



THE MISSING MONSTER MAKER



YOUR EYES ARE CLOSED. YOU'RE leaning back in your chair and drifting off when a low gravelly voice disturbs you.

"Hey, I don't pay you to snooze. Look sharp!"

A familiar white furry face looms over you. Two oily black eyes. One wet pink nose. This is Klaus Solstaag: a private investigator, your boss and a yeti.

"I nip out for five minutes and when I get back I find you taking a nap. I know you said you had a bad night's sleep but I need you alert now."

Klaus turns on one of the many fans. The cold breeze makes you sit bolt upright. It catches a pile of newspapers, blowing them around the already messy office.

"We have a visitor," he says.

You've learned a lot about Haventry since Klaus hired you as his assistant. For the most part, it's a quiet, ordinary town, but its shady side is home to every mythical being imaginable – and even a few you never dared to imagine.

The hairs on your arms stand on end as a shadow appears at the frosted windowpane. You never know who or what will walk through that door next.

When it does suddenly swing open, a man in a white lab coat bursts into the room. On his head, he wears a pair of goggles strapped over an explosion of white hair.

"Dr Franklefink," says Klaus.

"Detective Inspector Solstaag," replies the man.

"Actually, it's plain old Mr Solstaag since I quit the Unusual Police Force," says Klaus.

"Sorry, yes. Force of habit," replies the doctor. "It's a good thing you're no longer with the UPF, though. I need someone independent and trustworthy." His eyes swivel round to you. "Who's this?"

"My new assistant," says Klaus.

"What happened to your last one?"

"Ah, poor old Edwin the Elf went in to investigate that bottomless well behind the supermarket and never came out," says Klaus. "I did warn him that you can't get to the bottom of every single mystery."

Klaus chuckles but you wonder whether it's really a joke. How many assistants has he had? How many has he lost?

Dr Franklefink addresses you directly. "It's dangerous, working with this yeti. You should be careful. Hold on, are you ... a human?"

Before you can answer, Klaus says, "Need I remind you that you are also human, doctor?"

"Yes, but—"

Klaus interrupts. "Let me assure you that my assistant is both discreet and diligent. Now, please take a seat and tell me what we can do for you."

The doctor hesitates, then reluctantly sits down.

"Someone has stolen a very precious object from me," says Dr Franklefink. "It is the most valuable

piece of equipment I own – made by my great-great-grandfather. It is called..." The doctor stands up, raises his arms to the ceiling and cries, "The Monster Maker!"

Klaus coughs politely and the doctor sits back down.

"Sorry," he says. "Force of habit. But you must return it to me. Since my great-great-grandfather created it, each generation of Franklefinks has used it to weave the purple hair that brings our creations to life."



He pulls out a handful of photographs showing various monsters. The older photos are black and white but those in colour reveal that all the monsters have the same bright purple hair.

"Talk us through what happened," says Klaus. "Let's start with the last time you saw this contraption."

"I saw it yesterday morning when I went into the lab to check that everything was going according to plan."

"Working on a new monster, are you?" asks Klaus.

"Oh yes," says the doctor, eyes wide with excitement. "A beautiful monster, my masterpiece. This one will overshadow all my other creations."

"You've only ever made one," says Klaus. "Talking of which, how is Monty?"

"He's a good boy but he needs a mother. That is why I'm creating..." He pauses for dramatic effect. "Enormelda!"

Klaus laughs and the doctor looks offended.

"Sorry," says Klaus. "I mean... No, it's a lovely name."

"It is and yet she lies lifeless – and *hairless* – on my lab table. I cannot complete the project without the Monster Maker."

Klaus checks that you have your notepad at the ready. He relies on you to jot down all the facts.

He may be a brilliant detective but, as the messy office indicates, his organizational skills are lacking. That's why he needs you.

"When did you realize it was missing?" Klaus asks the doctor.

"Late yesterday afternoon," the doctor replies.

"My son had some friends over for a party. After they'd left, I discovered that the Monster Maker was gone."

"What does it look like, this Monster Maker?"

"I have a picture." He shows you one of the monster photos. In the background is a metal object that looks like an old-fashioned sewing machine, covered in cogs and with steam billowing out of the top.

"Is it heavy?" asks Klaus.

"Well, it's obviously light enough for someone to walk off with, otherwise I wouldn't be here, would I?" replies the doctor irritably.



Klaus winks at you. The doctor may not like all these questions but you both know how important every detail can be in a case like this.

"Talk us through the day," says Klaus.

"Very well." The doctor sighs. "After I left the lab, I went to find Monty. I called for him but, before I could locate him, there was a knock at the door. It was Witches' Oven, the catering company. It's run by two witches, Burnella and Bridget Milkbird. The food isn't great, but they're cheap."

"Hm, I know those two," says Klaus. "They've both stirred up trouble over the years."

"I don't think they had anything to do with it," says the doctor. "All they stir up is inedible food."

"Rule number one," says Klaus. "No one is above suspicion."

Your boss gives Dr Franklefink a long hard stare. It's clear to you that he's implying even the doctor himself should be on your list of suspects, but Dr Franklefink shrugs it off. "I just don't want you to waste your time talking to them."

"Even if they didn't take it, they might have seen something," says Klaus. "So what happened next?"

"I showed the witches to the kitchen, then heard another knock at the door. This time it was

the entertainer I booked for the party, Deadzo the zombie clown."

"He sounds like a barrel of laughs," replies Klaus.

"I usually use the illusionist The Great Impossible, but Monty said he wanted something different this year, as he's nine now. Making balloon animals that run around the room is all well and good but I think that nine-year-olds require more sophisticated entertainment."

"Such as a zombie clown?" Klaus looks amused.

"Precisely. Although I got the impression he thought it was all a bit beneath him. Anyway, I showed Deadzo to the party room, then went to find Monty. He was outside trying the new bike I'd given him. I'd added rocket boosters to it! I didn't really want him to go for a ride until I'd tightened his stitches, though. Monty's very delicate. I don't allow him to go to the hairdressers in case they nip a stitch and unravel him. I was young when I made him..."

"I see. But his stitching was OK, was it?" asks Klaus.

"Oh yes, a couple of them were coming loose around the right ear but nothing much."

"Tell me about the party," says Klaus.

"What's to say? Monty's friends arrived, Deadzo did his thing, everyone had a good time, the

food came out, followed by the cake. Then, once everyone had gone home, I went back to the lab and discovered that the Monster Maker was gone."

"How many friends were there?"

"Five. There was Lana. She's a ghost. I wouldn't waste much time on her. I'm not even sure she can pick up things and besides, she's pretty transparent. I mean, you can literally see through her."

The doctor sniggers at his joke but Klaus is concentrating. "Do carry on," he urges.

"Monty invited the goblin twins Grundle and Grinola Squelch as well," says Dr Franklefink. "They were dropped off by their grandma, Ma Squelch. However, it turned out that they're allergic to milk so they reacted rather badly to the cake. This morning I had to have my whole house professionally cleaned!"

"Goblins and trouble go together like cold days and hot chocolate," Klaus explains to you.

"And then there was Trisha Cry's lad, Huey."

"They're werewolves," Klaus informs you.

"But your prime suspects should be the Stokers," says Dr Franklefink. "Bobby is Monty's best friend, but it's his bloodsucking father, Bramwell, who I really don't trust. Yes, that vampire is by far the most likely culprit."

"If you're so sure, why do you need me?" asks Klaus. "And, while we're at it, why didn't you call the Unusual Police Force?"

"I need you to find the proof that reveals Bramwell Stoker is the thief." Dr Franklefink gets up to leave but then he pauses at the door. "The UPF are all very well and good, but they can be rather slow and I need results quickly. You can find me at City Chamber tonight – brings your findings to me there."

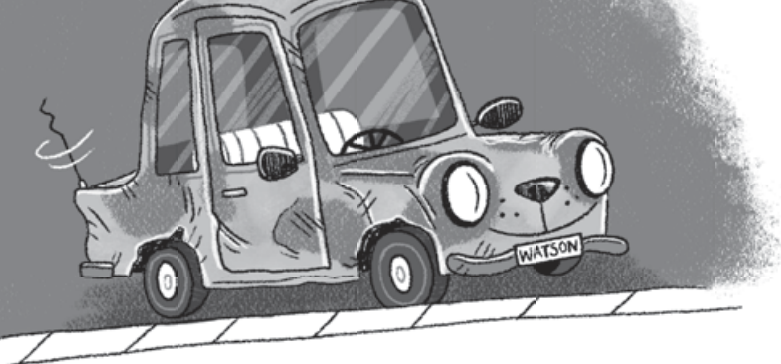
Once the doctor has gone, Klaus turns to you. There's a sparkle of excitement in his eyes at the prospect of a mystery to solve. You can't help smiling.

He says, "OK, so you should have a list of everyone who visited the house, including the parents and guardians who dropped off the kids."

You look at your list to check that you haven't missed anyone, then Klaus says, "Come on. We'll take the dog."

You grab your coat and follow Klaus through the door, down the stairs, out into the street, where his car is parked.

Klaus's car, Watson, is a brown, flaky rust-bucket covered in dents and scratches, but Klaus has great affection for it, not least because Watson used to be his pet dog.



When you first started working for Klaus, he explained that Watson had been the best detective dog he'd ever owned until a witch called Susan turned him into a car. The spell bounced off his wing mirror and transformed her into a caravan, meaning he was stuck like this.

Klaus pats Watson's bonnet and says, "Who's a good car? You're a good car. Yes, you are." He slips into the driver's seat and you get in next to him. "So where are we taking him first?" he asks.

? Do you want to start working through the list of suspects?

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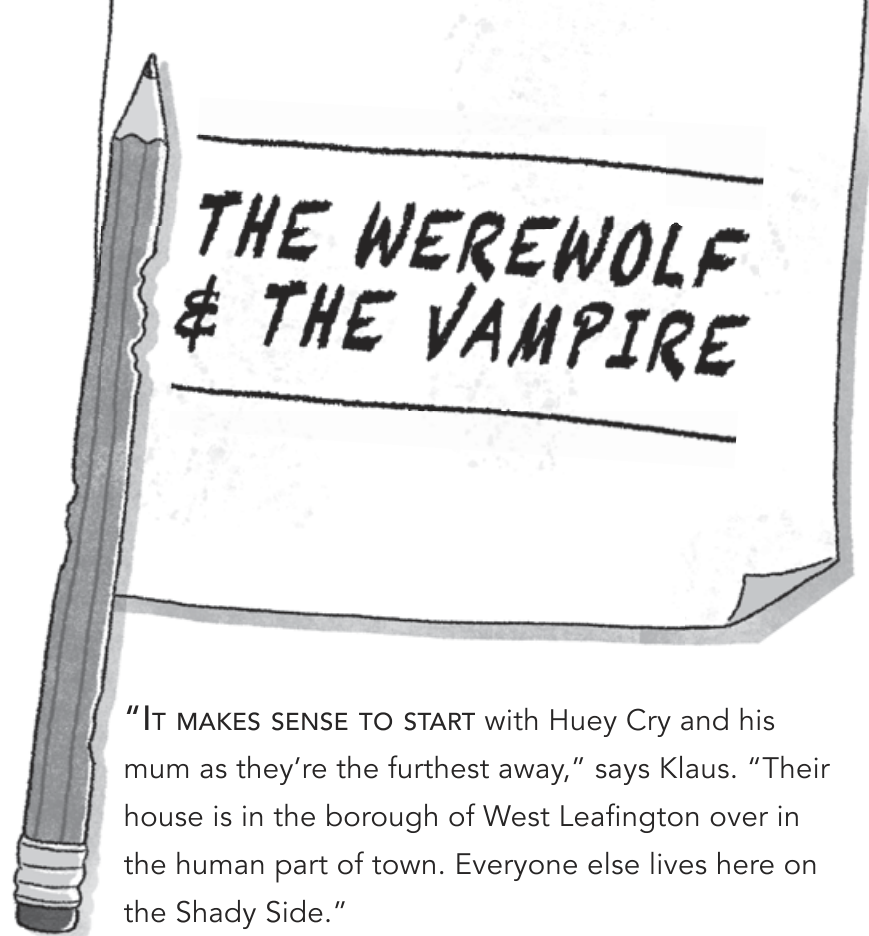
THE WEREWOLF & THE VAMPIRE

? Or do you want to investigate the crime scene?

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THE MAD SCIENTIST'S LAB

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"IT MAKES SENSE TO START with Huey Cry and his mum as they're the furthest away," says Klaus. "Their house is in the borough of West Leafington over in the human part of town. Everyone else lives here on the Shady Side."

Sitting on Watson's furry seats, you feel your elbow itch. You're pretty sure Watson has fleas but you don't complain. He may be a bit smelly but he's loyal and he often turns up exactly where you need him, even if he does have a habit of leaving oil puddles at the bottom of trees.

The quiet suburb where the Crys live is a contrast to the Shady Side where Klaus's office is based.