

ONE GRAVE IN EVERY graveyard belongs to the ghouls. Wander any graveyard long enough and you will find it—water stained and bulging, with cracked or broken stone, scraggly grass or rank weeds about it, and a feeling, when you reach it, of abandonment. It may be colder than the other gravestones, too, and the name on the stone is all too often impossible to read. If there is a statue on the grave it will be headless or so scabbed with fungus and lichens as to look like a fungus itself. If one grave in a graveyard looks like a target for petty vandals, that is the ghoul-gate. If the grave makes you want to be somewhere else, that is the ghoul-gate. There was one in Bod's graveyard.

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Bod fell, tumbling through the darkness like a lump of marble, too startled to be scared, wondering how deep the hole beneath that grave could possibly be, when two strong hands caught him beneath the armpits and he found himself swinging forward through the pitch-blackness. Bod had not

experienced total darkness for many years. In the graveyard, he saw as the dead see, and no tomb or grave or crypt was truly dark to him. Now he was in utter darkness, feeling himself being pitched forward in a sequence of jerks and rushes, the wind rushing past him. It was frightening, but it was also exhilarating. And then there was light, and everything changed. The sky was red, but not the warm red of a sunset. This was an angry, glowering red, the color of an infected wound. The sun was small and seemed like it was old and distant. The air was cold and they were descending a wall. Tombstones and statues jutted out of the side of the wall, as if a huge graveyard had been upended, and, like three wizened chimpanzees in tattered black suits that did up in the back, the Duke of Westminster, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the Honorable Archibald Fitzhugh were swinging from statue to stone, dangling Bod between them as they went, tossing him from one to another, never missing him, always catching him with ease, without even looking. Bod tried to look up, to see the grave through which they had entered this strange world, but he could see nothing but headstones.