

Dreams in the Deep, by Luke Slater (HappyFett) – RPG Geek OneSheet Contest 2015

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The Hook

March 1925: The antiquarian community is excited by report of mysterious occurrences and wanton vandalism at the Pech Merle caves in Southern France. Newspapers, letters from friends and reports filed by Martine Valois, secretary to the curator of the caves, turn up the following, tantalising snippets: 'Strange dreams of drowned cities', 'howling, gibbering beasts', 'passages crudely opened or blocked again', 'Professor Duras has gone mad'.

The Horrible Truth

The caves at Pech Merle are home to one of the Star Spawn, a long-dormant Xothian, drowned not in water but in stone. As R'lyeh rises and Cthulhu awakes, Muhuurl also stirs.

Investigators

Investigators may be antiquarians themselves, scholars of the occult (such as the narrator of 'The Call of Cthulhu'), diletantes, adventurers, or even – despite the lack of official interest - gendarmes investigating in their spare time. They arrive at roughly the same time on the 20th March 1925.

NPCs

Martine Valois

Secretary to the curator, a sensible woman who is tired of being called 'fanciful'.

Prof. Georges Duras

The curator of the caves, currently confined in his own home.

Father Armand Lemure

Curate of Cabrerets, a priest and antiquarian and the 'official' finder of the caves. He now believes them haunted by evil.

Andre Assante and Henri Dubois

Two local boys who found the cave and are now local celebrities. Assante leads the 'Cult of Myrrh', with Dubois – who has the local 'look' – as his bodyguard.

Carlos Esio

Spanish artist drawn to the area to paint.

Mother Keitel

The local 'witch', much plagued by visions.

Lieutenant Marchant

Head of the gendarmes in Cahors, the nearest authority figure.

Assorted villagers, cultists , gendarmes and troglodytes, as needed

What Has Happened

Prehistory – The Xothian Muhuurl is trapped in slumber and buried under limestone deposits.

A troglodyte (Neanderthal) tribe retreats into the hill caves, becoming predators to the Cro-Magnon who replace them.

Throughout the millennia, the Neanderthals terrorise, abduct and breed with the Cro-Magnons. The result is a number of hybrids in the local population.

1922 – Assante and Dubois find the cave and report it to the curate. Lemure begins excavating.

1924 – Assante becomes the demagogue of a cult and begins a long dispute with Lemure over the caves. The cult sets up in a house by Chateau du Diable.

1925

January 6th – Locals began to have terrifying dreams.

January 19th – Carlos Esio arrives from Spain.

January 30th – Mother Keitel curses a young girl with nightmares and is accused of witchcraft.

February 14th – Someone apparently breaks into the caves.

February 18th – Professor Duras, lying in wait in the caves, is found in the morning, quite mad.

February 28th – The entire village is woken by screaming dreamers.

March 3rd – Fr. Lemure leads a group of his congregants to deface the murals; they clash with Assante's 'Brotherhood of Myrrh'. Both groups begin vigils in the caves.

March 15th – Lemure accuses the Brotherhood of intimidating his congregants. The gendarmes decline to get involved.

March 20th – The Investigators arrive.

Clues

The figure of Muhuurl is visible in the caves. Pech means hill, but the meaning of 'Merle' is unknown.

Records of the cave dig (**Anthropology**) may demonstrate Neanderthal activity.

The locals have a distinctive look (**Anthropology**) with heavy brows, low forehead yet large cranium. Local folklore (**Oral History**) is replete with people taken 'under the hill.'

The three are local celebrities and the discovery of the cave is well known.

Cultists are little remarked in town, but wander about in dark clothes. They speak in vague terms of their faith if asked, and may invite interested parties to attend service.

Dubois will respond to serious threats (see page 2).

(See page 2) – Esio and artistic Investigators may be affected.

Esio is much remarked on by the women of the village.

Local gossip. Marchant may note this as a waste of his time (**Cop Talk**).

Martine will explain this.

Duras talks of strange, shambling figures. With careful questioning, he recalls that they came from *inside* the cave.

Common gossip. Detailed questioning shows that the city in the dreams is no longer drowned.

Any villager will gladly talk of this. Assante claims the Brotherhood are possessed by the caves' evil; the Brotherhood that Catholicism is the faith of fear.

Most people believe that the Brotherhood might get heavy, but note that the Catholics are taking chisels and hammers into the caves to deface the murals and are thus more heavily armed.

<p>Dreams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vast, drowned plain; an alien city rises from the oozing mud, all colossal and impossible geometries. • A wild revel, worshiping at the feet of a stone giant. • Agonizing stillness; trapped in a helpless torpor as water flows over you and turns to stone around you. • The exultation of human sacrifice, offering another's blood with spears to honour a heedless god. 	<p>Dreams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city rises from the waves. • Stars wheel and circle in a dance which seems to honour strange gods with its inscrutable mathematics. • The joy of the hunt, pursuing megafauna, pinioning them by will alone before crushing them by strength alone. • Stones shatter as a dead god wakes to new life. 	<p>Troubles</p> <p><i>Henri Dubois</i> – Athletics 4, Scuffling 6 (blackjack), Firearms 4 (shotgun), Health 8</p> <p><i>Cult Heavy</i> – Athletics 3, Scuffling 3, Firearms 3 (shotgun), Health 6</p> <p><i>Angry Catholic</i> – Athletics 3, Scuffling 3, Weapon 3 (hammer or chisel)</p> <p><i>Troglodyte</i> – Athletics 4, Scuffling 7, Stealth 5, Health 8</p> <p><i>Lungfish</i> – Athletics 2 (6 in water), Scuffling 3, Health 4</p> <p><i>The Hound</i> – Athletics 6, Scuffling 6, Health 6</p>
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What happens now (all other things being equal)

March 20th

- Investigators get established and ask around. A chance to explore the caves.
- Overnight, two of Lemure's men at the caves go missing, as does one of the Brotherhood (**Assess Honesty** or other investigation may reveal that the missing Brotherhood member is just holed up at the Chateau).

March 21st

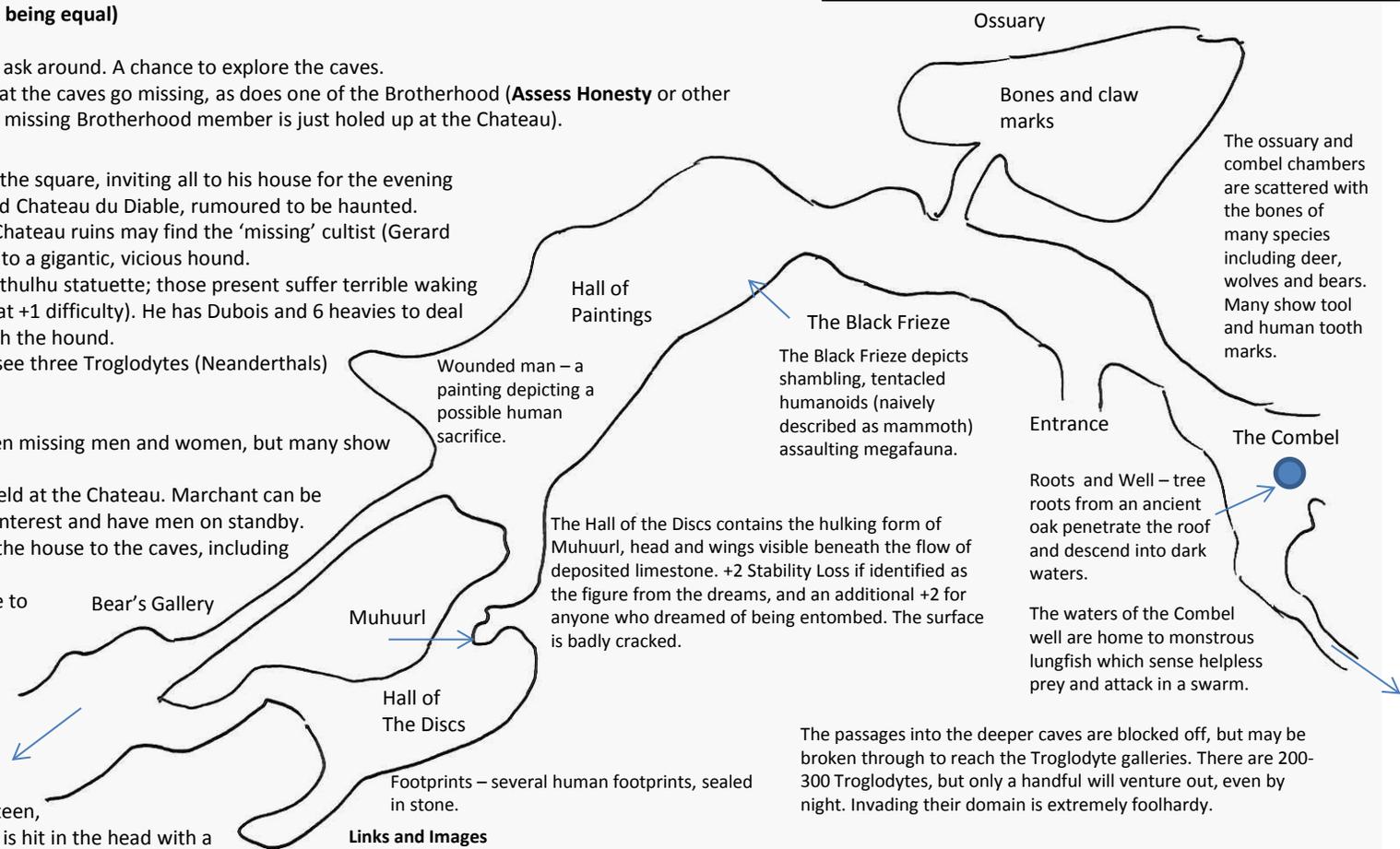
- Assante gives an open sermon in the square, inviting all to his house for the evening service. The house is by the ruined Chateau du Diable, rumoured to be haunted.
- Investigators poking around the Chateau ruins may find the 'missing' cultist (Gerard Gaultier), feeding bits of Catholic to a gigantic, vicious hound.
- At the service Assante unveils a Cthulhu statuette; those present suffer terrible waking dreams as above (2 Stability loss at +1 difficulty). He has Dubois and 6 heavies to deal with any trouble, and may unleash the hound.
- Anyone in the cave at night may see three Troglodytes (Neanderthals) emerge to attack them.

March 22nd

- Lemure reports more than a dozen missing men and women, but many show up in cult robes.
- Half a dozen villagers are being held at the Chateau. Marchant can be persuaded (**Cop Talk**) to take an interest and have men on standby.
- At night, a procession goes from the house to the caves, including any prisoners.
- Assante attempts a ritual sacrifice to wake Muhuurl, assisted by half a dozen Troglodytes.

If Assante is stopped, the dreams fade after a few days and all returns mostly to normal.

If he is not stopped, Muhuurl breaks loose, slaughters the Brotherhood and attacks the town. At eleven eighteen, he slumps back into sleep as Cthulhu is hit in the head with a motorboat. On April 2nd, the body is swallowed by the earth, wherever it is.



Links and Images

- Pech Merle – <http://www.pechmerle.com/english/introduction.html>
- Black Frieze – http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-GiXwcD8YKl/UeEKGDz-eOI/AAAAAAAAABj4/_Tc8lp3uEts/s1600/pech-merle-304323.jpg
- Wounded Man - http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-L6iv8JKXREM/UeEKPh500I/AAAAAAAAABkI/8yea_eGb624/s1600/PMerle.jpg
- Muhuurl – http://www.pechmerle.com/images/IMG0007_600.jpg

The passages into the deeper caves are blocked off, but may be broken through to reach the Troglodyte galleries. There are 200-300 Troglodytes, but only a handful will venture out, even by night. Invading their domain is extremely foolhardy.