THE CURSE OF DREAD PIRATE ZARR

A TTRPG ADVENTURE by ZESHIO



THE CURSE OF DREAD PIRATE ZARR

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A NOTE ON USING THIS ADVENTURE

System Agnostic

Thank you for purchasing The Curse of Dread Pirate Zarr! First off, I created this adventure to be flexible for a variety of tabletop RPG systems. As such, you may need to add or alter combat stats and skill mechanics as needed to fit your favorite system. However, each battle provides instructions that should make fights similar regardless of what system you use.

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Last, thanks to the patrons who support me, even though I occasionally push the boundaries on providing rewards on time.

Zeshio



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ADVENTURE INTRODUCTION

This adventure concerns the strange events happening in Brinewater, a cool water port on one of the more popular merchant routes through the region. For the past couple of months, merchant ships sailing into the area have been harassed and tricked by a mysterious force. The city itself has experienced strange bouts of heavy fog seeping into sections of the city, and frightened denizens speak of seeing ominous forms and shadows playing across the mist. The party has just arrived in the city of Brinewater, but are they willing to uncover the truth behind the *Curse of Dread Pirate Zarr?*

BRINEWATER

The city of Brinewater sits directly on the coast. It acts as the naval capital of the regional government, protecting the lucrative shipping routes along the coast. The large strip of dock on the eastern side of the city is commonly referred to as the Wood Walk, which hosts a multitude of merchant ships, naval vessels, and fishing boats. Sailors, dockworkers, and all types of citizens freely associate on the walk, with businesses supporting diverse interests of all parties. Notable areas include:

1. Deadwood Pub. This small pub on the Wood Walk was obviously put together from wood adrift on the sea. It's not the prettiest sight, but the ale inside is said to make up for the pub's appearance.

2. Grick's General Store. Owned by Grubula Grick, an enterprising and sharp witted goblin. They carry just about anything, from extra sails to sharp blades.

3. Hangman's Point. This rocky peninsula serves as the location for those sentenced to death by the navy.



4. Naval Headquarters. The regional government's naval headquarters sits just off the Wood Walk, overseen by Admiral Sougga.

5. Naval Academy of the Arcane. Naval officers and researchers work here to explore ways the arcane arts can benefit those traveling on the seas.

6. Salty and Sassy. A burlesque theatre and inn, a common place for sailors and commoners to visit while in town. Shows for all interests are seen here.

7. Shacktown. Originally created as a temporary shelter area for transitory sailors, it now serves as an area for the poor and downtrodden.

8. The Church of Haforn. This church is dedicated to worshipping Haforn, the god of the sea. It's said they represent the ocean, battle, conflict, and travel. It's the wealthiest place of worship in Brinewater, collecting tithes from sailors in return for blessings of protection.

9. The Tempered Hammer. A high end blacksmith shop. The owner, Shay'a Rayo'na. is gruff and steely-eyed, and she doesn't appreciate sweet talkers.

10. The Temple of the Trickster. This temple is dedicated to the god commonly referred to as The Trickster, who is said to influence games of chance, chaos, trickery, and similar aspects.

11. Warehouse Triangle. A small series of warehouses rented out by merchants to store and transport goods.

12. Wood Walk. The wood walk is the entire section of docks stretching across the city. It hosts a wide variety of shops, warehouses, inns, and other attractions.



MAP OF BRINEWATER





PLOT SUMMARY

The party arrives at the port city of Brinewater and observes the antics of Dread Pirate Zarr, a powerful undead marauder getting revenge on the navy for hanging him. Will the adventurers seek to destroy Dread Pirate Zarr and save the town from his chaos, or delve into the circumstances surrounding Zarr's death?

SCENE SUMMARIES

Summary of Scene 1: The Docks of Brinewater

The party witnesses weird events in Brinewater.

The party eventually makes their way down to the docks.

The party watches the undead Dread Pirate Zarr make fun of a merchant crew and a naval admiral. Zarr sends his undead crew onto the docks to 'dance' with bystanders.

The party takes care of the undead by battling on the docks. Zarr either escapes or his physical form is destroyed.

Admiral Sougga offers a reward to the party to destroy Zarr.

Click here to go to Scene 1

Click here for fight details



Summary of Scene 2: Investigation in Brinewater

The party figures out how to deal with Zarr. (Optional: The party investigates Admiral Sougga).

Asking around, the adventurers can learn:

Priest or Magic User

Zarr's transition to undeath is magical in nature.

Zarr's thirst for revenge ties him to the area around Brinewater.

Naval Academy of the Arcane

Zarr must be weakened before the soul crystal may be used upon him.

Once Zarr's soul is in the crystal, shatter it to destroy Zarr.

Priestess of the Trickster

Kill the admiral and free Zarr from Brinewater. Alternatively, bring Zarr in the crystal to Shevva the blacksmith.

Dock Workers/Commoners

Some watched the public hanging of Zarr on Hangman's Point and saw mysterious weather.

They never heard of Zarr killing anyone.

Naval Officers (under duress)

Admiral Sougga is lying about Zarr's treachery. The admiral has documents showing he increased Zarr's crimes locked away in his office.





Admiral Sougga's Documents

The party can attempt to find Admiral Sougga's documents in his office.

The party can turn in the documents to a government envoy or confront the Admiral directly.

Depending on the party's choices, they will get the Admiral arrested or have to fight him themselves.

Click here to go to Scene 2

Summary of Scene 3: Dread Pirate Zarr at Hangman's Point

The party finds Zarr at the site of his hanging.

The party engages in conversation with Zarr. Zarr wants Admiral Sougga killed.

Depending on the party's choices, they fight Zarr.

The party captures Zarr and determines how they should handle him.

Story epilogue/rewards

Click here to go to Scene 3

Click here for fight details



THE DOCKS OF BRINEWATER (CH. 1)

The adventuring party has recently arrived to the city of Brinewater, and the rumors, whispers, and weird sights were hard to ignore. Use the following table to determine the weird sights in the city.

(d6) Weird sights in Brinewater

- 1 As you walk by large patches of mist you hear faint laughter.
- 2 People's faces flicker as you walk by and you swear you see their faces decaying.
- ³ In a dice game nearby, someone keeps rolling ones. It happens for others in the area too.
- As the naval guard chases someone on the run, you
- 4 watch as some magical force binds the guards' feet and they all trip into horse manure.
- A storm is rolling in, but the clouds are purple in hue. You hear strange whispers on the wind.
 - A small group of black squirrels with yellow eyes is
- 6 running around, grabbing food and biting customers eating outside.

Rumors

If the party is curious enough to ask around, they'll hear the following rumors.

- Ever since the admiral hung that pirate these weird events haven't stopped!
- They say the Trickster has cursed Brinewater and seeks his revenge on us!
- The dock workers have the craziest stories about the ships coming in to dock lately!
- It's been easier to get around the naval guard lately due to their 'bad luck.'

Approaching the Docks

The party makes their way through the city, the streets still crowded with business despite the weird sighttings. As the party makes their way through the last row of buildings, the shore opens up in front of them, revealing the Wood Walk.

Shops and warehouses line the long wooden walkway along the coast. A row of different sized ships sit at dock, in various states of loading or unloading cargo. Although the Wood Walk is busy, the party notices a small group of people pointing and staring at the nearest ship coming to port. A lone carrack, with its merchant flag hung upside down, creeps into an empty mooring.

Party Check: What is the party doing as the ship comes in? Where are people standing in relation to the docking carrack?

Difficulty Investigation Check

	0	
Easy	The ship appears undamaged	
Medium	Officers are tied to the deck railing	
Hard	There are only a few crew on the top deck	
	Intelligence Check	
Medium	An upside down flag means the ship is in distress	
	Detect Magic/Detect Undead	
Hard	A magical power is on the boat/there are undead present on the boat	

Dock crew help to moor the carrack. At this point, the party may notice a few pairs of pants strung up along the main mast, flapping in the wind. They match the tied up officers' clothing style.



Zarr's Antics

At this point the crowd realizes the tied officers are pants-less, and the party hears some laughing and gasping in the crowd. A high ranking naval officer pushes through everyone to make his way to the carrack.

You hear the crowd whisper, identifying the man as Admiral Sougga. Admiral Sougga investigates the situation, yelling out orders to dock workers and naval guards.

He makes his way to the deck of the ship and begins to interrogate the tied officers. One of the officers squeels loud enough for everyone to hear.

"It was Dread Pirate Zarr sir!"

The crowd goes silent. At that moment, a quick breeze whips by and Admiral Sougga's hat flies onto the deck. As he bends to pick it up, you witness a skeletal pirate appear from thin air and kick the Admiral right in the butt and over the rail of the ship. You hear an otherworldly large laugh.

"I can always count on you to be the butt of my joke, huh Admiral! Come, my lovelies, the entertainment has just begun!"

And with a flourish of Dread Pirate Zarr's hat, a group of pirate zombies dressed in men's and women's undergarments come above decks and proceed to jump on the docks.

"There's a dancing partner for everyone, don't be shy!"

BEGIN COMBAT

BATTLE AT THE DOCKS

Zombie crew will attempt to grab and dance with bystanders while Zarr laughs and gives directions. Combat ends if zombies are cleared out or Zarr is convinced to stop, via force or other means.

Admiral Sougga will be indebted to the party after battle if they pull him out of the water during the incident.



BATTLE AT THE DOCKS (SAMPLE SET-UP)

Dread Pirate Zarr Admiral Sougga Zombie Crew

Each turn, remove a number of civilians as they run away. Adjust the amount of zombie crew as needed, but remember they crumble after any two hits. Battle notes for Zarr and the zombie crew are on the following pages.



DREADPIRATE ZARR

ON TURN MOVE:

Stay on the boat.

ON TURN ACTIONS: (Two per turn)

"Dance, my pretties!"

All of Zarr's crew flails around in place, dealing (1 x player level) damage to adjacent enemies.

"You're not dancing!"

Zarr points to someone and they lose their movement for the next turn. They begin to dance uncontrollably and have a harder time attacking.

"Don't you get the joke?!?"

A explosive gust shoots from Zarr and anyone adjacent is thrown away 20 feet.

LEGENDARY REACTIONS (1x each combat round)

Blink

Zarr teleports up to 30 feet away to

DEMEANOR IN COMBAT

Dread Pirate Zarr will stay out of direct combat and remains on the boat < to command his crew. He will attack and use magic only as retaliation against the party.

VISUALS

Zarr wears traditional pirate captain garb. Wispy tendrils of fog escape around the openings of his clothes and his mouth. He has no weapons on him for this battle but is known to hold a cutlass and flintlock.

HEALTH

20x Player Level

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avoid danger.

PIRATE ZOMBIE

ON TURN MOVE:

Move towards a bystander or adventurer.

ON TURN ACTIONS:

Mmrrghh... dance... partner?!

Attempt to grab an adjacent bystander.

The two step

Make two swinging attacks (1x player level damage)

VISUALS

You don't know why, but Zarr dressed his crew up in undergarments. The rotten flesh and damp clothing is pretty offputting.

HEALTH

Out of the fight when hit twice.



BATTLE RESOLUTION

Dread Pirate Zarr

If the party decides to kill Zarr in combat, his physical form crumbles and you watch as a glowing wisp escapes the body and disappears.

If the party convinces Zarr to stop, he'll complain the party is ruining his fun, and then insinuate that Admiral Sougga is the real criminal in this situation. At that point, he bows and fades into the mist that surrounds him.

Admiral Sougga

Admiral Sougga will approach the party after the conflict. Wet but attempting as much dignity as he can muster, he requests the party's help to destroy Zarr once and for all. He will offer a large reward and free travel by sea on completion. If the party accepts, he points them to Dray Thunderfist at the Naval Academy of the Arcane. Dray has an item that should aid the adventurers in capturing Zarr.

Saved. If the party saves Admiral Sougga from the water during combat, the Admiral thanks them and offers them additional resources (see suggested table).

Ask about Zarr. Admiral Sougga will explain that Zarr was once a murderous and cruel pirate captain, who tortured merchants and stole their trade goods. The Admiral finally caught him, and he sentenced Zarr to death. By some weird circumstance, Zarr has come back as an undead and continues to wreck havoc on the city of Brinewater.

Accusation. Admiral Sougga will loudly scoff and get angry if confronted about Zarr's accusations. "Zarr is an outlaw, you saw what he did here! He is simply trying to play another one of his tricks on you all." The admiral will deny any wrongdoing.

(d6)	Sample Admi	ral Reward
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- 1-2 The admiral's dagger
- 3-4 Free lodging at headquarters
- 5-6 Gold

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INVESTIGATION IN BRINEWATER (CH. 2)

The adventuring party has been asked to get rid of Dread Pirate Zarr. The party now has the ability to freely explore Brinewater and investigate the situation further.

Naval Academy of the Arcane

When the party arrives at the naval academy, they are introduced to Dray Thunderfist, a dwarf and lead wizard of "Unnatural Ocean Anomalies."

Dray believes the party needs a soul crystal to prevent Zarr from escaping during combat. In addition, the crystal will capture Zarr's soul once his corporeal body is destroyed.

Luck has it, Dray has one for the adventurers.

Dray explains when Zarr's soul is in the crystal, one need only smash the crystal to remove his soul from this plane of existence.

Investigating Admiral Sougga

The adventurers may explore more about Admiral Sougga's involvement with Zarr.

Citizens will know he oversaw Zarr's execution and that Zarr wasn't as cruel as the Admiral says.

Naval officers will have more to tell, if convinced. For example, the party could get an officer drunk or persuade an ex-officer living in Shacktown to talk for coin.



Investigating Admiral Sougga (cont.)

Persuaded Officer's Comments Zarr played pranks on merchants but he never murdered or harmed others.

The admiral made up charges against Zarr to get rid of him. You see, Admiral Zarr is up for a promotion, and having regular trade disruptions on the coast would reflect poorly on his command.

Unfortunately, any proof of this kept in Zarr's private office in the city's naval headquarters.

Breaking into Admiral Sougga's Office

Admiral Sougga's office is on the third floor of the naval headquarters. Sougga keeps his secret documents here. See room map on following page.

While the party is welcome on the first floor of the naval headquarters, the top two floors are used for official naval business.

Admiral Sougga's Schedule				
Time	Activity	Location		
12-1:59 AM	Sleep in quarters	In Quarters		
2-3:59 AM	Sleep in quarters	In Quarters		
4-5:59 AM	Wake, prepare for day	Quarters/Mess		
6-7:59 AM	Officer's briefing	Office		
8-9:59 AM	Administrative work	Office		
10-11:59 AM	Wood Walk inspection	Docks		
12-1:59 PM	Working lunch	Office		
2-3:59 PM	Coastal guard	Ship		
4-5:59 PM	Coastal guard	Ship		
6-7:59 PM	Officer debrief	Office		
8-9:59 PM	Official mail	Office		
10-11:59 PM	Drink	Deadwood Pub		
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Investigating Admiral Sougga (cont.)

Admiral Sougga's office includes a waiting room, the formal office, and the Admiral's private study, which is locked.

Admiral Sougga's private documents are in the private study. They are hidden in a compartment behind a false wall, in a locked metal box.





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Investigating Admiral Sougga (cont.)

The locked box is trapped and will summon a large water elemental to hinder the party. Each turn the water elemental remains in the room it drips more water onto the floor below, which may alert the navy.

Admiral Sougga's bedroom is adjacent to his main office, and if disturbed from his sleep he will summon a lot of guards. These guards will try to break into the office and catch any intruders.

Documents

The retrieved documents reveal Admiral Sougga framed Dread Pirate Zarr for a series of murders on a variety of merchant vessels.

An official envoy for the government is visiting Brinewater, and the papers can be given to them to facilitate Admiral Sougga's arrest.

If confronted directly with the documents, the Admiral will attempt to have the party arrested.

Zarr won't care about the proof, he will want you to enact his revenge and assassinate the Admiral.

Dread Pirate Zarr, Agent of Chaos

A variety of people will have different bits of knowledge on Dread Pirate Zarr. People present at Zarr's hanging will remember seeing dark purple storm clouds surrounding the peninsula.

A studied priest or proficient party paladin or cleric would tell you that hanging someone would not turn them into an undead. There must be some greater force at work.



Dread Pirate Zarr, Agent of Chaos (cont.)

The Temple of the Trickster

The party walks into the temple and there is a woman in robes sitting on the floor, with a flat bowl in front of her. Her eyes snap open and follow the party as they enter.

PRIESTESS OF CHAOS

When the priestess of chaos is asked a question, she rolls two dice in the bowl. If the roll is odd, she refuses to answer the party.

Knowledge in Chaos

Zarr was brought back by the trickster to sow chaos, as he did in life.

The Trickster would frown upon Zarr's destruction.

If the priestess is asked about an alternative to Zarr's destruction, or asked about the Trickster, see below.

The Trickster

The priestess stiffens and her eyes immediately glow white. "Why ask her when you can ask me directly, mortals?"

The Trickster will ask the party to either release Zarr from Brinewater by killing Admiral Sougga, or bring the soul crystal with Zarr's essence to Shevva Shay'a, the blacksmith.

If asked why the party should comply, the Trickster gives a veiled threat at their adventure turning "unlucky." One of the party members gets stung by a bee.

If asked about the blacksmith, the Trickster will only reply, "Zarr will always serve me, even if his role must change."



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ZARR AT HANGMAN'S POINT (CH. 3)

Dread Pirate Zarr will be waiting for the party at Hangman's Point, where he was hung by the navy.

Zarr wants Admiral Sougga dead

If the party chooses to talk to Zarr, he demands the party kill Admiral Sougga. Zarr will refuse to cooperate with plans to enter the soul crystal, not wishing to chance being captured and destroyed.

Admiral Souga killed?

If the party has killed Admiral Sougga, Dread Pirate Zarr will laugh and exclaim that he is no longer bound to Brinewater. He declares he will continue his antics across the oceans, and invites the party to join him. If the party agrees to let Zarr free, move to the Epilogue.

The Soul Crystal

If the party attacks Zarr with the intent to kill him, Zarr will attempt to escape in mist form. The soul crystal prevents him from escaping, and he yells at the party. "What is that! You can't contain me! Prepare to die!"

If the party wishes to trap Zarr in the soul crystal for the Trickster, Zarr will fight the party. "You can't stop me so easily!"

If the party attempts to persuade Zarr, he will refuse to enter the soul crystal without a fight. "Let the chaos of battle determine the outcome!"

See the battle notes on the following pages.

BEGIN COMBAT

BATTLE WITH ZARR AT HANGMAN'S POINT

Zarr unleashes his full might against the adventuring party, his unlife on the line!

Zarr's zombie crew will climb up the rocks each turn and attack the party to distract them. Zarr will use his magic fog to confuse the players.



BATTLE WITH ZARR (SAMPLE SET-UP)

Dread Pirate Zarr Zombie Crew Each turn, (d4) zombies climb above the cliff and into battle.

Notes for Zarr and the zombies are on the following page. Adjust the battle based on your system mechanics.



DREAD PIRATE ZARR

ON TURN MOVE:

Into created fog or away from immediate threat.

ON TURN ACTIONS: (2 attacks, 1 spell per turn)

Forceful shot (ranged attack)

Zarr points with his flintlock and makes an attack on a player. If hit, the force pushes the target back 5 feet.

Slice and dice (melee attack)

Zarr makes two swipes with his cutlass.

Throw shade (spell)

Zarr creates a 20 foot wide circle of fog that lasts until dispelled. He may have up to two. Characters in the cloud can see each other, but those outside can't see in.

Trickster's tornado (spell)

Anyone adjacent to Zarr is thrown away 20 feet. If done in the fog, the fog is dispelled.

LEGENDARY REACTIONS (1x each combat round)

Blink

Zarr teleports into one of his fog clouds.

HEALTH

25 x player level

PIRATE ZOMBIE

ON TURN MOVE:

Move towards closest adventurer.

ON TURN ACTIONS: (1 attack per turn)

Yarr matey!

The zombie teams up with another zombie in range of a party member and they both make attacks.

Clawing Grasp

Zombie makes an attack that also causes bleeding damage for one additional turn.

HEALTH

Out of the fight when hit twice.



SAMPLE EPILOGUES

ADMIRAL SOUGGA DEAD, ZARR FREE

The party decides to leave Zarr alive. With the admiral dead, the party isn't welcome in Brinewater anymore. Of course, Zarr's offer to join him seems a tempting offer. Perhaps you all can serve the Trickster and cause a bit more chaos, the navy be damned.

DREAD PIRATE ZARR'S CRYSTAL DESTROYED

Zarr screams as you watch his essence being forcefully ripped from his body and into the soul crystal.

A party member steps forward to destroy Zarr, and you all watch as they crush the soul crystal.

You hear a faint rumble and see storm clouds approaching. A crack of lightning arches over your heads. Admiral Sougga will be pleased. The Trickster will not.

Admiral Sougga throws a ceremony for the party, and they are rewarded with money and their choice of destinations on the Admiral's personal cutter.

Brinewater goes back to being more or less normal. Of course, as the party leaves the city, you hear yelling over a dice game. "There's no way you can roll 1's that many times in a row!"

THE BLACKSMITH GETS ZARR'S CRYSTAL

"Well fought, so be it," Zarr exclaims, and the member holding the crystal extends it in Zarr's direction. You watch as Zarr's essence silently whooshes into the crystal.

Not quite sure what to expect, you all bring the soul crystal to Shevva Shay'a, the city's best blacksmith. When you arrive and show her the crystal, she says, "So you're the ones I'm waiting for. Very well then, hand me the crystal."

You watch as she takes the soul crystal from you and



SAMPLE EPILOGUES

THE BLACKSMITH GETS ZARR'S CRYSTAL (cont.)

...silently carries it to the forge. You watch as she pulls glowing hot metal in the shape of a cutlass out of the hot coals and places the crystal at the base of the blade. You hear her whisper something, and blue light streaks from her fingers around the crystal.

She begins her work, merging the crystal and the blade together. Realizing you're going to be here awhile, you all sit down and watch.

Finally, you hear Shevva's voice cut through the cold sea air. "It is finished. This is in your custody now." She stares at you all until someone grabs the cutlass.

"Zarr and this blade are one now. It will cause chaos and discord, just as the Trickster wishes. Use it as you will, or throw it in the ocean. I don't care." Shevva walks into her house and closes the door on the party.

You've stabilized the trade routes along Brinewater, and the town will be free of Dread Pirate Zarr and his antics from now on. But will you? You look over the finely crafted blade, pondering.



THE BLADE OF ZARR

Zarr's essence is trapped within this blade. As such. the wielder can hear Zarr in their thoughts while holding the blade.

The user may rely on Zarr's knowledge and trickery, as long as they can stomach his chaotic nature. They may use "Trickster's Tornado" and "Throw Shade" two times a day. The blade is magical in nature (duh!).

Thank you for reading and playing

THE CURSE OF DREAD PIRATE ZARR

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