



A Graveyard for Lunatics

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In *A GRAVEYARD FOR LUNATICS: ANOTHER TALE OF TWO CITIES*, Ray Bradbury focuses on a major Hollywood film studio, Maximus Films, and the cemetery across the way, Green Glades, as the setting for his novel, his two cities. The narrator, a young scriptwriter, is modeled on Bradbury--he doesn't drive a car, he is enamored of the film industry, and he discovers a man with a hideously deformed face who will become the pivotal point of the novel.

Fittingly, the story begins Halloween night, 1954, when the narrator, recently hired to do a monster picture for Maximus Films, is enticed to the graveyard by an anonymous note, promising him a story idea. He goes, only to find a body on top of a ladder with the face of the former head of the film studio, reported dead twenty years before in a car accident. This is an intriguing and dramatic premise for a complicated novel in which the author mixes fantasy with mystery.

Unfortunately, the reader is then led through a maze of stereotypical characters--the good-old-boy detective, the overbearing and rude studio exec, the foul-mouthed foreign film director, and so on--faces a lot of rapid-fire dialogue, and, apparently, finds much ado about nothing. The intuitive reader will have to wait patiently as the narrator slowly comes to the fairly evident outcome, which is disappointing considering the amount of blood and tears shed along the way.

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