

Boneflower and Boneflour

Yes, they're pronounced the same. And yes, it's supposed to be confusing (potentially lethally so). Necromancers will have their little jokes, particularly when they promise to be entertaining to watch.

The boneflower is descended from the dandelion, albeit one that has been mutated over the course of several generations by being grown in a bed of dirt thoroughly contaminated with ground-up bones taken from an Undead. A boneflower is stark white with grey leaves and sports a scent that is simultaneously mildly off-putting to mortals, and intoxicatingly wonderful to ghosts, spirits, and the Undead. Even a dried and pressed boneflower makes it much easier to summon such entities. Prolonged contact with a boneflower is not recommended for any mortal species; the flower is not exactly poisonous, but it's unpleasant to consume.

In contrast, boneflour is what one gets when a boneflower is ritually and carefully milled into a fine grey-white dust. Boneflour is absolutely toxic -- to ghosts, spirits, and the Undead; wards made out of it repel all sorts of inimical entities and ingesting boneflour will swiftly end a

supernatural possession of any sort. It's safe for mortals to ingest, and when mixed with water makes an acceptable face and body paint.

In other words, boneflower and boneflour have generally opposite effects, both mundane and supernatural. It would be helpful if the two items did not have such similar names -- but the professional necromantic community deliberately sets out to confuse the issue further. Written instructions and recipes deliberately, but not invariably, use the wrong name, and just as deliberately try to be as vague as possible about **how** one uses boneflower/boneflour in any particular ritual. Verbal communication by necromancers is, if anything, even more deliberately obfuscating, and typically done with an absolutely straight face.

Necromancers will typically not deign to explain why they do this, but the reason is straightforward enough: boneflower/boneflour confusion is an excellent way of weeding out outsiders, the willfully ignorant, and the unlucky. A necromancer will, of course, tell a favored apprentice when a ritual calls for one or the other; contrariwise, deliberately mixing up the two and waiting to see if the apprentice figures it out in time is a common enough test. One that can be hard on apprentices, to be

sure; but then, necromancy is not exactly a low-risk occupation anyway.

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