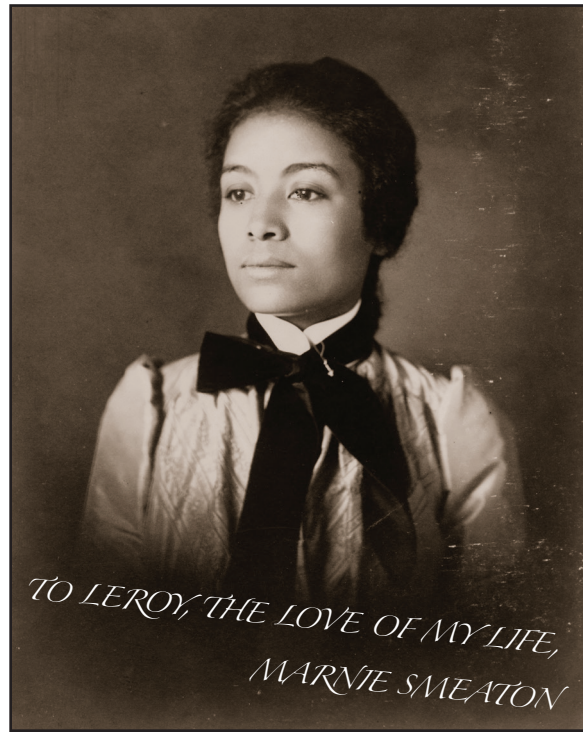
Handout: Edge 8



Handout: Stomp 1

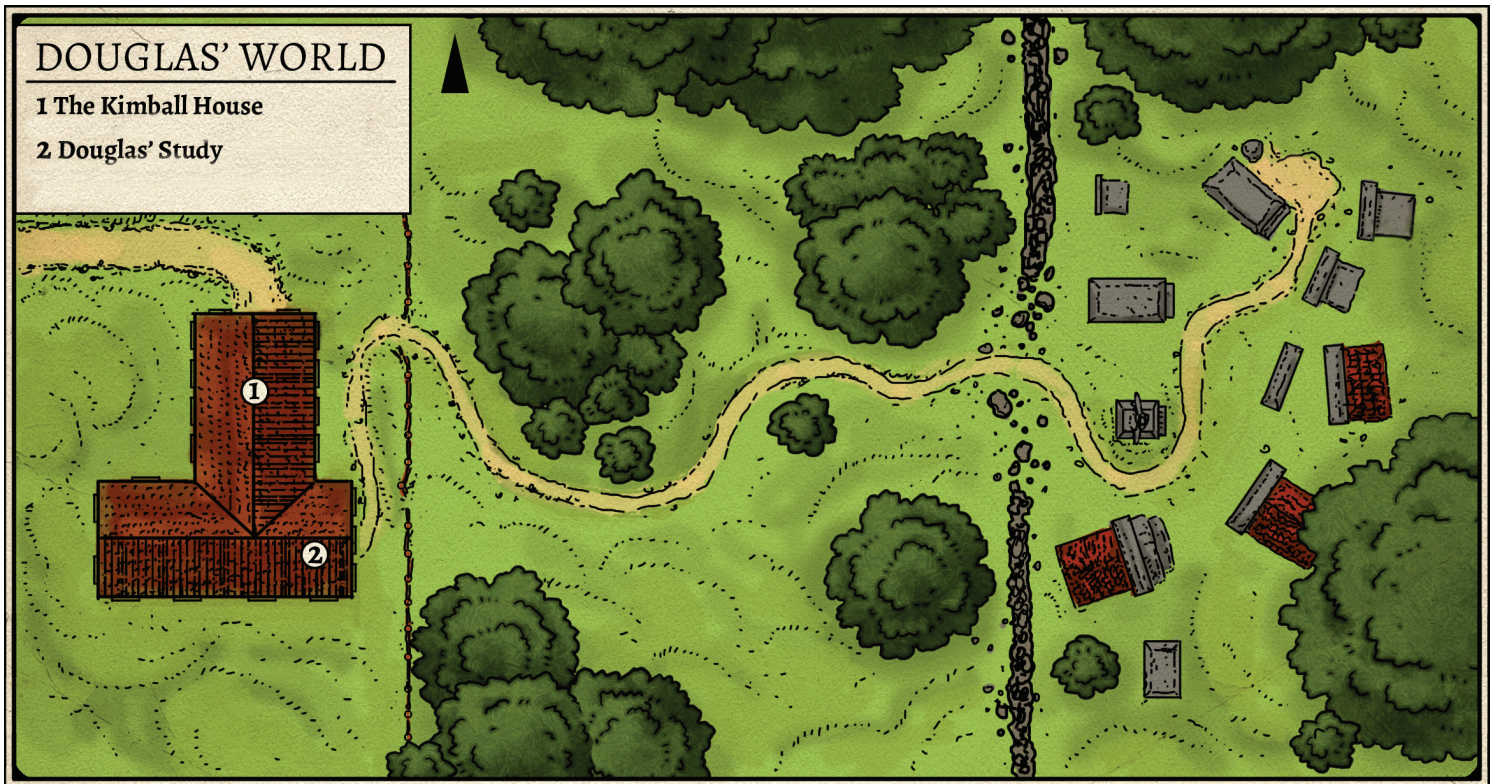
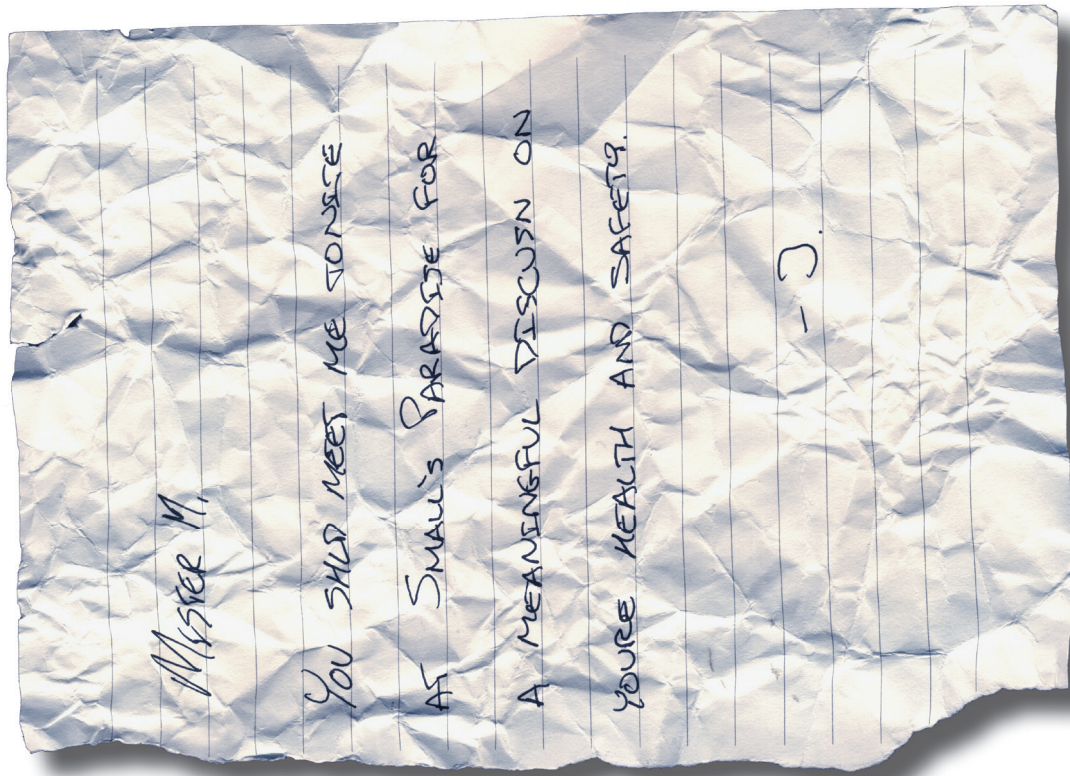
Morgan and Dupuy
CHRISTIAN FUNERAL HOME
 Serving Families of African Descent Since 1851
 West 145th Street
 Harlem, New York City
11 am sharp—bring your horn. New Orleans style

Handout: Stomp 3

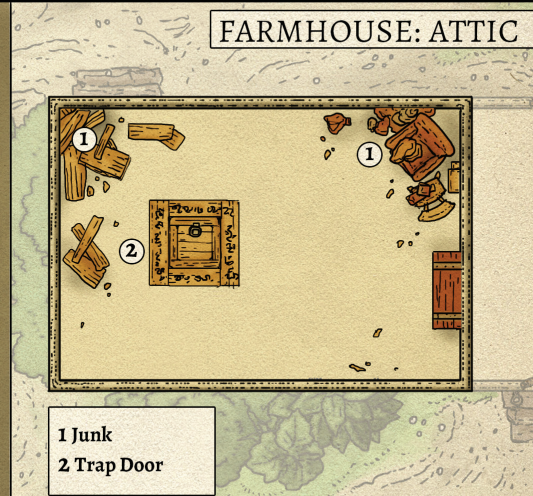
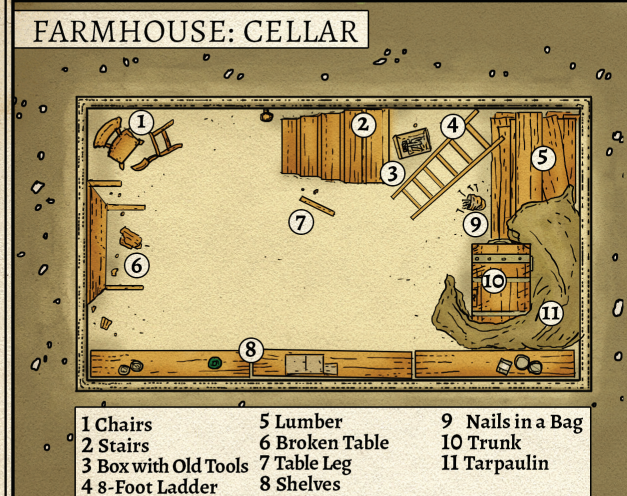
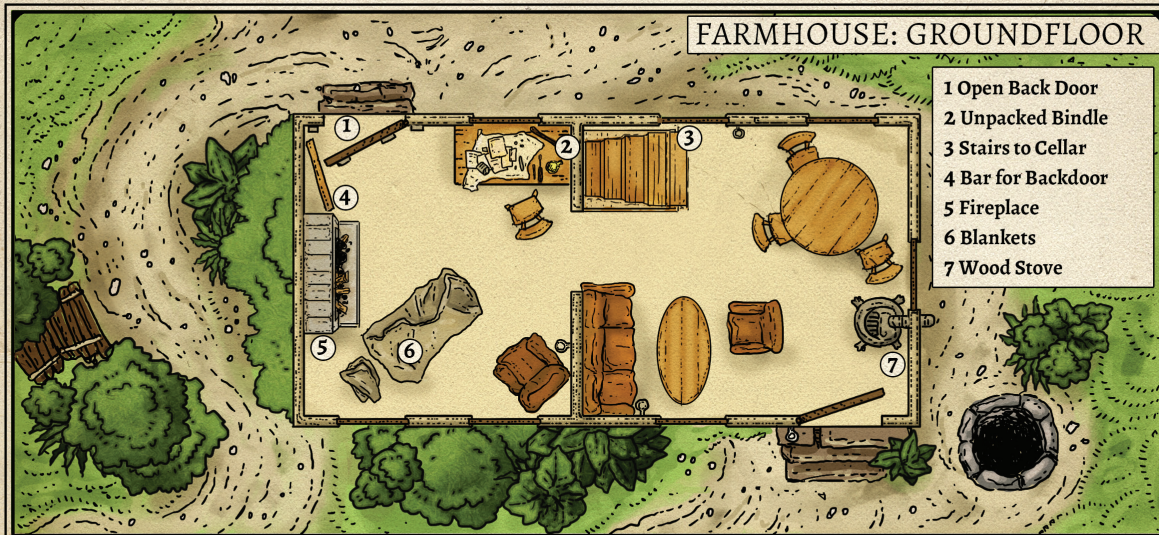


HANDOUTS

Handout: Stomp 2



HANDOUTS



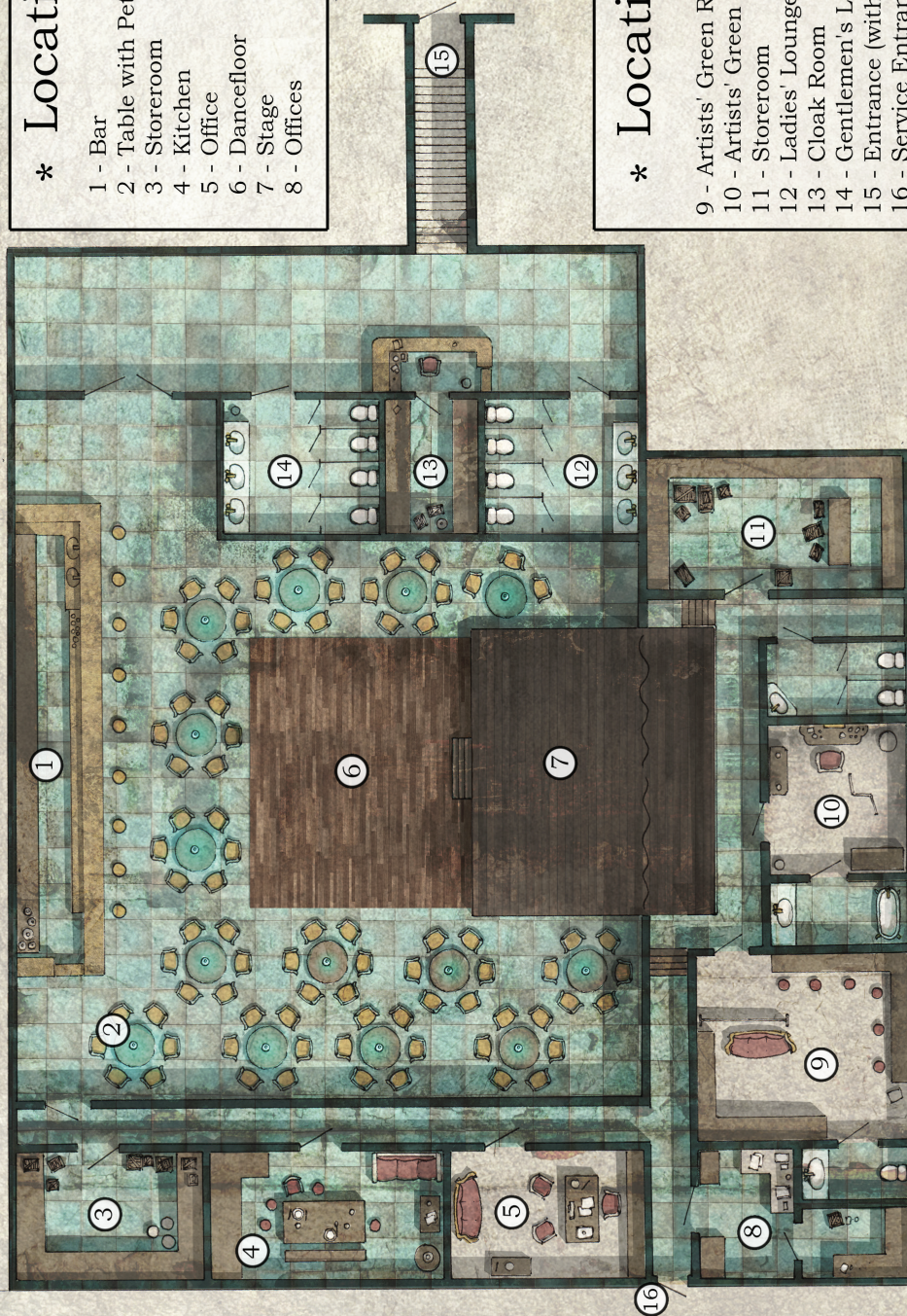
SMALL'S PARADISE

* Locations *

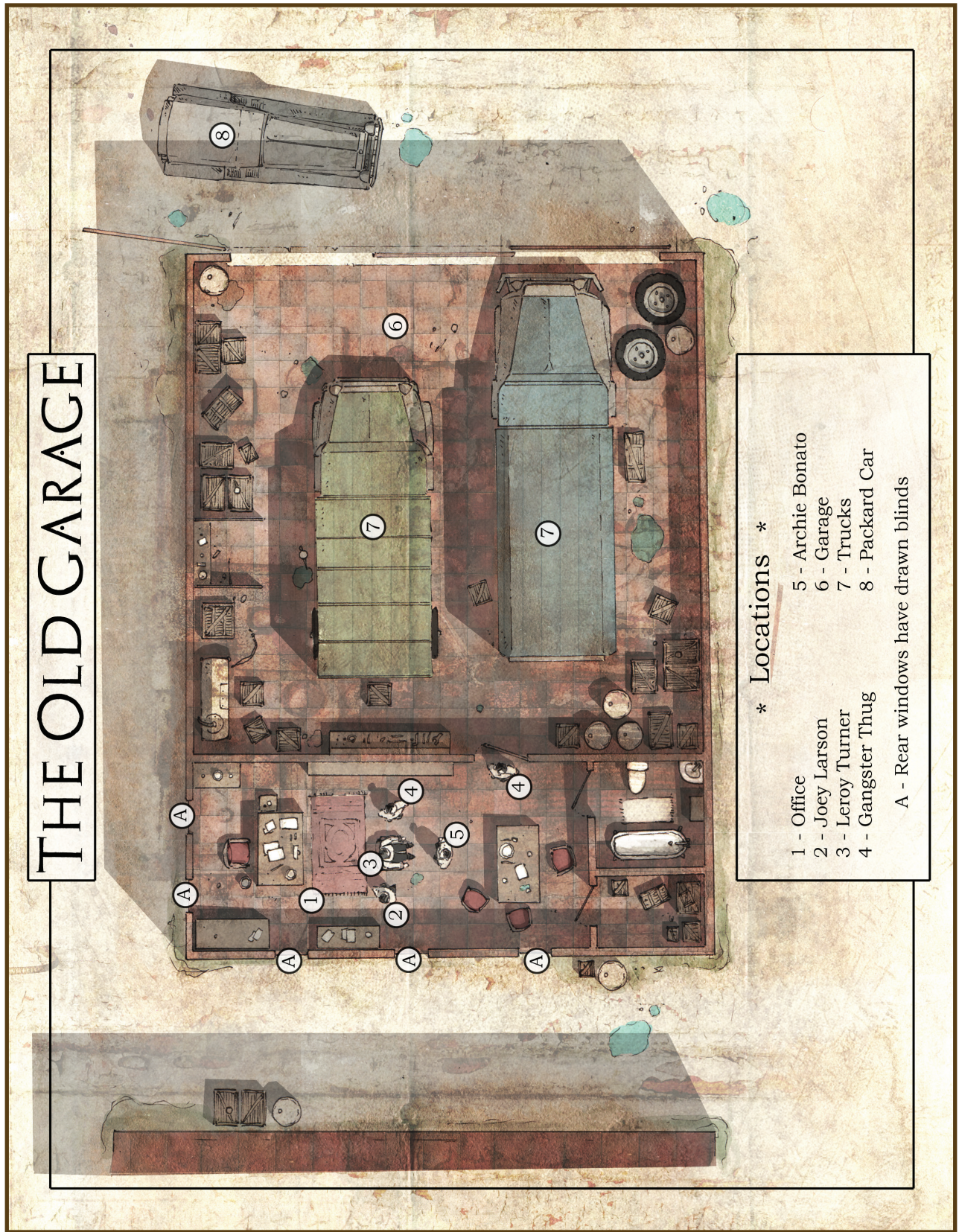
- 1 - Bar
- 2 - Table with Pete Manusco
- 3 - Storeroom
- 4 - Kitchen
- 5 - Office
- 6 - Dancefloor
- 7 - Stage
- 8 - Offices

* Locations *

- 9 - Artists' Green Room
- 10 - Artists' Green Room
- 11 - Storeroom
- 12 - Ladies' Lounge
- 13 - Cloak Room
- 14 - Gentlemen's Lounge
- 15 - Entrance (with two bouncers)
- 16 - Service Entrance



HANDOUTS



HANDOUTS



Map of Harlem - 1925

Locations

- 1 - Trinity Church Cemetery
- 2 - Funeral home of Morgan and Dupuy
- 3 - IRT Lenox Avenue Subway Line
- 4 - Small's Paradise
- 5 - Harlem Hospital
- 6 - New York Public Library Harlem Branch
- 7 - Columbia University
- 8 - St. John's Cathedral

Subway-Line

Subway Station

0 Mile 1/4 1/2 3/4

THE BRONX

MAP OF HARLEM - 1925