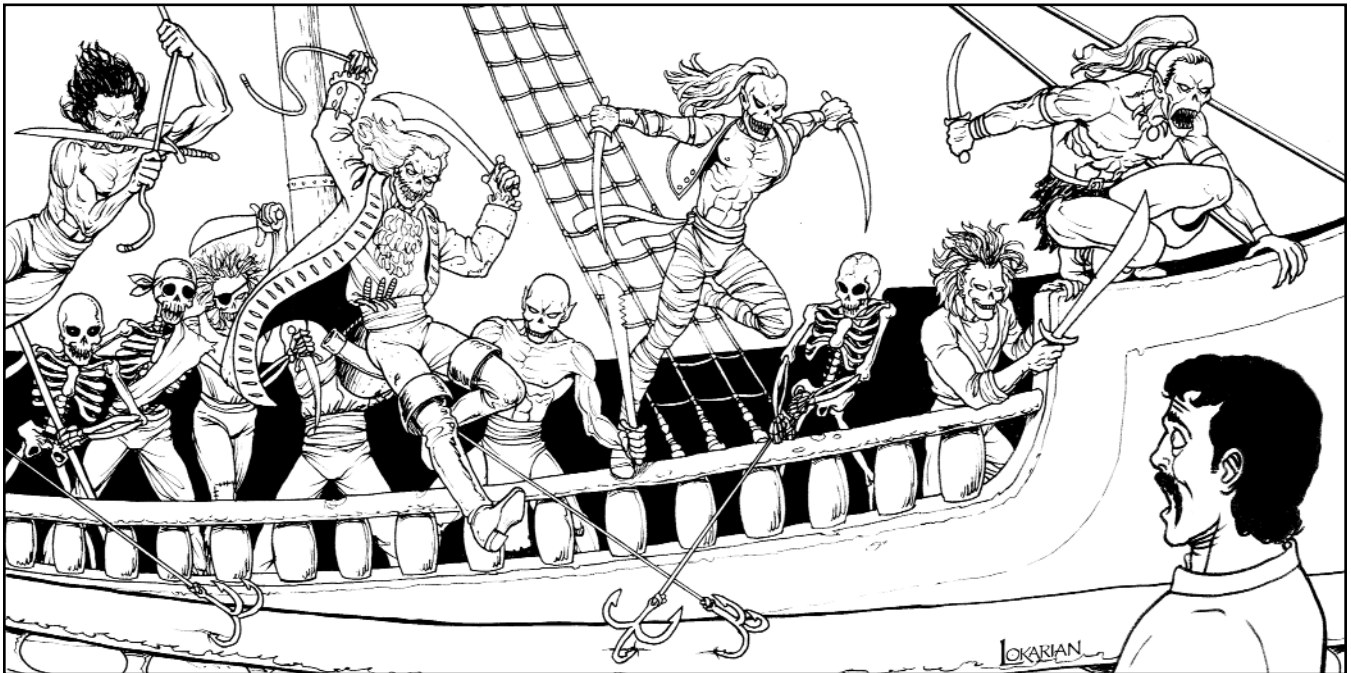


A Reaver's Tale: The Deadly Life and Lively Death of Bloody Jack Dascombe

Dungeon Crawl Classics #4 Web Enhancement

By Joe Crow • Illustrations by Lokarian • Published by Goodman Games



*With a setting sun and a bloody grin
And a rope around his neck
Bloody Jack Dascombe laughed,
No gold of mine you'll find, he sang
To Hell I go, from Hell I'll come
To claim my gold again
Now Bloody Jack, he roams the sea
And bloody work he wreaks
He seeks his gold and feeds the sharks
With Imperial blood and meat*

Jack Dascombe was born to a wealthy middle class family, whose money came from a particularly successful maritime trading company. The Dascombes were an ambitious clan, and bought Jack an officer's berth aboard an Imperial navy vessel in hopes that their son's military victories would bring them social success to match their financial stature. Though Jack had always been a cold sort, the navy made him cruel and hard as well. His captain was a renowned pirate hunter, and Jack became a fiercely efficient warrior and a brutal disciplinarian.

Unfortunately for the family's ambitions, the captain of their son's vessel was also renowned for his greed and faithlessness. Under this corrupt officer's tutelage, young Jack quickly mastered the fine arts of bribery, smuggling, and sharp dealing. Eventually, one of the captain's deals went awry. When he was caught, the captain laid all the blame on Jack.



Frightened by the possibility of scandal, the Dascombe family abandoned him, and Jack was court-martialed, found guilty, and sentenced to hang.

During a particularly careless session of pre-execution torture, Jack escaped and sought refuge among the pirates he'd once pursued. Jack quickly rose to command his own vessel through force of will and sheer viciousness, and began to take his revenge on the family that had betrayed him. For three long years Jack harried his family's shipping lines, driving them into bankruptcy. The day Jack heard the news that his father had committed suicide rather than face his creditors, he celebrated by capturing the last of his family's trading vessels and slaughtering the entire crew, including his last living relative, his younger brother James.

The years of grim vengeance had removed the last trace of the coldly efficient naval officer, and all that remained was a savage madman bent on bloody slaughter. The next twelve years would be filled with mayhem and butchery as Jack carved his way into pirate legend with raid after raid and atrocity after atrocity. The tale of Jack's Last Raid on an Imperial tribute fleet has been told elsewhere, as has the story of how he hid the loot and then met his doom at the end of an Imperial rope. But what has yet to be told is the tale of what came after.

In the shadows below the waves lurk many dark powers. At times, these powers allow those who come to them a chance to return to the world above and redden the waves with blood for their amusement. Jack's twisted soul was a

perfect toy for these evil forces. One year after he and his beloved ship were sent below the sea, they returned from their watery grave. Now Jack roams the seas aboard the ruined hulk of the *Red Skull*, slaying all that cross his path, forever seeking his lost treasure.

In the century since his death, Bloody Jack has sent countless ships to the bottom. Oddly, he shows no real interest in accumulating treasure from his victims. He sends it to the bottom with its former owners. Occasionally, he'll claim a useful piece of equipment that catches his fancy, but his primary focus is on regaining "his" treasure. There'll be time to add to the loot once it's in his hands again.

Captain and Crew

Jack still maintains a few vestiges of his former dandyism, taking pride in the tattered remnants of his pirate finery. He keeps his uniform neatly tailored, and carefully combs the patchy remains of his once-flowing locks over his jacket's rotted collar. His voice is a sinister rasp, a result of the hanging that killed him. Jack is focused entirely on regaining his hidden gold, and has yet to realize that the reason he can't find it is due to the conditions of his curse.

The dark powers that resurrected Jack thought it would be amusing to erase his memory of where he'd hidden his loot, then set him to search for it. For the last century, the game has served them well. Jack's obsession keeps him too focused on the quest to think about *why* he can't remember where he put the gold, and his savage nature makes sure that there's plenty of bloodshed for the dark powers to enjoy.

Now that he's undead, Jack's lost none of his gleeful appetite for slaughter. He's usually the first over the side when the *Red Skull* moves into boarding position. He dances through the mob, gaily slashing and stabbing his foes, while laughing and mocking them. He's grown quite skilled at using his crude skeleton troops as distractions so he can use his sneak attack ability on unwary sailors. He also takes great joy in disarming his victims and pretending to let them surrender, only to stab them as they submit.

"Bloody" Jack Dascombe, male human wave-cursed revenant Ftr6/Rog6: CR 15; Medium (6' 1" tall) undead; HD 12d12; hp 101; Init +9; Spd 30 ft., swim 45 ft.; AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 18; BAB +10/+5; Grpl +14; Atk +2 *rapier of wounding* +16 melee (1d6+6/19-20 and *wounding*) or claw +14 melee (1d6+4 and salt fever); Full Atk +2 *rapier of wounding* +16/+11 melee (1d6+6/19-20 and *wounding*) or claw +14/+9 melee (1d6+4 and salt fever); SA Sneak attack +3d6, terrifying stare 7/day (DC 20), cursed whisper (DC 20), create spawn, salt fever; SQ Evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge, undead traits, fast healing 6, rejuvenation, damage reduction 6/good and iron, seabound, cursed quest, bitter sea 120 ft., turn resistance +6, vulnerability to fire; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +13, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 20 (base 18), Con -, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 18.

Skills: Balance +10, Bluff +9, Climb +13, Diplomacy +7,

Hide +10, Intimidate +18, Jump +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +4, Spot +10, Swim +20, Tumble +14, Use Rope +7.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack.

Possessions: +2 rapier of wounding, amulet of natural armor +2, ring of protection +2, gloves of dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +1.

The *Red Skull's* crew is made up of skeletons as well as the wights that Jack has spawned in his travels. The skeletons go about their duties mindlessly. The wights' innate sense of discipline keeps them in order, and Jack has managed to beat some rudimentary seamanship into them to augment the mindless seamanship of the skeletons. They're by no means a skilled crew, but their discipline and tireless hunger for the souls of the living make up for their failures as sailors.

Encountering the *Red Skull*

The *Red Skull* and its grim crew haunt the trade routes, attacking any ship they encounter but going after Imperial ships with especial vigor. Jack insists on capturing ranking officers of Imperial navy ships for interrogation and torture. It's mostly just torture, though. Jack's not always the most linear-minded fellow, and while asking his questions he tends to get distracted by interesting screams. He'll usually make an effort to capture at least one person on any ship he raids to question about his treasure.

Jack prefers to attack at night, stealing up on ships while their crews are mostly asleep, then relying on his crew's darkvision to even the odds. He often uses the catapults to launch wights that have annoyed him at enemy ships as a sort of undead grenade. Having a shrieking wight drop out of the sky and into your rigging in the middle of the night is an unpleasant way to wake up. He'll have a dozen or so of the wights swim over to the ship and climb aboard, before attempting to board the ship himself. He rarely rams vessels with his beloved ship, out of concern for her hull.

Red Skull Death Hulk Frigate: Medium Warship (Sailed); Structure Dice: 4d12 (28 sp); Hardness: 4; Maneuverability: -2; Speed: 30 ft./72 miles; Turn Rate: 120 ft.; AC: 10; Weapons Fore: Light catapult; Weapons Broadside: Light catapult; 2 ballistae; Damage: Light catapult 3d6/1d6; ballista 3d6/-; Special Qualities: Fear Aura 120 ft. (20th level caster); immune to cold, electricity, fire; SR 12; cannot be turned; crew gains turn resistance +4.

Crew: 72 (47 skeletons, 25 wights)

Passengers: None

Cargo: 80 tons

New Monster Template: Wave-Cursed Revenant

Wave-cursed revenants look like zombies, but their bodies are harder and they move much faster. Jagged talons grow from their twisted hands, and their eyes glow with the eerie greenish light of phosphorescent algae. They usually wear nothing but the rags they died in, but some accumulate various pieces of gear to aid them in their doomed quests.

Wave-cursed revenants are bound to hopeless quests, doomed to wander the seas eternally until they fulfill whatever malevolent purpose they've been cursed with. Few manage this, and they take their endless frustration out on whatever unfortunate travelers they encounter.

Creating a Wave-Cursed Revenant

"Wave-cursed revenant" is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal humanoid or monstrous humanoid (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A wave-cursed revenant uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size is unchanged.

Hit Dice: Increase all current and future hit dice to d12s.

Speed: Same as the base creature. The creature gains a swim speed of 1.5 times its base land speed, or, if the base creature had a swim speed, then that speed is doubled.

Armor Class: The base creature's natural armor bonus improves by +4.

Attack: A wave-cursed revenant retains all of the attacks of the base creature, and gains a claw attack, if it did not already have one. If the base creature can use weapons, the wave-cursed revenant retains this ability. A creature with natural weapons retains those natural weapons. A wave-cursed revenant fighting without weapons uses either its claw attack or its primary natural weapon (if it has any). A wave-cursed revenant armed with a weapon uses its claws or a weapon, as it desires.

Full Attack: A wave-cursed revenant fighting without weapons uses either its claw attack (see above) or its natural weapons (if it has any). If armed with a weapon, it usually uses the weapon as its primary attack along with a claw or other natural weapon as a natural secondary attack.

Damage: Wave-cursed revenants have claw attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the appropriate damage value from the table below according to the wave-cursed revenant's size. Creatures that have other kinds of natural weapons retain their old damage values or use the appropriate value from the table below, whichever is better.

Size	Damage	Size	Damage
Fine	1	Large	1d8
Diminutive	1d2	Huge	2d6
Tiny	1d3	Gargantuan	2d8
Small	1d4	Colossal	4d6
Medium	1d6		

Special Attacks: A wave-cursed revenant retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains those described below. Saves have a DC of 10 + 1/2 revenant's HD + revenant's Cha modifier unless noted otherwise.

Terrifying Stare (Su): A wave-cursed revenant can fill its opponents with fear with but a look. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the revenant must use a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the revenant targets must succeed on a Will save or become panicked, as if by a *fear* spell (with a caster level equal to the revenant's HD). This attack may be used a number of times per day equal to 3 + the revenant's Charisma bonus. It has a range of 30 feet.

Cursed Whisper (Sp): The horrid, rasping voice of a wave-cursed revenant can drain levels from a living victim. This requires a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, the revenant whispers terrible secrets in the foe's ear, forcing the victim to make a Will save or gain 1d4 negative levels for every round the pin is maintained. For each negative level bestowed, the wave-cursed revenant gains 5 hit points, up to its prior maximum hit points. A *silence* spell prevents this attack from working. This attack only affects one creature at a time. This is a sonic attack.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by a wave-cursed revenant's cursed whisper rises as a wight 1d4 rounds after death. The new wight is under the command of the revenant that created it and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. At any given time a wave-cursed revenant may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own hit dice; any spawn it creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed wights. A wight that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a revenant can control a large number of wights in this fashion. A wave-cursed revenant may voluntarily free an enslaved wight in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a wight cannot be enslaved again.

Salt Fever (Su): A wave-cursed revenant's claw attack carries with it a supernatural disease called salt fever. Salt fever's symptoms include high fever, bloodshot eyes, a strange desire for salt water, and homicidal rage.

Special Qualities: A wave-cursed revenant retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains those described below.

Undead Traits: As other undead creatures.

Fast Healing (Ex): A wave-cursed revenant heals 1/2 of its HD in hit points per round, so long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 or less hit points in combat, the revenant collapses, entering a state nearly indistinguishable from true death and becoming helpless. A DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check is required to recognize that a fallen revenant is not truly dead. While in this state, the revenant heals 1 hit point per hour until its hit points are once again above 0, at which point it is no longer helpless and begins healing damage as normal. Unless its foes have left the area, the revenant most often flees overboard into the sea to fully regain its strength and plot revenge.

Rejuvenation (Su): A wave-cursed revenant is extremely difficult to destroy permanently. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A revenant that would otherwise be destroyed can return to existence in 2d6 days by making a successful level check (1d20 + revenant's HD) against DC 13. The only known method of preventing this return is to burn the wave-cursed revenant's body on a piece of dry land that has never been below water, and is out of earshot of the sea, or to somehow enable the revenant to successfully complete its quest.

Damage Reduction (Su): A wave-cursed revenant has damage reduction equal to 1/2 its HD/good and iron. A revenant's natural weapons are treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Seabound (Su): A wave-cursed revenant is bound to the sea, and can only spend a limited amount of time on dry land without returning to the sea. A revenant on dry land must make a Will save every hour, DC 15 + 1 for every hour that the revenant has been ashore. If the save is failed, the revenant immediately ceases whatever actions it is engaged in and flees at maximum speed toward the nearest body of water. Once the safety of the sea has been reached, the revenant must stay either in or on the water for a minimum of 1 hour for every hour that was spent on land.

Cursed Quest (Su): A wave-cursed revenant has been returned from the grave by dark powers to complete a quest it failed to finish in life. Because the revenant's state is a curse rather than a blessing, the conditions placed upon this quest tend to make completion nearly impossible. Should the revenant actually manage to succeed in its quest, the revenant immediately dissolves into a pile of sand and salt, and its soul moves on to its (undoubtedly unpleasant) final reward.

Bitter Sea (Su): A wave-cursed revenant radiates a constant *curse water* effect, affecting all water within a radius of 10 feet times the revenant's HD.

Salt Fever

Salt Fever: supernatural disease; Fortitude DC 18; incubation period 1 hour; damage 1d6 Wis and the target must make a DC 18 Will save every hour or lapse into a violent frenzy, attacking all nearby creatures.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A wave-cursed revenant has +6 turn resistance.

Vulnerability to Fire: A wave-cursed revenant takes double damage from fire and heat-based attacks.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +2, Cha +4. As an undead creature, a wave-cursed revenant has no Constitution score.

Skills: Wave-cursed revenants have a +4 racial bonus to Listen, Search and Spot checks and a +10 racial bonus to Swim checks. Otherwise, their skills are the same as the

base creature.

Environment: Any aquatic.

Organization: Solitary or band (1 plus 5-25 wights).

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +3.

Treasure: Double normal (personal items only).

Alignment: Usually evil.

Advancement: By character class.

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature +8.



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