

Mawon

During the time leading up to the Haitian slave revolt in 1790, many slaves escaped their masters and lived in mountains in what was then called Saint-Domingue. These escaped slaves were called “Maroons” (or, in the modern Haitian Kreyol, Mawon). Sometimes, in order to maintain their freedom, these Maroons were forced to enter into agreements with other slave-owners.

One such Mawon was Marchand. After escaping from his slave owner on a plantation, Marchand became a Mawon, and lived for months in the mountains. Unfortunately, French mercenaries in the employ of Monsiour Lapointe, another plantation owner, discovered him, and in order to maintain his freedom, he entered into a crooked agreement: if Marchand crossed paths with any escaped slaves from M. Lapointe's plantation, Marchand would capture them and return them to Lapointe's men. In return, Lapointe's men would allow Marchand to live free in the mountains.

For Marchand, this was a soul-destroying bargain. As a former slave, himself, he fully understood what it meant to return slaves to Lapointe's control. But he was terrified of the alternatives.

One day, Marchand captured an old woman who had escaped from Lapointe's plantation. When it became clear to her that Marchand intended to take her back to Lapointe's estate, she cursed him. She knew that revolution was in the air, and so she cursed him such that as long as any slave from Lapointe's plantation knew freedom, Marchand would know only nightmares, but for every slave he captured, he would lose a bit of his soul.

Revolution broke out in Haiti in 1790, and by 1804, the country declared itself the first free black republic. Lapointe, himself, was dead and his slaves free. And Marchand was being driven mad by the curse. Years passed, and Marchand did not die. Although, like his fellow former-slaves, freedom was the one thing he wanted more than anything in the world. But he could find no rest while Lapointe's slaves remained free.

Eventually, his mind snapped. Seeing it as the only way to know rest, he began to hunt down all of Lapointe's slaves. Living in the mountains, he learned many secrets from Vodou priests and priestesses, as well as the Taino Shamans. Tracking the former slaves required Marchand to learn many new skills; fortunately, he had a lot of time to do so. Over 200 years later, Marchand is still looking for the descendants of Lapointe's slaves, even those who eventually left Haiti to live in Canada and the United States. When he finds them, he captures their souls, and holds them in small clay jars called govis.

Involving the Characters

The PCs get involved to investigate a series of deaths. Each of the victims is black or mixed-race, but other than that, no real pattern has emerged. Some are young, others old. Some were attacked outdoors, others in their homes. With enough digging, the PCs might be able to recognize that they all have Haitian ancestors, although in some cases, the connection goes back over 100 years. Some of the families have moved around throughout the Caribbean, the US and Canada, and the connections to Haiti are slim.

The cause of death, in each case, is unclear. In many respects, it appears that the victims died of fright.

Leads

Simone LaClaire, the sister of one of the victims takes a special interest in the PCs' investigation. She's heard family rumours of a curse. An uncle in Montreal died in a similar way in the 70s. And they say that her grandmother also died the same way, while she was visiting relatives in Port-au-Prince back in the 50s.

Of course, Simone is also being targeted by Marchand. If the PCs don't unravel the mystery soon, she'll be the next one to die.

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