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Opening extract from
**Stitch Head III – The Ghost of
Grotteskew**

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PROLOGUE

THE BARGAIN

(A timely end for
Mawley Crackbone)

The moon was full over Grubbers Nubbin, the night Mawley Crackbone met his timely end.

The townsfolk gathered round the body in a circle, not quite able to believe what had happened.

“Is ... is he really gone?”

“Ard to know.”

“He ain’t movin’ ... Poke him to be sure.”

“*You* poke him.”

“Not a chance! I ... I haven’t got a pokin’ stick.”

“Here – borrow mine.”

“If you’ve got a stick, why ain’t *you* pokin’ him?”

“I ... I’ve been pokin’ stuff all day! My pokin’ arm’s tired.”

“*No one’s poking anyone,*” hissed a voice. The townsfolk parted. A tall, wiry man in a long, white coat slid into the centre of the circle like a snake and stood over the body of Mawley Crackbone.

“We have an *arrangement,*” the man said. “Mr Crackbone is no longer a problem for the people of Grubbers Nubbin ... thanks to my particularly potent poison. Now I am here to collect what is mine.”

The townsfolk edged nervously away from the body. Then the mayor of Grubbers Nubbin straightened his tie and stepped forward.



“Of – of course, good sir. He’s all yours,” said the mayor. “But what do you intend to *do* with him?”

The man’s lizard eyes flashed in the moonlight.

“That’s my business,” replied the man. “A deal’s a deal – no questions asked.”

“Of course,” said the mayor, retreating into the crowd. “And – thank you for your help ... *professor.*”

“Don’t thank me yet,” said the man as he struggled to drag the body one-handed back up the hill. “You haven’t seen the last of Mawley Crackbone. Ah-HAHAHAHAHA!”

CASTLE GROTTEKKEW

Yesteryear
(Some time after *Ye Olden Days*)

