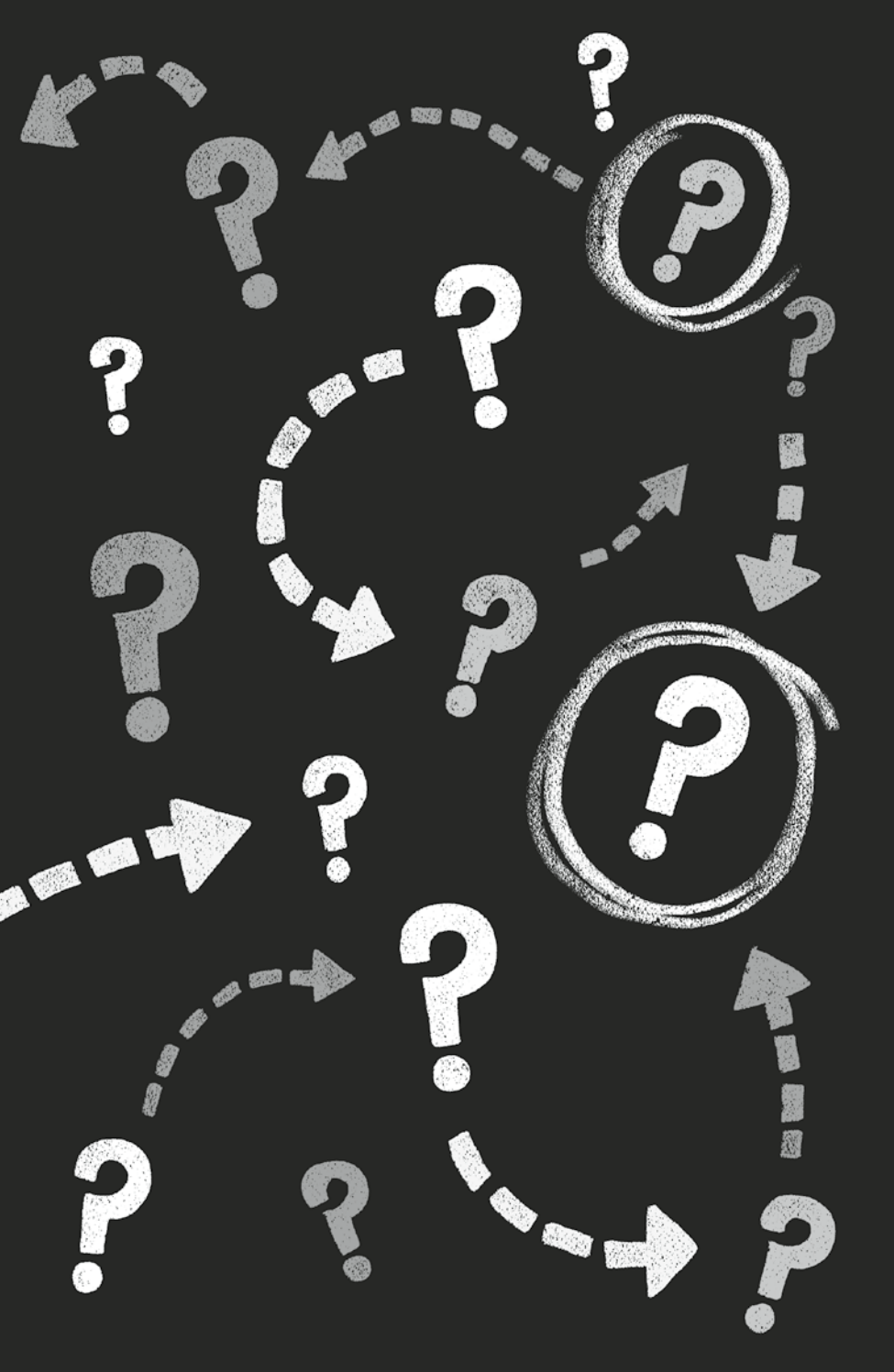


**SOLVE
YOUR
OWN
MYSTERY**

**THE
TRANSYLVANIAN
EXPRESS**





FOR OUR NEPHEW GUS,
THE BRAVEST BOY IN AUSTRALIA
- GPJ

FOR MY OTHER HALF CHAD...
ARE YOU HAPPY NOW?
- LF

LITTLE TIGER

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GARETH P. JONES
ILLUSTRATED BY LOUISE FORSHAW

LITTLE TIGER
LONDON

CLASSIFIEDS

**SPEND A WEEKEND IN
WEREWOLVIA.***

**UNLEASH YOUR
INNER WOLF.**



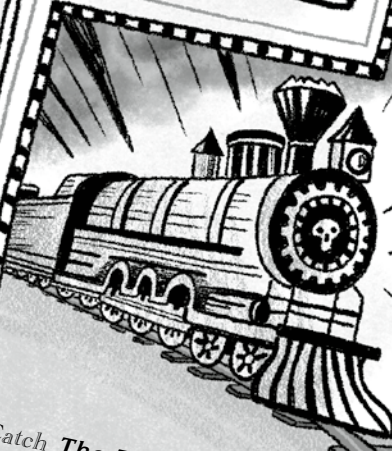
***PAY BY
THE HOWL**

Visit the
VILLAGE OF LOST SOULS

Raise your spirits
and hang out at
an unusual haunt.

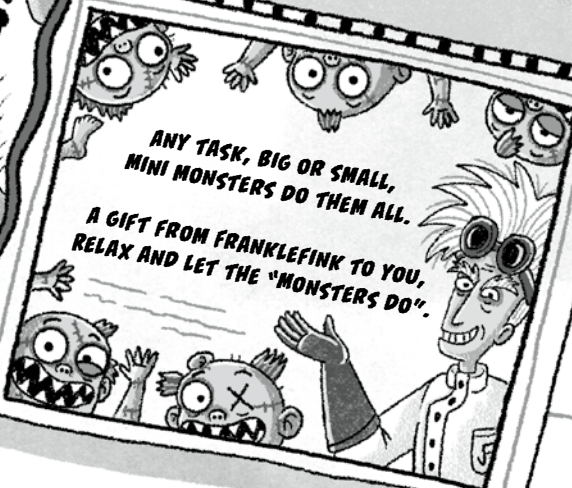
FOR A DEAD GOOD DAY OUT.


Catch The Transylvanian Express.
Your final destination awaits!



**ANY TASK, BIG OR SMALL,
MINI MONSTERS DO THEM ALL.**

**A GIFT FROM FRANKLEFINK TO YOU,
RELAX AND LET THE "MONSTERS DO".**





Job:

Private Investigator's Assistant
Long hours, low pay, hard work.
Based on the Shady Side of town!



HAVE YOUR SAY!

The Night Mayor Elections are next Thursday.
Make your vote count:

NIGHT MAYOR FRANKLEFINK
(monster-making scientist)

BRAMWELL STOKER
(vampire)



Dear Mr Solstunag and assistant,
Please find enclosed two tickets for the
Transylvanian Express, leaving Havertry
underground station this evening at 18.17.
Please board the train and await further
instructions. Your expenses are enclosed.
Yours gratefully,
A Client



EDWIN'S
STUFF

THE
TRANSYLVANIAN
EXPRESS

ENJOY
YOUR RIDE



OVER THE PAST SEVEN DAYS, you've grown accustomed to the gentle sway of the carriage and the rhythmic clitter-clatter of its movement along the rails. Clouds of yellow steam billow from the engine and drift past the mucky windows of your cabin. The Transylvanian Express is making its way through a mountainous region towards Castle Ursprung, home of the dreaded vampire Count Fledermaus.

You're lying on the top bunk watching the drips of condensation quiver along the window. You've been on this train for a week with very little to do, so you've been spending as much time as possible practising a skill you've recently acquired ... magic!

Ever since ten thousand kilo-whizzes of pure magical energy passed through your body, you've been able to sense it all around you. Even now, you can feel its familiar warm tingle. You reach out a hand and wiggle your fingertips, spelling out your name with the droplets on the other side of the windowpane.

"You're getting better at that all the time." Your boss, Klaus, is lying on the bottom bunk. "I know Burnella has been tutoring you but you should be careful how much advice you take from a witch."

Klaus rolls off his bed, stands up and stretches. You duck to avoid being whacked by his hairy hand. Sharing this small space with a yeti has not been easy. Klaus is always restless when he doesn't have a case to occupy his thoughts. Since the train departed, the only mystery you've had to mull over is what on earth you're both doing here in the first place.

It all started with an envelope that arrived at your office.

Dear Mr Solstaag and assistant,

Please find enclosed two tickets for the Transylvanian Express, leaving Haventry underground station this evening at 18.17. Please board the train and await further instructions. Your expenses are enclosed.

*Yours gratefully,
A Client*

“We’ve been travelling for a week and there’s no sign of this mysterious client,” says Klaus. “I’m having to pay to keep Watson in the garage while we’re out of town and he doesn’t like being cooped up like that.”

You feel bad for Klaus’s car, who was beeping his horn, revving his engine and swishing his wipers the last time you saw him. Klaus’s faithful dog was turned into a car years ago but he still serves as a reminder of how dangerous it can be working for the yeti detective. Peril is all part of the job - Klaus’s previous assistant fell into a bottomless pit, never to return. You’ve had a few near misses yourself.

“Why are we even here?” grumbles Klaus.



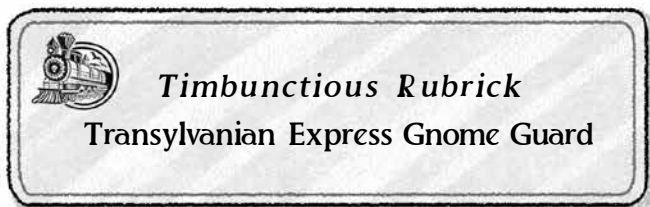
"The most mysterious thing I've seen was that tub of screaming ice cream the witches served last night."

The catering witches, Bridget and Burnella, aren't the only people you recognize on the train. Since you boarded, you've observed several familiar faces travelling alongside you.

Rat-a-tat-tat!

"I hope this is room service," says Klaus, rubbing his stomach. "I'm starving. Come in."

The door swings open to reveal a short, bearded man with rosy red cheeks. This isn't the first time you've seen him. He's often scurrying up and down the corridors, a large set of keys attached to his belt jangling away as he deals with all the passengers' problems and requests. His highly polished name tag reads:



He looks flustered and anxious. He glances at you but addresses Klaus.

"Mr Solstaag! Oh, please. It's awful. I don't know what to do. I need your help."

"Aha. So it was you all along?" says Klaus.

"What was me all along?" asks the gnome.

"It was you who sent the letter and paid us to board the train."

"I'm afraid I have no idea what you're talking about," says Mr Rubrick. "The witches tell me you and your partner are private detectives."

"Actually, this is my assistant," says Klaus.

It's true that the advert in the paper was for an assistant but your boss relies on you so much, you often do feel more like his partner.

"What's the problem, Mr Rubrick?" asks Klaus.

You grab your pen and notepad while the gnome guard closes the door behind him then speaks in an urgent whisper.

"I take it you're already aware that we have a certain high-profile passenger on board this train?"

"I've noticed a few," says Klaus. "I saw District Governor Sandra Rigmarole at dinner last night."

"Actually, this concerns her boss."

"Night Mayor Franklefink?" says Klaus. "Yes, I saw he was here with his son Monty and that new monster wife of his—"

"Enormelda," interrupts Mr Rubrick.

"What has Franklefink done this time, then?"

asks Klaus.

"He's gone missing."

"How can anyone go missing from a train?" asks Klaus.

"I don't know. Here on the Transylvanian Express we take safety very seriously. The doors are secured, making them impossible to open until the train has stopped," says Mr Rubrick.

"You're saying that he must be still on the train?" says Klaus.

"Er, yes, most likely. Except, the thing is, I've knocked on every cabin door and checked. He's nowhere to be found."

"So he's not on the train but he can't have been thrown off the train," says Klaus, winking at you. "This case is sounding fun already."

"Fun?" cries Mr Rubrick. "This isn't fun. Count Fledermaus is expecting a full train to arrive. If he finds out a passenger has gone missing, there's no telling what he'll do."

"Why would the count care who's on the train?" asks Klaus.



"Because, once a year, the count opens the castle to visitors and offers an audience with one person. He gets sent the train passenger list in advance. What if he's chosen to see Franklefink? He does have quite a temper as his many victims will tell you. Please, it's imperative that you help."

"OK, we'll take the job." Klaus strokes his chin.

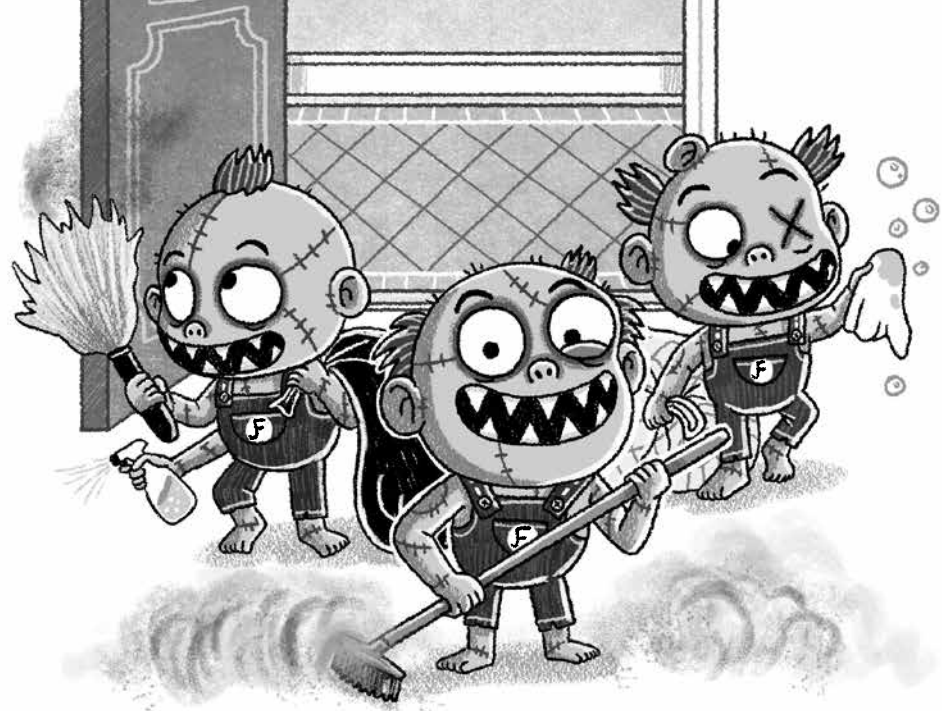
"We'll have to establish whether he's on the train, who might be harbouring a grudge against him and his precise movements prior to his disappearance."

"The obvious suspect is Bramwell Stoker. He's in Carriage V," says Mr Rubrick.

"Stoker, eh?" muses Klaus. "Yes, the election is next week and Bramwell is running against Franklefink."

The door swings open and three tiny monsters enter.





"Ah, the cleaning staff," says Mr Rubrick.

"I noticed that the train company has been using Frankleink's mini monsters," says Klaus.

"Yes. Not my decision," says Mr Rubrick. "Our driver Mr Ogilvy employed them. Apparently he did some kind of deal with Frankleink for all these monsters. They do get underfoot but they're very hard workers."

"Monsters do... Monsters do..." they squeak as they dart around the cabin, emptying the bin, wiping surfaces, changing towels and sweeping the floor. One pulls the rug from under Klaus's feet to clean it,

sending your boss crashing to the ground, rocking the carriage.

"To be honest, I'd rather this lot went to work SOMEWHERE ELSE!" yells Klaus grumpily.

"Maybe you should come back later," says Mr Rubrick to the monsters.

"Monsters do... Monsters do..." The monsters leave as quickly as they appeared.

"It seems like half of Haventry is using those mini monsters these days," says Klaus. "Maybe they could help us with our enquiries."

"Ha! Good luck getting any sense out of them," says Mr Rubrick. "They only speak two words: *Monsters do.*"

A bloodcurdling howl rises up and you hear a clattering sound, as though some clawed creature is running across the top of the train.

"I keep hearing that," says Klaus. "Are there any werewolves on the passenger list?"

"None," says Mr Rubrick, "but it's hardly surprising since we're going to see a vampire. Those two species have never got on."

"So where is the howling coming from?"

"We are travelling through Werewolvvia. The packs often run alongside the train."

"Or along the top, by the sounds of it," says Klaus.

"Evidently," says Mr Rubrick. "Probably best to keep your window closed."

Klaus places a hand on your shoulder. "We need to retrace Franklefink's steps before he vanished," he says. "Mr Rubrick, when did you last see him?"

"He and his family had the eight-thirty breakfast sitting in the dining carriage," replies Mr Rubrick. "He seemed in rather good spirits, but then I had to go and deal with a problem in the excess luggage compartment. We have some non-paying passengers... Goblins."

"So when did you hear that Franklefink had disappeared?" asks Klaus.

"Enormelda reported him missing at around ten thirty. Apparently he left the dining carriage straight after breakfast and never showed up at their cabin. She doesn't know where he went and she isn't taking it very well. The poor thing is in bits about this." He turns to you and adds, "Literally. One of her ears fell off while I was talking to her. Between you and me, I'm not sure Franklefink took enough care putting her together."

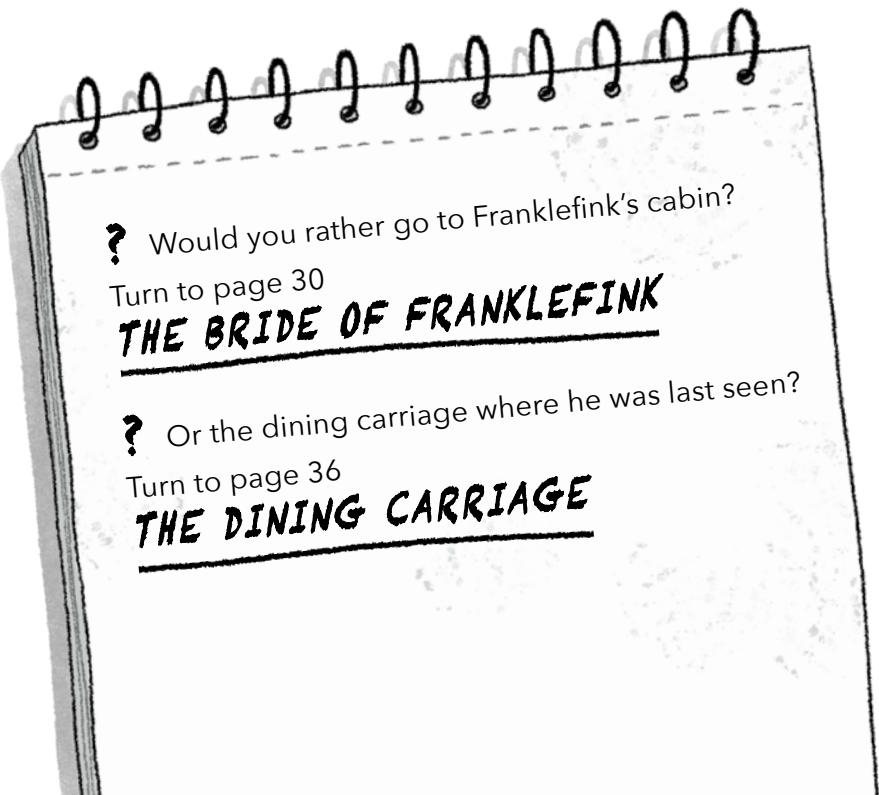
Klaus stands up and grabs his hat.

"It's very fortunate you're here," says Mr Rubrick.

"Yes, it is. Someone hired us to be on this train for a reason," says Klaus. "Maybe they knew something like this would happen?"

"But that would mean you were hired to solve a crime that hadn't even been committed yet. Isn't that a bit on the strange side?" says Mr Rubrick.

"A bit on the strange side is pretty normal for us," says Klaus, nudging you. "So should we start retracing his steps and go to the dining carriage where he was last seen or speak to his wife who reported him missing?"



? Would you rather go to Franklefink's cabin?

Turn to page 30

THE BRIDE OF FRANKLEFINK

? Or the dining carriage where he was last seen?

Turn to page 36

THE DINING CARRIAGE