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Opening extract from

Witchworld

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A NOTE TO ALL WITCHKIDS

My grandma is eighty-three – and you know what she uses to do spells? A wand. A real old-style wand.

I know. I know. She's probably the only witch in the whole of Witchworld who still does. It's a long black thing, and she has to wave it about and say magic words – lots of them – to make it work. And it's much bigger and slower than a spellstick. But Grandma will NOT be parted from it.

Mum bought her a top-of-the-range spellstick – touchscreen, lime green and with extra-big graphics because Grandma's eyes aren't that good. But Grandma just snorted and turned it into a toad.

Which is what Grandma's like. Stubborn and grumpy and rude.

Also bossy. VERY bossy. It was Grandma who bossed me into writing this book. Grandma said I should tell you my story. She said witchkids need to know about ghouls.

And Grandma is right. You witchkids do need to know about ghouls. Need to know the signs to watch out for. Need to know, if you spot even a hint of a ghoul, to act - FAST.

So here it is. The book that Grandma bossed me into writing. A book about the ghoul attack in Haggspit. Written by a witchkid who was there, part of it, from the very start.

I've tried to be truthful. I've tried to tell it exactly how it was. I hope you find the book useful.

And remember, witchkids. Stay alert. At all times stay alert...

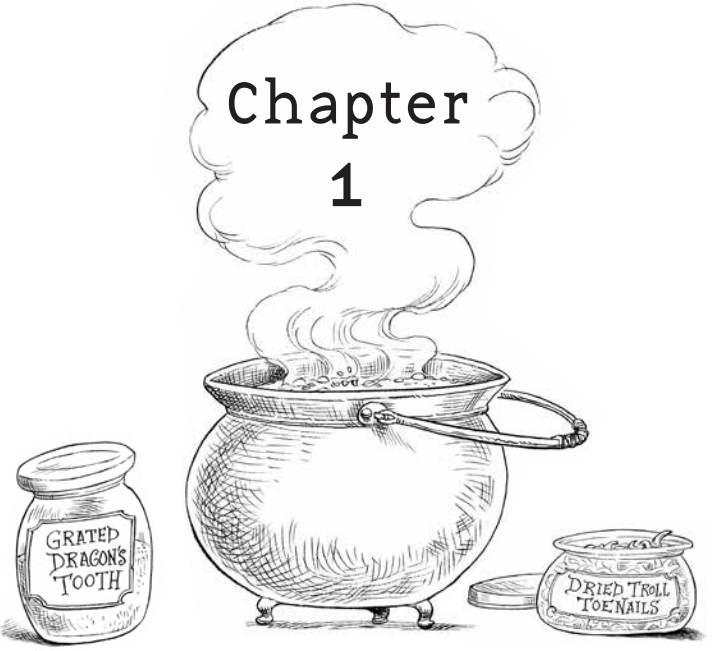
VERY alert.

Florence Skritchett

Part One



Chapter 1



I'm Florence Skritchett – known as Flo – and I live in Haggspit, the capital of South Witchenland.

My house is in Upper Haggspit, near the top of Moaning Mountain. It's a cave-style house, wide and low and light, and all on one floor. And it's big, because Mum makes lots of money.

Not long ago I lived there with just Mum and Hetty, my sister. But one morning, that all changed…

That morning – Saturday – started like Saturdays usually do.

I was in the kitchen, alone, eating my breakfast.

Then I heard wailing from the other side of the house, which meant Hetty was awake.

Because Hetty does the same thing most mornings. Wakes up, looks in the mirror – and starts wailing.

I heard her feet stomp out of her bedroom and along the corridor, then – *Bam!* – the kitchen door burst open and in Hetty stomped. "Flo, I hate my nose," she wailed. "It's too small. Too neat. Not even one bump! It's just not witchy enough."

Then she flung herself on to a breakfast bar stool and smoke started pouring out of her ears, like it always does when she's upset.

Oh. The nose…

Hetty has just finished her witchsits, and she's almost sixteen – and you know what she wants for her birthday?

A nose-job potion.

I had to say something, so I did. Because I do love my sister – well, most of the time – but she can be extremely shallow.

"Hetty," I said. "There are only ninety-five forest pixies left in the whole of Witchworld – and what are you worrying about? Your nose."

Hetty ignored me, like she nearly always does when I talk about forest pixies. She just grabbed my arm. "Flo, what can I do?" she wailed. "I'll never



EVER get a boyfriend. Not with a nose like this!"

Just then Mum came sweeping into the kitchen.

Now, maybe your mum would say something sensible. Something like, "Don't worry, Hetty. Witchy noses come in lots of shapes and sizes." Or, "You're still growing, Hetty. There's plenty of time for your nose to sprout lovely big bumps." Or even, "Hetty, a nice witchboy won't care about your nose, he'll care about your character."

I do NOT have a mum like that. More's the pity.

"Darling," Mum said. "I've found you the perfect nose." Then she waved this week's copy of *Hocus Pocus* at Hetty.

Hocus Pocus. The weekly magazine – top seller, although I have no idea why. It's got no actual important news at all. It's just gossip and scandal and pictures of famous witchscreen stars on holiday, with arrows added on, pointing at their wobbling bits.

And I'm sorry to say, my mum is boss of it.

Now Mum was leaning over Hetty and pointing at a picture of a pouty sort of witch wearing skintight robes – very short – with a lot of cut-out bits, posing on the green carpet. "Zoe Shreek," it said underneath. "Star of *Premonition*."

I took a look. Whoever Zoe Shreek was, she had

an extremely witchy nose, long and pointy, and with three bony bumps.

Then Mum patted Hetty on the head. "Not long to wait," she said kindly, because – as I'm sure you know – it's illegal to buy a nose-job potion for anyone under sixteen. "Then we'll sort that sad little nose of yours out."

Which is about as mumsy as Mum gets.

And soon after that, Mum swept Hetty out of the kitchen to get ready. They were off shopping for witchwear, because Hetty's school Prom is in one week's time – which means when Hetty's not wailing about her nose, she's wailing about having nothing to wear to her Prom.

I think there's a witchboy who's going that she likes…

Good luck to him, that's all I can say.



The kitchen stretches along one side of my house. It's got curved walls, and curved doors off it. One wall is all windows, floor to ceiling, with big views out. So, sitting at the kitchen table – which I was – I could see across the garden and down the mountain to Haggspit Harbour, way way below.

I could see something else too.

What looked like a tiny black bird, bobbing and

weaving along Skyway 121, making its way up Moaning Mountain.

Except, as it got closer and bigger, I realised it wasn't a bird. It was a witch. An old witch. Riding a broomstick, an actual old-style broomstick…

An old witch dressed in long robes, black as black, like something out of my witchhistory book…

An old witch wearing a big pointy hat with stars on it…

It could only be one old witch.

Grandma.