
THE FOURTH CHAPTER

A TOUR OF THE
CASTLE

(monsters, ghosts,
and everything in-between)



*High above
The castle loomed,
And while it stood
The town was doomed.*



“I LOVE castles! I mean, I think I do...” said the Creature, following a reluctant Stitch Head into the shadowy depths of Grotteskew. “This is DEFINITELY the most exciting thing that has happened to me EVER. Even if I can only really remember the last twenty min — AAAAH!”

The Creature froze, as a strange, inhuman shape emerged from the darkness, dragging itself into the moonlit corridor. It had a huge grey skull, with tentacles whipping out of its eye-sockets, and three metallic legs, each of which walked with a limp. It gurgled and dripped thick brown slime from its mouth as it shuffled towards them.

“MONSTER! Run, Stitch Head, RUN!” screamed the Creature. Before Stitch Head could hide, it scooped him into its third hand and lumbered as fast as it could down the corridor, smashing through yet another wall and leaving a Creature-shaped hole.

“Well, I never! How very rude,” said the skull monster.

“P-p-please ... s-s-stop!” stammered Stitch Head, as the Creature ran and smashed as if its almost-life depended on it. With its two massive arms, it punched its way into a large stone hallway. It retreated as best it could into a dark corner and clutched Stitch Head under its hairy chin.

“I totally thought that monster was going to bite off our heads and tear the flesh from our bones and EVERYTHING!” whimpered the Creature. “Do you think we lost him?”

“You’re holding me very tightly,” choked Stitch Head, his ice-blue eye bulging out of its socket as the Creature squeezed the breath from his tiny body.

“Sorry! This third arm is stronger than it looks. Also, I’m pretty sure this is the first time I’ve had a third arm, but my memory’s hazy...” said the

Creature. “Right, what are we going to— AAAH!
MONSTERS! MONSTERS GALORE!”



The hallway seemed to writhe and shift as if it were alive. Slowly, more bizarre beasts began to emerge from the shadows. One after the other they came – each more impossible and terrifying than the last. Wherever Stitch Head and the Creature looked, there were monsters of every

description – a six-armed slug, a giant fish with clockwork feet, a steam-powered skull... Monsters, creatures, mad things!



“We’re going to be eaten! I don’t WANT to be eaten! I’m only twenty-three minutes old!” screamed the Creature, squeezing Stitch Head even more tightly.

“*Can’t ... breathe...*” wheezed Stitch Head.

As the foul beasts shambled towards them, groaning and hissing, a disembodied head with

hands growing out of its chin scuttled past a slime-covered chicken-dog.

“Good morrow, Oliver! A fine night for skulking in the shadows, wouldn’t you agree?” said the head.

“Peter, old chap! It’s been an age! How’s the wife?” replied the chicken-dog.

Before long, all the monsters were greeting each other as they passed by. Some were small and crudely put together, while others were huge and made up of a dozen or more hideously different parts. But despite their impossible monstrosity and stomach-wrenching ugliness, each monster was surprisingly pleasant. After its initial horror (and just a *little* bit more screaming and running), the Creature began greeting every new abomination with growing enthusiasm: “Um, hello, leggy-head-thing!” “Hello, flappy-cat-thing!” “How do you do, slimy-worm-thing!” Before long it was

shaking appendages with everyone. These were the nicest unnatural horrors it had ever met!

“These are the nicest unnatural horrors I’ve ever met, Stitch Head,” remarked the Creature. It looked down into its third hand.

It was empty. Stitch Head was gone!

“Oh NO! I must have dropped him! Stitch Head? Where ARE you, Stitch Head?” cried the Creature. It barrelled through the gathered creations, asking anyone and everyone if they had seen its lost friend.

“Stitch Head? Never heard of him! And nor have I!” said a two-headed rat-cow.

“What an odd name! He should try something more *creaturey* ... like Lesley or Archibald!” said a bat-winged eyeball.

“Stitch Head, Stitch Head ... doesn’t ring a bell,” said a three-eyed brain on metal spider’s legs.

“Does this Stitch Head have any distinguishing features – anything we might remember?”

“DISTINGUISHED features? Hmm, nothing springs to mind,” said the Creature, wracking its brain and scratching its chin with its third arm. “Wait...”

With a single finger from one of its mightier hands, the Creature gouged a simple sketch of Stitch Head in the hard stone floor. The gathered creations watched with fascination as a portrait of the stitch-faced stranger appeared.

“Those stitches in his head! Why, that’s the *Ghost of Grotteskew* – I’d bet my brain on it,” said the three-eyed brain-spider.



“By jingo, you’re right!” said an electric-powered lizard-man. “Why, I haven’t seen the ghost since I was awoken. He totally cured my vampirism!”

“The ghost? WHAT ghost?” asked the Creature.

“The Ghost of Grotteskew! He’s helped dozens of us creations. On the day I was created, he appeared from the darkness and gave me a tonic for my obsessive man-eating disorder,” said an

oozing swamp monster. “I’ve been clean and non-man-eating for 1,021 days!”

“I didn’t even have time to thank him for sorting out a pretty nasty case of werewolfism,” added a hulking hairball with coiled claws. “‘Stay out of the full moon!’ he said, and then vanished into the shadows.”

“Stay out of the full MOON!” repeated the Creature. “That’s what he said to ME!”

“Lately, it seems that *all* the professor’s creations start out bite-off-your-head bonkers – until the Ghost of Grotteskew pays them a visit,” added the three-eyed brain-spider. “From the roars we heard earlier, it sounds like he cured someone just today.”

The Creature was more confused than ever. Was its bestest friend a *ghost*? This strange news only made it more determined to find Stitch Head. It said its goodbyes and began making its way deeper into the castle.

“Stitch Head! Stiiiiitch Heeeeeaaaad!” the Creature cried, as it smashed its way through the castle. (And occasionally, “MUUUMMY!” even though it didn’t remember having a mummy.)

After several minutes of searching (and screaming), the Creature found itself alone in a wide, echoing hall. Its deafening cries rang out through the castle, threatening to shake Grotteskew from its foundations.

“Stitch Head! I only remember the last thirty-eight minutes, but in that time, you’ve been the **BESTEST** friend I’ve **EVER** had! Come back, Stitch Head, come **BACK!** Stitch Head!”