

Island of the Damned



An Adventure for SKULL & BONES

By Gareth-Michael Skarka

Island of the Damned is an adventure for a pirate crew of between 2nd to 5th level on average. The adventure assumes that the player-characters have their own ship (perhaps the *Isabella* from the starting adventure in the *Skull & Bones* core book).

This adventure is a preview for the bi-monthly *Skull & Bones* pdf ezine, *Buccaneers & Bokor*, which is produced by Adamant Entertainment (<http://www.adamantentertainment.com>) and will be available via RPGNow (<http://www.rpgnow.com>) as of Halloween 2003.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The player-characters, enjoying the fruits of their labor in a raucous portside inn, are approached by a messenger who tells them that his employer, Captain Bobo, wishes to hire their vessel. The messenger pays the character's tab at the inn, and then some, with a pouch of gold doubloons.

Meeting with the Captain, the players discover that their mysterious benefactor is, in fact, a monkey--a pirate captain cursed by a powerful bokor. He wants to hire the player-character's ship to take him to Isla de los Maldecidos--the Island of the Damned.

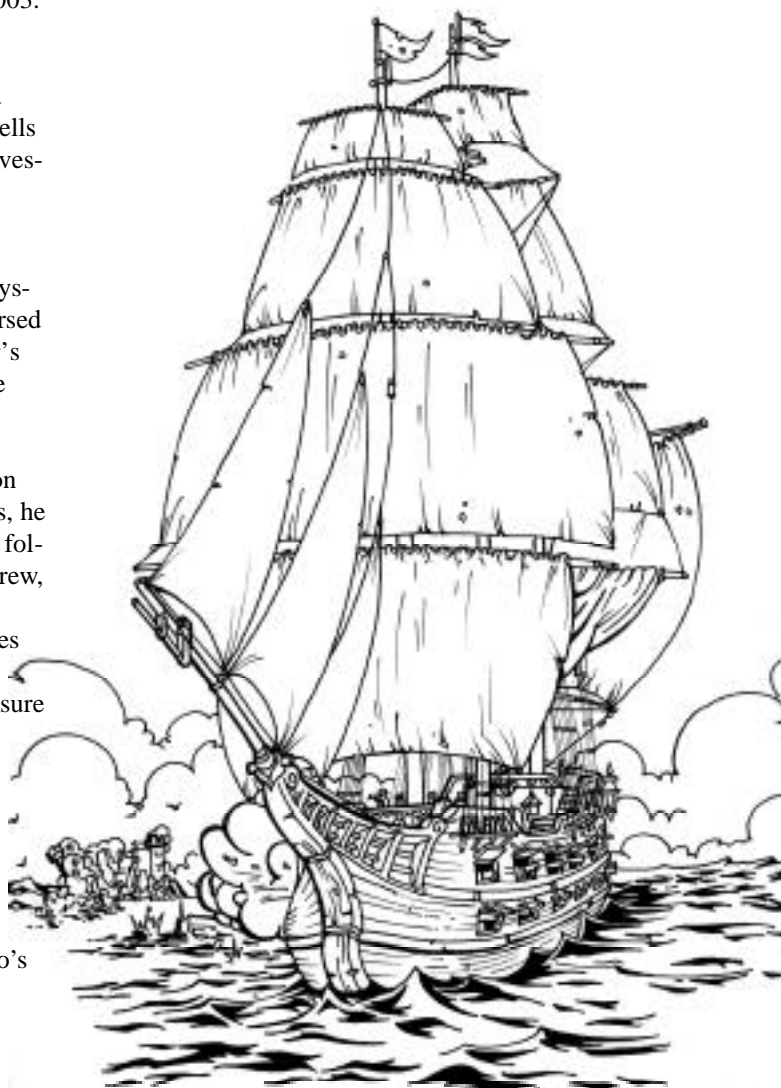
Bobo tells the PCs that he buried a massive haul of booty on the island--an island that only he can find. Soon afterwards, he was cursed by a bokor, and his crew mutineered, unwilling to follow a monkey. He was marooned with a few of his loyal crew, but he escaped--and now wants to get back to Isla de los Maldecidos, to retrieve the treasure before his old crewmates are able to break the codes in his log book and determine the location for themselves. He is willing to share the treasure with the player-characters 70/30--he will keep 70% of the haul in order to acquire and outfit a new ship and crew, and the PCs will earn 30% for simply taking him and his men to the island.

What Bobo isn't telling the PCs is that the treasure on the island isn't his, but rather the property of the bokor who cursed him, and is crawling with zombies--members of Bobo's crew, among others.

Bobo wants to travel to the island, and retrieve the magical

container which stores his crew's gros-bon-anges, thereby removing them from the bokor's thrall, and placing them under his power--at which point he will attempt to take over the PC's ship, and return to his life of piracy upon the open seas, leaving the PCs marooned on Isla de los Maldecidos to face the wrath of the bokor.

The lesson here: Never trust a monkey.



A Generous Offer

"You're in a tavern, drinking..." You'd be surprised how many real-world adventures started that way...

The player-characters (PCs) are drinking in a port-side tavern (the location can be of the GM's choosing), freely spending the ill-gotten fruits of their labor, when they are approached by a man who identifies himself as a messenger (use the sample statistics for the "Underworld Lackey" on page 139 of *Skull & Bones*).

The messenger tells the PCs that he is a representative of Captain Bobo (he pronounces the name with the accent on the second syllable, like an African name). The Captain wishes to speak to the PCs about hiring their vessel. He assures the PCs that the offer is a lucrative one, and, to demonstrate, he pulls out a small pouch of gold doubloons, and tosses it to the innkeeper, more than paying for the PC's tab at the tavern. He asks that the PCs follow him to a rooming house where the Captain will meet them.

He will make no effort to coerce the PCs through violence or other skullduggery--if the PCs do not wish to accompany the messenger, or take the Captain up on his offer, the adventure is over--although Bobo may cross paths with the PCs again at some point.

The messenger takes the characters to a run-down boarding house on the quayside, frequented by seamen in-between journeys. They are ushered to an upstairs room, where they see a large African man with ritual scars, standing with a monkey on his shoulder. If they attempt to talk to the man, he mutely shakes his head and points to the monkey.

Suddenly, the monkey speaks! "Aye, I'm a monkey. I'm the one in charge here, though...and ye'd best not be forgettin'."

Captain Bobo (NPC)

Buc4/Sof5; CR 9; Tiny; Init +2; Spd 30ft; AC 14 (size, Dex); Atk +5 melee (1d3-4 bite) +12 ranged (2d4 pistol); SQ: low-light vision, expert pilot, survivor, resilient, command; AL: NE; SV: Fort +5 Ref +6 Will +8; Str 3 Dex 16 Con 10 Int 15 Wis 12 Cha 14

Skills & Feats: Hide +12, Sleight of Hand +4, Balance +10, Climb +10, Listen +3, Spot +3, Knowledge (Caribbean)+6, Knowledge (Navigation)+6, Use Rope +6, Appraise +5, Intimidate +8, Bluff +8, Profession (Sailor)+7, Gather Information +6, Point Blank Shot, Alertness, Iron Will, Crack Shot, Firearms Drill

Fortunes & Backgrounds: Cursed (special), Scum

Horse (NPC)

Sdg4; CR 4; Medium-sized; 38 hp; Init +2; Spd 30ft; AC 12 (Dex); Atk +8 melee (1d6 cutlass) +7 ranged (1d12 blunderbuss pistol); SA: Close Quarters +1; SQ: Favored Ship: English Warships; AL: LE; SV: Fort +6 Ref +6 Will +2; Str 17 Dex 14 Con 14 Int 12 Wis 13 Cha 9
Skills & Feats: Climb +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Profession (Sailor)+6, Spot +4, Use Rope +3, Balance +4, Heal +3, Jump +4, Dodge, Mobility, Cleave, Endurance.



Captain Bobo and Horse

Bobo was the Captain of the pirate ship *Dragon*, until he made the mistake of running afoul of the bokor known as Monsignor Domino (the same bokor who appeared in “Welcome to the Account” in *Skull & Bones*). He found the bokor’s secret refuge, on an island called Isla de los Maldecidos: Island of the Damned. Bobo tried to steal the bokor’s treasure, but Domino discovered the pirates on his island, and enacted a horrible revenge.

The majority of the crew of the *Dragon* were turned into zombi, under the control of the bokor, who added their gross-bon-anges to those of his other hapless victims. Bobo and a small handful of his men escaped from the island in a ship’s boat (the *Dragon* left burning to the waterline during a fight with the zombi). As the boat pulled away, Domino unleashed a special curse upon the Captain, casting a *Baleful Polymorph* that transformed the pirate into a chattering monkey.

Domino did not count on Bobo’s iron will, however, which resulted in the Captain maintaining his intelligence and the power of speech. The monkey soon began to dress in a diminutive coat and cockade hat, smoking his hand-rolled cigars, and wearing a flintlock pistol carried via a strap over his shoulder, like a large rifle.

Bobo is a monkey of foul temper and foul language, bristling at the lack of respect his new form engenders. He will lose his temper if he is belittled...and especially if anyone mispronounces his name as “bo-bo”, which he feels makes him sound like some “blasted carnival monkey.”

Horse is one of Bobo’s loyal crew, a huge man with tribal ritual scars on his face. He is mute, his tongue having been cut out by the slavers who took him from his home. Captain Bobo saved him from those slavers, earning the man’s loyalty for life. The crew of the *Dragon* said that he was as “big as a horse”, and the name stuck. He now acts as Bobo’s perch and proxy, standing in during those times when a more human face is needed.

Horse stands impassively while Bobo speaks to the PCs. Bobo will tell them that he was cursed by a powerful bokor (he won’t say who unless directly asked), and that soon afterwards, his crew mutineered, because he lost their respect when he was transformed into “a blasted monkey.” His old crewmates marooned him along with a handful of the crew that remained loyal.

He tells the PCs that he and the loyal crew escaped, and now they need a ship to carry them to the location of his buried treasure. He claims that the treasure is buried on an island that only he knew the location of--an island called Isla de los Maldecidos (allow characters who speak Spanish to realize that means “Island of the Damned”). He wants to get to the island and remove the treasure before his old crew manages to decipher the codes in his log-book, which they still have.

Bobo says that the treasure is the haul of a lifetime--worth over 100,000 doubloons. He will “negotiate” with the PCs--his ini-

tial offer will be 10% of the booty, just for bringing his party to the island, but he will “allow himself” to be talked into as much as 30%...after all, he has no intention of sharing the treasure with the PCs.

Bobo is willing to give the PCs some payment up front, if they demand it. He and his men have 500 doubloons at their disposal, and will give it all to the PCs, since they know they will just be stealing it back when they take the PCs ship.

He urges the PCs that time is of the essence--claiming that they’re just a few steps ahead of his treacherous former crew-mates. The players, at this point, should probably be expecting a “chase” adventure--rushing to the island, and lifting the treasure before the arrival of the other pirates. They should get under way immediately. Bobo will provide the course to their navigator.

In addition to Horse, Captain Bobo has 7 men with him (the pirates who were with him on the ship’s boat when they ran from Domino):

Bobo’s Crew (CF)

Sdg1; CR 1; Medium-size; Init +1; Spd 30ft; AC 11 (Dex), Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 cutlass); SA Close Quarters; AL NE, SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10

Skills & Feats: Balance +4, Climb +3, Profession (sailor) +6, Spot +3, Swim +4, Use Rope +3, Dodge (when in light or no armor), Skill Focus (Profession: sailor), Weapon Focus (cutlass).



The Island

The journey to Isla de los Maldecidos is uneventful. Bobo provides the course corrections to the navigator (whether PC or NPC), and, after three days of sailing, the cry of “land ho” comes from the crow’s nest--an island has been spotted, where none exists on the charts.

The island is roughly 4 miles long, and 2.5 miles wide at it’s widest point. Bobo directs the PCs to anchor their ship in the protected lagoon on the south side of the island. (The reason for this is that the burned-out wreckage of the *Dragon*, his old ship, is in the the lagoon on the north side...something he doesn’t want the PCs to see)

The location of the treasure is the “X” marked on the map--it is, in fact, Monsignor Domino’s house, once owned by a Dutchman who ran this island as a plantation. The journey overland to the house covers about 2 miles, due north from the lagoon, through dense jungle and over a ridge of mountainous terrain. It should take 2 hours to get there, due to the difficult conditions.

Initially, Bobo will suggest that he and his men go and retrieve the treasure. He does this knowing that the PCs will object, and demand to go along with them--thereby removing the most dangerous opponents from the ship itself. When the PCs insist on coming along, Bobo will relent, and suggest that in the interests of trust, the PCs come along with him. He leaves 5 of his men aboard the ship (to start preparations for the take-over).

During the overland journey to the plantation house, roll once every 30 minutes for an encounter: Roll a single d6. On a roll of 5 or 6, an encounter occurs. Roll 1d10 on the provided table to determine what the PCs encounter:

<u>1d10</u>	<u>Island Encounters</u>
1	Apes
2	Crocodiles
3	Snake
4	Spiders
5	Pygmies
6-9	Zombi
10	Ben Cannon

Apes: 1d4+2 carnivorous great apes, as per page 268 of *Core Rulebook III* (v3.5).

Crocodiles: A small colony of 1d6+2 crocs, lying in wait in the water (the PCs path crosses a few small rivers). Use the statistics on page 271 of *Core Rulebook III* (v3.5).

Snake: A huge viper (as per page 280 of *Core Rulebook III* (v3.5)) lashes out in a surprise attack.

Spiders: The PCs disturb a colony (1d4+1) of medium Monstrous Spiders (see page 288 of *Core Rulebook III* (v3.5)). In and among their web, the PCs can find the remains of past

victims, including 22 pieces of eight, 18 shillings, 1 doubloon, and several rusted and ruined weapons--although one blunderbuss is only lightly rusted, and is salvagable, along with an oil-skin bag containing packets of powder and shot (enough for 8 shots--the rest are damp and ruined).

Pygmies: A small (no pun intended) community of Pygmies lives on Isla de los Maldecidos, keeping to the tree-tops to avoid the bokor and his zombi. The PCs encounter a party of 1d4+2, patrolling to keep trespassers away from their village. Use the statistics found on pages 146-147 of *Skull & Bones*.

The Pygmies carry no treasure of worth to Europeans. They are clothed in woven fronds, and bear blowguns and half-spears, as per their description.

Zombi: Isla de los Maldecidos is crawling with zombi, used by Monsignor Domino as guard dogs to protect his home. They wander across the island, and attack any people they encounter. This encounter represents a group of 1d6+5 Zombi, as per the statistics on page 150 of *Skull & Bones*.

When faced with attack by zombi, Bobo’s men must make a DC 10 Will save, or hesitate for one round, conflicted at the thought of attacking a former crewmate. Bobo and Horse are immune from this effect.

Ben Cannon: One of the *Dragon*’s crew that escaped the fate of his crewmates, but did not get off the island with Bobo, Cannon has been fighting for survival ever since. He is a gaunt figure with a scraggle of beard and wild eyes. His clothes are rags, mostly worn and rotted by sun and salt air, and he waves a cutlass around constantly--fending off demons that only he can see. He is quite insane.

Cannon blames Bobo for abandoning the crew to the wrath of Domino, and will recognize his crewmates, although not Bobo, since he didn’t witness the transformation. If the PCs can talk to him, they’ll learn the truth of the situation.

Ben Cannon (CF)

Sdg1; CR 1; Medium-size; Init +1; Spd 30ft; AC 11 (Dex), Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 cutlass); SA Close Quarters; AL NE, SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 9

Skills & Feats: Balance +4, Climb +3, Profession (sailor) +6, Spot +3, Swim +4, Use Rope +3, Dodge (when in light or no armor), Skill Focus (Profession: sailor), Weapon Focus (cutlass).

If confronted by what Cannon has said, Bobo will dismiss it as “the rantings of a man driven mad by the tropical heat.” If the issue is pressed, and Bobo thinks that things are turning against him, he will attempt to put his plan into action by having his men kill the PCs, and signalling his men back on the ship to start the attempted take-over.

Domino Plantation

Deep in the jungles of Isla de los Maldecidos, along a winding river that runs from a spring in the mountain to the northern lagoon, lies Domino Plantation. The house was built by a Dutchman who owned this island and ran it as a plantation.

Monsignor Domino was one of the Dutchman's slaves, and led a revolt. The Dutchman and his family were slaughtered, but then Domino turned on his fellow slaves as well--they became his first batch of zombi. Now, the former plantation, cursed by the many evil and unnatural deeds performed by Domino over the decades, is the bokor's refuge and base of operations.



The good news: Monsignor Domino is not currently present on the island. He is away, on dark business best left unsaid.

The bad news: The bokor has plenty of fail-safe measures to take care of thieves, not the least of which are the many zombi which wander the island. Plus, the PCs are in the company of a treacherous monkey who wants to maroon them here, leaving them to face Domino's wrath upon his return.

Bobo's sole intention is to ransack the house, and find the crystal skull which Domino uses to store the gros-bon-ange of those he turns into Zombi. He doesn't care what happens to the PCs--he only needs them to be zombi-fodder.

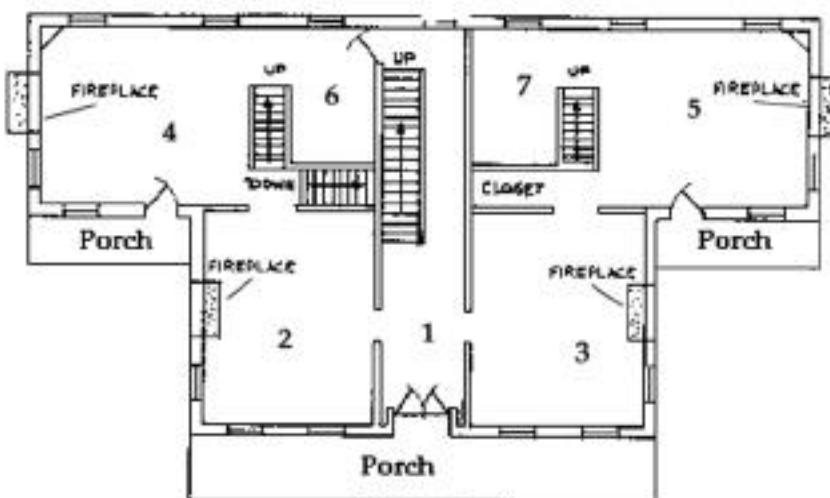
The house sits in a clearing in the jungle. Long ago, the land had been cleared for sugar cane fields and outbuildings, but as the decades passed, the jungle has reclaimed most of the land.

While on the grounds, there is a 20% chance every 10 minutes of encountering a group of 1d6+2 zombi, wandering around the house with orders to destroy any trespassers. (For statistics, see page 150 of *Skull & Bones*)

The house is run-down and decrepit, decaying in spots due to the tropical heat and moisture. What was once a gleaming white home is now stained dull grey-green from molds and fungus.

The clearing also features the remains of a peristyle, a ceremonial site for voodoo worship. However, it has long since fallen into decay and disrepair, along with Domino's reverence of the Loa. He no longer actively worships, fearful of the Loa's reprisals for his stolen power.

Monsignor Domino's House Ground Floor



Monsignor Domino's House Upper floor



Map Key on following page

GROUND FLOOR:

1: Entryway and Main Staircase:

The front door is unlocked, and opens onto a main foyer which stretches from the front of the house to the back, and is dominated by a large staircase to the upper floor. There are paintings hung on the walls, but the tropical moisture has ruined them with mold and mildew.

2: Living Room

This was once a fashionably furnished room, but the heat and moisture of the jungle, and the whims of the current resident, have taken their toll. The rug on the floor is rotted and worn away, and the majority of the furniture has collapsed or has been chopped for firewood by Monsignor Domino.

In front of the large fireplace is a overstuffed leather chair, along side a table adorned with an oil lamp, a pipe, a tobacco container and smoking implements (a tamping rod, tapers for lighting, etc.)

The tobacco is a special blend, created by Domino. If smoked in the specially-prepared pipe (carved from human bone), it bestows upon the smoker the effects of the spell *discern location*. There are 3 “charges” worth of tobacco in the container.

3: Drawing Room

This was the room where the former master of the house spent most of his time. It is filled with hunting trophies, including a large crocodile, stuffed by a taxidermist. When Domino slaughtered the Dutchman and his family, he had the Dutchman’s head stuffed and mounted on a walnut plaque above the mantelpiece. The eyes seem to follow the PCs as they move through the room.

4: Rotten Room

The floor in this room (formerly the music room) has completely rotted through, leaving gaping holes down to the cellar. Any creature of medium-size or larger who enters this room must make a Reflex Save at DC 20 every turn to avoid falling through the rotten boards into the flooded cellar, taking 1d6 points of damage.

Just off this room is a stairway down to the cellar. The cellar is not used by Domino--it long ago flooded. Lurking in the dark, chest-deep water is a Giant Octopus (see page 276 of *Core Rulebook III* v3.5), placed there by Domino while young, and fed regularly.

5: Dining Room

This room features a huge wooden dining table, although only one chair (the others having long since been used for firewood).

6. Alcove

This alcove was originally used by the lady of the house as a ladie’s sitting room, but it has fallen into disuse. The former lady of the house still resides here, in the form of a zombified corpse which mindlessly goes through the motions of needlepoint until commanded otherwise by Domino. If the PCs enter this room, the lady will ignore them, unless they try to stop her needlepoint, at which point she will attack.

7. Kitchen

The kitchen has a wood fired oven, large basins, and a chopping

board, stained dark with blood. Domino uses it occasionally, but not exclusively for food preparation.

UPPER FLOOR

1. Domino’s bedroom

The former master bedroom of the house, now taken over for Domino’s use. The room features a large four-poster bed (with sheets and blankets of silk and damasc) and a number of bookshelves and wardrobes.

Domino has placed three zombi on permanent guard in this room while he is away, to defend the contents of the bookshelves, which include many volumes of dark and ancient lore (the GM should feel free to indulge here, perhaps including tomes from a certain non-UGL D20 adaptation of a game of cosmic horror).

2. Bedroom

This is one of the bedrooms of the house, and is no longer in use.

3. Sewing Room

The former sewing room is still used for sewing, but not of fabrics. This is the room where Domino sews the lips of his zombi thralls, or patches them together when needed. There are various pieces of...raw material in this room.

4. Rotten Floor

This area is open to the elements--a hole gapes in the roof (caused by a lightning strike and a fire some weeks ago), and rain and other moisture have weakened the floor. The first medium-sized person to cross this area does so with no difficulty, aside from a noticable creaking of the floorboards. Every additional medium-sized creature crossing the floor, however, must make a DC 20 Ref Save to avoid breaking through the floor, and falling to the kitchen below, taking 2d6 points of damage.

5. Treasure Room

This room is locked, both physically, and with all of Monsignor Domino’s power--the door has an *arcane lock* cast on it.

Inside the room are five zombi placed on permanent guard duty, with orders to kill anyone other than Domino who opens the door.

The room is filled with various containers and houses the bokor’s worldly treasure--gold, silver, jewelery and precious stones and other plunder totalling some 40,000 doubloons (Bobo, naturally, was lying about the size of the haul).

6. Laboratory

This is the center of Domino’s activity on the island, where he communes with the Djab, brews potions and creates drogues. There are vials of liquid in containers of all sizes, as well as powders and small bits of bric-a-brac, used in the creation of drogues.

The room is protected while Domino is gone by a Specter (see page 232 of *Core Rulebook III* v3.5)--a spirit summoned and bound by the bokor through instructions given to him by the Djab known as Lel-Za-Bol. The specter is bound to the room, however, and is unable to leave, even to continue attacking trespassers.



one occupant--a young woman named Elizabeth Mallory:

Elizabeth Mallory (NPC)

Ari3; CR3; Medium-size; 12 h.p.; Init +1; S 30ft; AC 11 (Dex), Atk +1 melee; AL NG, SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will + Str 9, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 16
Skills & Feats: Apprai +7, Bluff +6, Diplomac +6, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (politic +3, Knowledge (nobilit +3, Ride +4, Speak Language (English, French, Spanish)

Elizabeth is the daughter of Lord John Wilton, a minor member of the House of Lords. She was bound for the Caribbean with her husband,

the PCs can defeat the specter (hard to do in a low-magic setting) I can ransack the lab, they will find a variety of poisons and the following drogues:

- a cutlass with a drogue hanging from the pommel, with 6 charges of *True Strike*
- A drogue sewn into a hat, with 4 charges of *Disguise Self*
- A drogue with 3 charges of *Featherfall*.

These drogues have no "owner" having not been given by Domino to anyone--they were created by the bokor to be used as a commodity, purchase favors from contacts.

The most important item in the room, however, is a carved crystal skull, which glows with a dim radiance. This is the magical container which Monsignor Domino uses to store the gros-bon-anges of zombi thralls. He who possess this skull, commands the zombi whose gros-bon-ange is contained within. The problem, however, is that the use of the crystal skull gradually changes the user's alignment towards Evil (Lawful Good will turn to Lawful Neutral, and then to Lawful Evil, etc.). Each day while in possession of the skull, the owner must make a Willpower Save at DC20, or have their alignment shift one place towards the evil side of the spectrum.

This is not something that Bobo worries about, as he is evil already. He needs the skull to control the zombified remains of his crew, so that he can sail the seas with a unquestioningly loyal crew, none of whom will demand a share of the booty.

Cell

This is a locked room used to be a small front bedroom, but Domino converted it for use as a cell for prisoners. There is no furniture, and prisoners are shackled to a iron ring mounted within a large stone wall in the center of the room.

band, James Mallory, who was to take over his family's plantation in Antigua, but their ship fell victim to a pirate attack, and Monsignor Domino was travelling with those pirates. Her husband was killed, and the bokor willingly gave up his share of the treasure in return for the custody of the sole prisoner. She has been held in shackles for the past 3 months. Domino's intentions towards her are probably best left unexplored.

8. Zombi Room

This room is where Domino creates his zombi slaves. The room is filled with tables where the victims are chained down while they undergo the bokor's conversion process. The room currently does not feature anyone awaiting conversion, but there are 4 new zombi here, who will be attracted by any noise upstairs and will come to investigate.

Finishing the Adventure

Bobo's plan is to use the PCs to fight the zombi while he retrieves the crystal skull. As soon as he has the skull in his possession, he will command the zombi to attack the players and their ship. If the PCs surrender, he will let them live, but maroon them on Isla de los Maldecidos, to face the wrath of Monsignor Domino upon his return.

If things turn badly for Bobo, he will try to escape, preferably by stealing a ship's boat--anything to get him off the island. If he gets away, the monkey will swear vengeance upon the PCs, and become a recurring villain.



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