



the
LEGEND
of
MISTER
BONEAPART



A SKULL-ADJACENT ADVENTURE FOR
1st level characters



Introduction

The Legend of Mr Bone-apart is an adventure for 2-3 level 1 characters that takes place in the village of Barovia. Refer to Curse of Strahd for details on the village of Barovia and its inhabitants.

Synopsis

The Widow Bonaparte has discovered that someone keeps breaking into the tomb of her husband. Each morning, she finds the door to her small private mausoleum open, though nothing has been taken. She's convinced that someone is breaking in when she's asleep, so she hires the characters to investigate and keep an eye on the tomb for her. Alas, when the characters inspect the tomb, they find no trace of forced entry. Staking out the location at night, they discover the real source of the problem – the skeleton is alive! Each night it escapes from the tomb, chasing its own skull. The characters must capture the errant skeleton, and convince it to return to the tomb (along with its skull) – for good.

Running This Adventure

This adventure is standalone, and is designed for a group of 4 level one characters. Characters of a higher level are unlikely to find it to be a sufficient challenge, particularly when they gain access to second level spells and expertise.

To begin this adventure, the character must agree to solve a mystery for the Widow Bonaparte, who lives alone in a gloomy townhouse.

Characters who complete this adventure should advance to 2nd level.

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Interior Illustrators: Tallulah Cunningham Graphics, fonts and various assets licensed through creative commons, Adobe Stock Services, Unity, Artstation, Creative Market and others, individual licenses available on request. “Mandrake” first appearing in Bearthazar’s House of Familiars [2019].



Part One: The Widow Bonaparte

The town of Barovia is not a pleasant place, a stony grey town of eerie quiet and uncomfortable smells. You've been hired by the Widow Bonaparte to solve a mystery for her, and you are standing in her spacious living room, which is decorated in a gloomy fashion. She seems fond of the colour maroon, in which rather aggressively draped. "Oh, my poor husband," she wails. "He died so young. Well, young for this town. The sanitation alone takes about 5 years off the lifespan, you understand."

The Widow Bonaparte is desperate to hire some strangers to fix her rather unique problem.

Her husband is dead and was buried some years ago. As is tradition, the bones were bleached and placed in a tomb in the back garden.

Lately, the Widow Bonaparte keeps finding the door to the tomb ajar. She can't explain it.

"Oh, it's just so tragic," the widow despairs, billowing over to lounge seductively on a pianoforte. "To be so alone in this big house, and without a husband to care for me. It's almost too much to go on. But I would be so grateful..." she pauses and stares pointedly. "So incredibly grateful if someone could solve this mystery for me."

Nothing is missing from inside the tomb that she can see, though she will admit that construction was hasty and it still has a few holes in the walls.

"I had to cut some corners," she sniffs. "His funeral was so expensive. Yes, perhaps the arrangement of exotic animals was a little excessive, but I wanted only the best for my Henry. His coffin is made from pure Balinok marble, you know. Very exclusive."

The widow Bonaparte lives in a two-story house, with enough space for two people to live comfortably. She carries a small pouch of gold in a locked drawer in her desk, and she offers to pay the adventurers for their time. She also guilts them with extravagant displays of grief, with much gnashing of teeth.

"Of course, I can offer you compensation for your trouble," she says, fluttering her eyelashes and resting her arm on the mantelpiece where an ornate carriage clock is stuck at 1 minute to midnight.

"My means are limited, being a widow of no vocation, but I'm sure we can come to some arrangement that pleases everyone."

She directs them to the back garden when they are ready to inspect the scene of the crime(s).



The Widow Bonaparte

Part Two: The Back Garden

The back garden barely qualifies for the term, and is difficult terrain for most creatures. The door to the mausoleum is open. Looking around the garden reveals the following clues to characters that pass the relevant ability checks.

The Bonapart back garden is an unsightly affair drowning in weeds and drooping ivy. Near the back door of the house, a miniature mausoleum perhaps large enough for a single desultory coffin has been clumsily erected.

INTELLIGENCE (INVESTIGATION) DC 10

This mausoleum isn't finished properly. There are holes in the roof, and at ground level.

INTELLIGENCE (NATURE) DC 10

There are no animals in this garden. Are they frightened of something?

WISDOM (SURVIVAL) DC 10

There are faint footprints in this garden, but they are thin and strange. They appear to track all around the Mausoleum.

The mausoleum is constructed of grey stone, with a thick door, but the door itself is incredibly light and easy to move.

Inside the Mausoleum

Walls of dry stone are engraved with prayers for the dead. A stone tomb lies in the center – oddly, the casket is open, revealing the skeleton of the late Mr. Bonaparte. Crouching on the tomb is a rather wonky looking cat.

Heading inside the mausoleum during the day, the adventurers find themselves confronted by the late Mr. Bonaparte's cat, Mr. Niblets.

This ugly specimen of feline recalcitrance gives you a malevolent look before licking its own unmentionables with demonic fervour. It doesn't seem to want to help.

Mr Niblets has the statistics of a **cat**, but is a lawful evil fiend and likes tuna. It can also speak common, in a meowing kind-of-a-fashion, which it uses to question the interlopers. Mr Niblets didn't care for the Widow Bonaparte in life, and lives only to obstruct her in death. If attacked, Mr Niblets flees, yowling.

Inspection of the mausoleum can offer the following information:

INTELLIGENCE (INVESTIGATION) DC 10

The door was opened from the inside

INTELLIGENCE (THIEVES' TOOLS) DC 15

This lock was picked recently, by something that wasn't designed for it.

WISDOM (SURVIVAL) DC 10

There are no muddy footprints, which is peculiar if someone broke in.

This is a cat. It is also an asshole.



The Casket

The tomb of Mr Boneapart is the salient feature of the mausoleum.

Detect magic reveals a faint aura of necromantic magic around the skull.

INTELLIGENCE (MEDICINE) DC 15

This skeleton has all kinds of scratch marks over it. The head is very loose.

WISDOM (MASON'S TOOLS) DC 15

There are holes in the walls of this mausoleum near the floor

Continuing the Investigation

Both Mr. Niblets and the Widow Bonaparte will encourage the characters to stay and stake out the night near the mausoleum, in order to discover who or what is breaking in (or out) of the tomb.

Part Three: The Stake Out

You wait in the dark for something suspicious to happen. It is quiet here, and the moon shines down from above, illuminating the mausoleum in silver hues. Then, suddenly, a clatter.

The Skull

On the stroke of midnight, the **Skull of Mr. Bonaparte** makes a bid for freedom.

The skull rolls out through one of the holes in the mausoleum walls, and begins to zoom around the garden about 15 ft off the ground, cackling quietly to itself.

The Skeleton

About 6 seconds after the skull escapes the tomb, the **Skeleton of Mr. Bonaparte** gets up (headless), looks around confusedly, and gingerly gets up out of the casket, heading for the door. If unmolested, the skeleton picks the lock to the mausoleum with a bony finger and enter the garden. There, it begins to impotently chase the skull around in circles, getting whipped and lashed by plants as the skull floats gleefully above it.

SKULL OF MR. BONE-APART

Small undead, neutral evil

Armour Class 13

Hit Points 40 (9d4+18)

Speed 0ft., fly 40ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances Necrotic, Piercing

Damage Immunities Cold, Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned, Prone

Senses passive perception 12

Languages Common

Avoidance. If the skull is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Flyby. The skull doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Boop. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 bludgeoning damage.



This is a skull.

Capturing the Skull

The skull is floating a little above ground level, and could be hard to reach. Some characters might be tall or strong enough to jump and grab it, and others might have magic like *jump* to help them in their efforts. Alternatively, knocking the skull prone can put an end to its antics, allowing a character to seize hold of it with an opposed Strength (Athletics) ability check opposed by the skull's Dexterity (Acrobatics). Sitting on the skull is (perhaps) the most efficient way to prevent it escaping.

Capturing the Skeleton

The skeleton of Mr Boneapart rises, clad in armour and still carrying his family sword, to attempt to capture the skull. Alas, as the skeleton is blind and deaf without the skull, this proves a challenging task. If un disturbed, the skeleton rampages around the garden chasing the whimsical skull. The skeleton reacts with violence if it is assaulted, laying about itself frantically with its longsword.

If and when the characters manage to subdue both the skeleton and the skull, proceed to Part Four.

SKELETON OF MR. BONE-APART

Medium undead, unaligned

Armour Class 18 (plate armor)

Hit Points 13 (2d8+4)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities Bludgeoning

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses can't see or hear, passive perception 4

Languages understands common but can't speak

Skull Sense. The Skeleton of Mr Bone-apart can always sense the location of the Skull of Mr Bone-apart relative to its own location

ACTIONS

Stabby Stab. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

PERILS OF THE BOTANICAL VARIETY

The Bonaparte garden is a verdant disaster zone, containing all kinds of means by which to bedevil and confound parties who look like they might capture the skull and skeleton too easily.

Petunias of Death. The garden is home to a variety of violent and highly territorial petunias and other garden flowers in decorative plant pots that advance on the intruders with malice. These use the statistics of **awakened shrubs**.

The Mandrake. A whimpering sound is perceptible in the south-western corner of the garden. A blubbing plant pot has been abandoned here. It has a small warning card on it in elvish reading "Caution: Mandrake."

Razorvine. For some inexplicable reason, Lady Bonapart enjoys growing Razorvine all over her garden. Razorvine has AC 11, 25 hit points, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage. When a creature comes into direct contact with razorvine for the first time on a turn, the creature must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) slashing damage from the razorvine's bladelike thorns.



Part Four:

Putting Mr. Bonaparte to Bed

The skeleton looks plaintively at you, and gestures for you to return its head. It seems to want to say something.

Attaching the head back to Mr. Bonaparte is no mean feat, as the treacherous brain-cradle flies off unless it is secured or held in place. A successful DC10 Dexterity (Medicine) ability check allows a character to temporarily fix the skull on its neck the right way around. Regardless, holding it in the proper place on the skeleton's neck allows it to speak in a rasping voice.

"Oh thank goodness", the skeleton says, wheezing. "I can't seem to help losing my head these days. I'm afraid the habit seems to have stuck post-mortem. Every night my head flies off, and I have to catch it. It's very tiring – no-one told me death would be this inconvenient, or I wouldn't have bothered."

In order to lay Mr. Bonaparte to Bed, the adventurers must find a way to stop the skull escaping. Mr. Bonaparte isn't sure why his skull is so keen to escape his shoulders.

A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN

There are a number of ways the adventurers might seek to solve the Bonapart dilemma.

ATTACHING THE SKULL.

A character proficient in relevant tools can attempt to secure the skull to the skeleton with a successful DC15 Strength (Tools) check. Alternatively, an adhesive can be concocted with alchemists supplies using Intelligence, or another creative way at your discretion. In any of these cases, Mr Bonaparte continues to rise each night, but at least he is whole.

CREMATION.

An impromptu cremation destroys the bulk of the bones, and offends Lady Bonapart beyond measure. Mr. Boneapart rises as a specter the next night, and is not amused.

SANCTIFYING THE TOMB.

The tomb can be sanctified with a *ceremony* spell or by anointing the tomb with holy water. In this instance Mr Bonapart no longer rises from the dead each night.

CLOSING THE HOLES

The tomb can be attended to with Mason's Tools over the course of 1 hour, which closes all the gaps through which the skull (having no arms to open the door) usually escapes. With the lack of an exit, the nightly jaunts of Mr. Bone-apart are constricted to inside the mausoleum, and Lady Boneapart is none the wiser unless she is informed.

This is a gravestone. It is thematic.



Epilogue:

The Widow Bones-together

Lady Bonaparte wafts over to you, dabbing a handkerchief to her eyes. "Oh, I've been so dreadfully worried," she says, eyeing you all suspiciously. "Have you solved the mystery for me?" She continues to gaze at you like a hawk, if a hawk were trussed up in a corset and given a lemon to suck on.

The widow's reaction to the party's actions depends largely on the result of their interaction with the skeleton. If the characters harmed the skeleton of her beloved husband and she finds out, she descends into a frothing rage and refuses to pay them, on account of their "irresponsible behaviour". If the skeleton was returned to a relatively peaceful sleep, and the tomb patched up in the important places, then she waits one more night (to see if the problem is solved) before paying them as promised. Mr Niblets hates everyone either way

Maybe give them some experience or something. IDK. Perhaps the Widow Bonaparte allows them to keep a Mandrake, or insists they take Mr Niblets. Honestly, she really wants to get rid of that cat. It's a nuisance, and definitely almost probably not a spy for the evil vampire Strahd von Zarovich.

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MANDRAKE

Tiny plant, neutral evil

Armour Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 10 (3d4+3)

Speed 5ft, 0ft whilst planted

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	1 (-5)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Senses passive perception 9

Languages understands draconic but can't speak

Planted. A mandrake must remain planted in soil, or perish in 1d4 rounds.

Scream. A mandrake unwillingly uprooted lets off a lethal scream. Every creature that can hear it must succeed on a DC10 Charisma saving throw or drop to 0 hit points.

A creature that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Scream of all Mandrakes for the next 24 hours.

Powerful Sap. The mandrake can secrete a potent sap which acts as a potion of healing. This sap can be held indefinitely, but after it has been collected once, the Mandrake must be buried under fresh soil for three consecutive days before it can be collected again.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

