Resurrection Man
By Moe Lane

It struck me, as I wielded my trusty screwdriver on the crypt face, that I'm supposed to be *dodging* ghosts, not accepting jobs from them. And that typically my job description was 'remove bodies from cemeteries,' not… well, let me tell the story in order.

To start off with: yes, I am a Resurrection Man. No, not like the guys in the movies or television. Seriously, **not** like in the movies or television. I mean, sure: I steal corpses and sell them to people who need dead body parts to fuel their industrial necromantic spells. But there's not much *romance* in it, and almost no brooding. Most people these days pre-sell at least their skeletons to the robotics companies ahead of time, and the more gloppy bits either come along for the ride, or also get pre-sold if the aforementioned bits are valuable enough. I mostly get called in for specialized jobs. Ones where the mourners don't want their Uncle Bob being carved up for 'dark rituals,' and never mind that he had an uniquely useful death. Or ones where the necromantic recipe requires that a body part be 'stolen under a full moon,' or something else that's equally weirdly specific. In other words, I'm a professional who needs to maintain certain standards.

And I don't carry weapons on a job. I'm a **burglar** who **steals corpses**. I don't need the cops thinking that I'm a violent nutcase, too.

So now that I've set the scene: this is my best ghost story. It started when I got a call from… never mind who. Somebody who heard that there was a guy wanted to talk to a Resurrection Man, and who thought that I'd be interested in knowing that. So I went on over. People who want to do face-to-face meets typically pay more, thanks again to television and

movies. Besides, I can usually spot a cop who's not trying to arrange a side deal for the department…

...Oh, yeah, didn't you know? Turns out that the tooth of a hanged poisoner can be used to deflect bullets. Only, there's a hell of a backlog on that one, and local law enforcement personnel aren't always high up on the waiting list. Also: and that's why they brought back hanging. You can pretty much use every bit of a hanged corpse for **something**.

But I digress.

Anyway, the guy I met with wasn't a cop; he was a spirit medium, and a real one. You can tell the real ones by the way that they're always swatting at the air and telling unseen figures to shut up. He was pathetically grateful to see me, too: the sooner he gave me the job, the sooner one particular ghost would shut up.

And the job? Well, it was tricky. Turns out that the ghost - I don't know how the specter paid for this, and I don't care - wanted to do a switcheroo. There was a corpse (not going to name names, but you should be able to figure it out) in one Los Angeles cemetery that needed to be moved to a specific spot in a second Los Angeles cemetery, and there was a *second* corpse in the second Los Angeles cemetery that needed to be somehow shown that the *first* corpse was in fact now in that second cemetery, and then returned to the second corpse's original crypt. I would also be paid more if I urinated on the second corpse's crypt at that point. And, oh, yeah, nobody was supposed to know that I did any of this.

Hey, it took me three tries to work out what the client wanted, too. I would have probably have said 'no,' except that the money was in fact pretty good even by my standards and I found the entire thing morbidly fascinating. Tricky, but fascinating. And it was fascinating… just not in the way that I thought.

Removing a body from a cemetery is surprisingly easy, as long as you can bribe the right people (or, if you're fortunate enough to work in New England, you have the right connections with the local ghoul warren). And it turned out that the first part of my job was already done; the first corpse had been quietly moved to the second cemetery years ago. Which simplified matters - the second cemetery was one of those celebrity Hollywood ones, which meant that bribing somebody to bring someone in permanently would be highly expensive (and trying to bribe somebody to bring someone **out** would be futile). Moving a corpse around for a while… ah, how hard could it be?

(Almost) famous last words. As I discovered when I came to move the second set of remains. It takes a certain kind of sheer bloody-mindedness to booby-trap a corpse. Most people who might bother don't bother; they figure that attaching a noisemaker to the inside of the coffin is enough. Of course, they figure the same thing about cars and car alarms, and look how many of **those** get stolen every day? What made it especially fascinating is that this guy first got buried at the turn of the century, which meant that somebody put that trap in before I was even born. Which is why it didn't go off, probably. I'd be more upset, except that the damned thing looked like it was designed to destroy the corpse more than anything else. Weird - I mean, necromancy didn't really take off until about 2023 or so, so it's not like they should have been worried about Undead back then - but not really relevant.

The rest of the gig was a snap: dump Corpse #2 in a bag, sling the bag over the shoulder, go over to Corpse #1's hidden resting place under her centopath, nod and pay off the nice security guards each way, return Corpse #2, help my new security guard buddies chase down some idiot with a college necromantic textbook who was trying to fast-resurrect Bugsy Siegel (I don't know *what* they're teaching kids in schools these days). Then it was a quick car ride back to the medium, who paid me off on the

ghost's behalf and I was done for the day. As I said: it's not really a romantic gig, this business. If I'm in any kind of physical or supernatural trouble, something's gone wrong. Really, really wrong. I'm not into that.

I mean, I didn't even piss on the crypt like the ghost asked. That's, like, public nuisance territory and I could go to **jail** over it.