Trauma Dice

When something bad happens to the party, the players should never feel they're being punished. Instead, they should feel like they're being rewarded with drama.

Rather than saying, "Oh no! My character has lost a hand!" Misfortune should feel like, "Oh wow! My character has lost a hand and now I have a cool hook!"

So when the party's ship sinks on the way to their destination, that's the goal. We're calling this mechanic... Trauma Dice!

Unknown rolls

The Trauma Table has six options, so you should ask your players to roll a D6.

For dramatic purposes, you could ask for this roll right at the beginning of the session before the ship sinks. This roll should be kept secret (perhaps hidden under a teacup) and only revealed after the ship sinks.

Skewing rolls higher

The Trauma Table is arranged so each option points the characters to a different dramatic location compatible with the *Dragons of Stormwreck Isle* adventure. Because the goal is to get a wide spread of dramatic hooks into the players, each option can only be rolled once.

However, the higher numbers are more impactful seeds for the story's main parts. So to skew the results higher, if any players roll a duplicate number, round up until they get an unclaimed Trauma.

In particular, *The Curse of a Widow's Prayer* is a crucial story beat. So if a six has not come up in the player's rolls, fudge the dice for the final player and assign the sixth result to whatever number the player rolls. This means you should not share options on the Trauma Table with the players and only reveal each result as it is rolled.

Trauma of a Sinking Ship

1. A Tithe for a Distant Shore

Somehow, you've lost an item of great significance to you below deck of the sinking ship in last night's chaos. What item did you lose, and how did you lose it?

Effect. The player nominates an item of personal significance to lose on the ship.

Resolution. This item can be recovered later when exploring the wreck of the ship, found in the harpy's nest.

2. A Tithe for a Sunken Lair

At some point in your tumble through the water, an item of great significance slipped away from you, and a massive, tentacled shadow swallowed it whole. What item did you lose, and how did you lose it?

Effect. The player nominates an item of personal significance to be swallowed by the Spore Servant Octopus.

Resolution. This item can be recovered later when exploring the mushroom caverns, found in the octopus' lair or belly.

D6	Trauma
1	A Tithe for a Distant Shore
2	A Tithe for a Sunken Lair
3	Sickness of an Unclean Spore
4	A Wound from a Maid Unfair
5	The Weight of Draconic Awe
6	The Curse of a Widow's Prayer

3. Sickness of an Unclean Spore

At some point in your tumble through the water, you attracted the attention of a massive, tentacled creature. It wrapped you up with its tentacles, tiny spores puffing out from its suckers, and it squeezed the air out of you. You gasped and sputtered a mouthful of seawater and spores, and when you arrived on the beach, you felt very strange.

Effect. The character suffers the same affliction affecting the Myconids, gaining the following trait immediately.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, you have disadvantage on Attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

If the sickness is not cured, 24 hours later, the character also gains the following trait.

Aggression. You have advantage on Intimidation checks.

Resolution. This sickness can be cured by the Lesser Restoration spell or by an Elixir of Health. This sickness can be suppressed for 8 hours by a Paladin's Lay on Hands ability.

4. A Wound from a Maid Unfair

While still aboard the ship, you had a direct confrontation with the harpy, and she gravely injured you. How did the harpy injure you, and what does your injury look like?

Effect. The player describes a physical injury they sustained from the harpy. The Dungeon Master should apply an appropriate disadvantage, using the following as examples:

Eye injury. You have disadvantage on perception checks.

Leg injury. Your movement speed is reduced by 5ft.

Arm injury. You cannot use two-handed weapons or shields.

Resolution. The injury could be fixed by the Greater Restoration spell.

5. The Weight of Draconic Awe

Before the ship sank, on the deck, you found yourself transfixed by the awesome power of the two spiraling dragons in the distance. The sight triggered something primal in you, some basic need to respect greatness. Unless a dragon were to absolve you of this burden by giving you permission, you can't shake the feeling that personally striking a dragon would be profoundly incorrect.

Effect. The character gains the following trait.

Awed. You have disadvantage on attack rolls against dragons.

Resolution. The condition can be removed if a dragon verbally absolves the character of this glamour.

6. The Curse of Widow's Prayer

On the deck of the ship, you saw a fellow traveler, a widow, stooped in prayer amidst the chaos. She was clasping a charm in her hands, and you overheard part of her prayer. "Please, I must get this charm to his grave on the island… in this life or the next!" In that moment, you saw a flicker above her, like a spectral mantle of a ram's skull. She looked surprised as a wave of necrotic energy erupted from her, engulfing you and a sailor's corpse, and she collapsed to the deck. The dead sailor near you, mangled and pinned to the deck by debris, lifted its head and looked directly at you with cruel, white eyes. You felt a dark weight had settled on you.

Effect. The character gains the following trait.

Necrotized. When presented with multiple viable targets in combat, undead creatures prefer to attack you.

Resolution. This curse can be cured by resolving the widow's storyline with the charm at the wreck of the ship.

Credits

Writer: Matthew Perkins

Steel Patrons: Aclian Lore, BlackbirdofTx, Brian Smith, Craig Savage, David Dyer, Erin McKee, Humberto Hoffmann, Jill Potter, Justin Rossman, krishna chivukula, Kyle Pietrovito, Kyle Somers, Luke Hermann, Paul S, Phillip Brown, Platypulogist, SonOfSofaman, Steve Yahner, The 2nd most Epic Wizard from Mt. Skullzfyre, William Bond, xFreshyJx

Everything Else: Matthew Perkins