



Written by Stephen Graves

Produced by Rami Pantoja

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THE LURE

Logline

An elderly angler hooks a mysterious artifact from the river, and is stalked by a vengeful water spirit as he attempts to throw off its curse.



Short synopsis

JIM (mid-60s) sneaks past a "no trespassers" sign to go fishing on a secluded riverbank. His line is snagged, and he reels in an ancient artifact, a torc. Upon returning home, he's haunted by mysterious sounds - wet footsteps, gurgling, hissing noises that could be the pipes, or whispered voices. He's startled by an apparition in the dead of night.

Visiting the local museum, he consults the curator, GEMMA, who explains how the river was used for sacrifices in the Iron Age. Jim wants to return the torc to the water; Gemma argues that it needs to be handed over as treasure. Jim flees.

Jim ventures back to the river under cover of darkness. He flings the torc into the water, and begs that the apparition leave him alone. For a second it seems his wish has been granted - and then something reaches out and drags him into the river.

Director's notes

Steeped in the mythology of the British landscape, *The Lure* pays tribute to folk horror and the ghost stories of MR James, in which vengeful spirits stalk lonely places and unwary men are drawn to their doom by their own greed...

The film's mix of folkloric imagery and historical elements are based around the theme of present-day Britain's uneasy relationship with its past as it undergoes the convulsion of Brexit.

The film will have a gritty look; specifically it will resemble the aged, unrestored 16mm film seen in productions such as the BBC *Ghost Stories for Christmas*, and the iconic *Spirit of Dark and Lonely Water* public information film. The film will aim for an almost documentary feel - horror lands better when it's based in a realistic setting.



More recent references include the 2017 film *Ghost Stories* and the horror work of Peter Jackson. The denouement draws inspiration from the infamous closing scene of *Friday the 13th*.

The apparition itself is based on the vengeful spirits of MR James. It's shrouded in the manner of classical sculpture, with only glimpses of something terribly thin and wet beneath. Cracked nails, wet, pallid flesh and yellowing teeth recall the creatures of *Lord of the Rings* and the monsters of Guillermo del Toro. Its movement - a low crawl - is inspired by the MR James story *The Mezzotint*, as well as the creature work of actor Doug Jones and the recent short film *Wight Night*.

The film's sound design is vital; the sound palette is ambiguous, with wet, dripping sounds that could be footsteps, gurgling that could be sibilant voices or grumbling pipes.

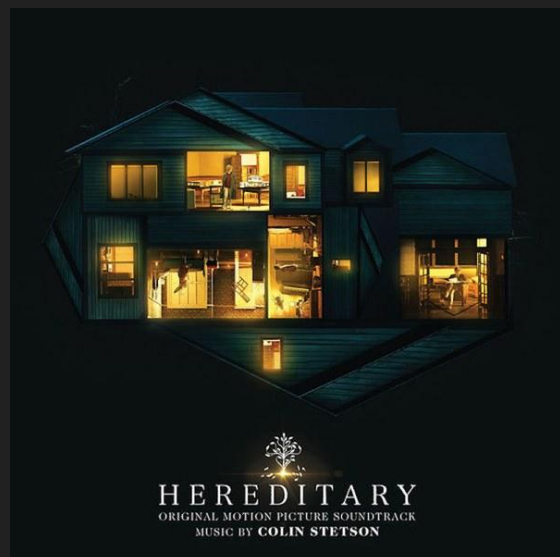
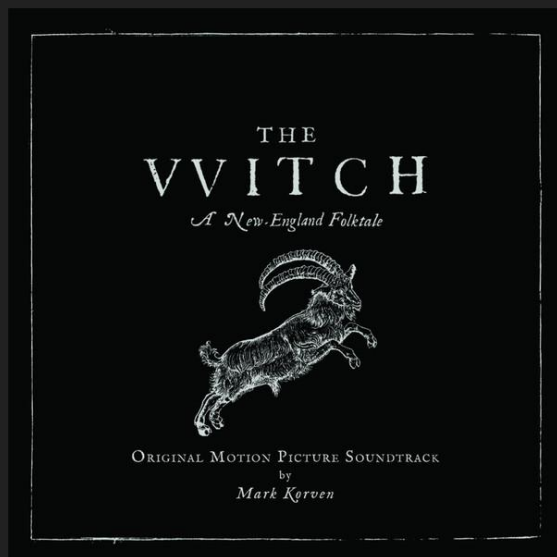
Sound design and music

"There's no music. The score is entirely created from sound effects. I didn't want to hammer anything out. I love that about Lawrence Gordon Clark's Ghost Stories. They're very spare. You don't see the ghost for a long time, and there's a slow accumulation of dread. It really does exert something very special if you get it right. If you don't overdo it, it brings you to a very particular place of fear."

Mark Gatiss

To maintain *The Lure's* documentary feel, I intend to stick with diegetic music and a pared-back, minimalist score that uses drones and eerie sound effects. For inspiration, I'm looking at scores such as Mark Korven's *The Witch* (dir. Robert Eggers, 2015) or Colin Stetson's *Hereditary* (dir. Ari Aster, 2018). The soundtrack will be created by manipulating organic and acoustic sounds, rather than electronic elements, similar to the effects created by Mark Korven's "apprehension engine".

Sound effects will be particularly important in conjuring the story's mood, including the wet, dripping footsteps that herald the apparition's appearance, and the sibilant noises that could be whispered voices.



Mood board



Crew biographies

Director – Stephen Graves

Stephen Graves has written, directed and produced award-winning narrative short films across a range of genres including comedy, horror and drama.

His work has screened in film festivals including Raindance, the East End Film Festival and the London Independent Film Festival.

He has produced commercial videos for titles such as N by Norwegian magazine, Campaign and Stuff, and for clients including Sony, LG and The Trade Desk.



Producer – Rami Pantoja

Rami Pantoja's producing credits include award-winning short film *Maneater* (2016, dir. Zara Burdett) and feature film *Summer in the Shade* (2017, dir. Alice Millar). He has worked in the TV industry since 2011, for broadcasters and production companies including the BBC, Crook Productions, Endemol and Objective Productions.

Most recently he has moved into the film industry, working on Wes Anderson's stop-motion feature *Isle of Dogs* and joining the team of the London-based production company Passion Pictures on an upcoming Disney animated series.



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