

Island Rituals

OBEAH AND VODOUN FOR PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

-Savaged by HawaiianBrian

This article is designed to be used in conjunction with Clint Black's "Rituals in Savage Worlds," from Shark Bytes #2. While it describes a real-world magical practice, used throughout the Caribbean, it does not attempt to realistically portray obeah, nor does it intend to endorse or condemn such practices.

OBEAH

The Caribbean during the days of piracy is a strange and dark place. Voodoo has begun to take shape in the New World, reports of strange creatures abound in the waters and jungles of these unfamiliar isles, and it is said those who have the desire can study and master small incantations, at great risk to themselves. Hexes

are a type of curse designed to hinder one's enemy, while charms provide boons to the caster. Collectively, both are often called obeah ("OH-bee-ah"), a type of sorcery distantly related to voodoo. Obeah is practiced throughout the Caribbean except Hispaniola, and uses rituals, requiring Knowledge (Rituals) to cast. The difference is, the hexes and charms of obeah target one individual and require a sacrifice from the caster.

Learning to cast an obeah hex or charm requires a teacher (although a written text will do in a pinch). After a few days of study, the adept gains the ability to cast a new hex. As usual, characters may know a total number of rituals equal to half their Knowledge (Rituals) die.

Casting the hex or charm requires the caster to select one individual who is to be the recipient of the



OBEAH HEXES

spell. Targeting multiple victims requires different castings. The target may be the caster herself. All obeah spells require the recitation of a magical phrase, which takes one round to complete.

Once a target has been selected, the caster needs to make a blood sacrifice. The blood need not come from the caster's own body, but it does need to come directly from a living being. Usually this means the caster himself will inflict some damage on his own body, though any willing (or unwilling) human will do. In order to work, the supplier of the blood must lose 1 Fatigue level (anything less is insufficient to power the ritual). This is done automatically unless the blood supplier resists, in which case the caster will need to make an attack roll and get the blood in the form of a wound. This replaces any other need for a Focus.

By selecting one specific, individual target, the caster gains a +4 Utility Modifier to the spell; however, remember that only the individual targeted will be affected by the spell. This means all spells have their effects reduced to a single target, even powers that normally affect an area. A spell designed to keep one individual from passing through a door, for example, will not keep anyone else out. The victim need not believe in obeah in order for the hex or charm to work. However, they do receive a Spirit or Agility check if one is normally part of the power being cast. Nor must the caster be able to see the victim, though the caster must have met them.

Like other rituals, hexes and charms can be cast "quick & dirty," and often are. The normal rules apply, though it may be harder to get a blood source in the heat of combat. This is why many casters will choose to draw the blood directly from themselves, by slicing open their forearm with a dagger, driving a nail into their palm, or any similar minor injury. Doing so requires an action.

Example: The cruel pirate Black Billy is casting the Confusion hex on Jack Hollander, as a battle rages around them. Since Confusion, based on the power Stun, has a power point cost of 2 (-2 penalty), and is being done "quick & dirty" (-4 penalty) but uses the individual Utility Modifier (UM +4), Black Billy will cast the spell at -2, with no penalties or modifiers. He spends an action to slice open his palm with his dagger, then next round he casts the ritual. Jack Hollander can make a Vigor check to resist the hex.

Confusion

Power: Stun

Trapping: Stabbing forward with middle and forefinger.

The Evil Eye

Power: Fear

Trapping: Glaring at the victim with a baleful expression in the eyes.

Cloud the Eyes

Power: Obscure

Trapping: Blowing through pursed lips.

Poppyshow

Power: Puppet

Trapping: Twiddling the fingers as if controlling a marionette.

Vexation of the Spirit

Power: Lower Trait

Trapping: Blowing across the hand as though blowing powder onto the victim.

Mind Trap

Power: Barrier

Trapping: Sliding some sort of object in a line along the surface to be blocked (usually the ground).



OBEAH CHARMS

Shield of the Faithful

Power: Deflection

Trapping: Holding out the hand, palm open.

Brace the Spirit

Power: Boost Trait

Trapping: Inhaling deeply, hands clasped.

Sufferance

Power: Armor

Trapping: Encircling body with hands.

Viewing

Power: Detect Arcana

Trapping: Sliding fingers across closed eyelids.

Quicksilver

Power: Quickness

Trapping: Punching open palm with fist three times.

Pierce Juju

Power: Dispel

Trapping: Flicking the fingers thrice toward the target.

Walk Through Fire

Power: Environmental Protection

Trapping: Wave hand in front of body, as though pushing aside environmental threat.



VODOUN

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