



WERELOCK *AND* SCRATCH

MYSTERY MOST PUZZLING

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HODDER

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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For Oliver, Harry and Rosie –
my brilliant puzzle-solving readers
who tested out this story and helped
it on its way to becoming a book.
Thank you!



GOETHICA
THE CITY AT THE HEART
OF GRIMOIRE-WHERE
EVERYONE IS WELCOME



**NOTICE
BOARD**

**VOTE ALUCARD
FOR MAYOR!**



No ONE likes change.
Vote for me if you don't
want to risk being
changed into Statues!

**HAIKY AND FED
UP OF BEING
MISUNDERSTOOD?**

**THE
HAIKY-NOT-SCARY
ALLIANCE**

needs YOU!

Meetings held every
Thursday, midnight
at the Town Hall.

Contact LUNA HOWLS
for details.

VOTE

**NEED
NEWS
NOW?**

Look No Further Than
the Raven Network
RAVENS FOR HIRE.

Competitive rates.
Contact Scratch for details.

STATUE PAINTING
CLASSES

Paint your stresses away
with Scarlett Herring
at The Beastly Hotel's
art studio. An ever-
growing selection of
statues to choose from.



COMMUNITY
MEETINGS,
EVERY MONDAY,
MIDNIGHT AT THE
TOWN HALL

HOSTED BY
MAYOR
ALUCARD.

NO
GARLIC.



VOTE
SCARLETT HERRING
FOR MAYOR!



Make hisss-tory. Vote Scarlett Herring
for Mayor. Voting closes midnight
on the Night of the Blood Moon.
Free drinks for all!

HAVE A MYSTERY
THAT NEEDS SOLVING?

call: Werelock
and Scratch!

visit us at our desk
outside the Town Hall,
open for an hour at
midnight on Thursdays.
Or contact us any time
via the Raven network.
No case too ~~big~~ small

PETITION

TO BAN GARDEN
GNOMES

GARDEN
GNOMES
FOR
SALE
MYSTIC
MARKET



WERELock AND SCRATCH:



WERELock HOWLS

AGE:	10
CREATURE:	Werewolf
DETECTIVE TRAINING:	watched all the detective shows, read all the detective books. Knows <i>The Detective manual</i> off by heart.
AGENCY ROLE:	Founder and Head Detective
SKILLS:	Super fast, super clever, super observant, super funny
WEAKNESSES:	None Overconfidence!



GOTHICA'S NEWEST AND GREATEST DETECTIVE AGENCY



SCRATCH

AGE:	Lost count a while ago
CREATURE:	Raven
DETECTIVE TRAINING:	Retired pickpocket and master thief — knows enough to outsmart even the so-called 'best' detectives
AGENCY ROLE:	Assistant. The Agency's expert on the criminal underbelly of Gothica City and Head of the Raven Network - Gothica's postal/spy system
SKILLS:	Street smart. Loyal. Patient with overconfident 10-year-old werewolves
WEAKNESSES:	Too patient with overconfident 10-year-old werewolves



JEKYLL + HYDE PARK

ICE DISTRICT

BEWARE!

POLICE

FIRE STATION

CATACOMBS

CATHEDRAL

MYSTIC MARKET

TRAIN STATION

UNIVERSITY OF MAGIC

THE GOTHICA OPERA HOUSE

CRYPT CORNER

ALUCARD'S CASTLE

BEASTLY HOTEL







CHAPTER ONE

A Mystery is Afoot

‘MURDER! MURDER! MAYOR MURDERED!’

The butler’s cries echoed through the shadowy nighttime corridors of Gothica’s Town Hall.

‘Mayor Alucard? Murdered?’ I jumped up from the bench outside the Town Hall that doubled as the office of the detective agency I ran with my raven assistant, Scratch.

Oi, I’m a bit more than just an ‘assistant’! I was Gothica’s finest pickpocket before I met Werelock. He helped me out of a pickle I was in with The Rookfather – the city’s meanest crime boss – so now I keep an eye on the kid. I’ll pop in from time to time to help you out when Werelock gets a bit too ‘detectivey’!



I grinned. 'Remember how angry the vampire mayor got when I caused that teensy fire-ant infestation?'

'You mean the one that surged through the whole city and took over a year to get under control?'

'Err . . . yeah . . . that one.' I grimaced. 'I STILL think they'd have made great spies . . . but my point is, if the mayor got annoyed at THAT, just imagine how furious he'll be after being murdered!'



My werewolf senses tingled with excitement.

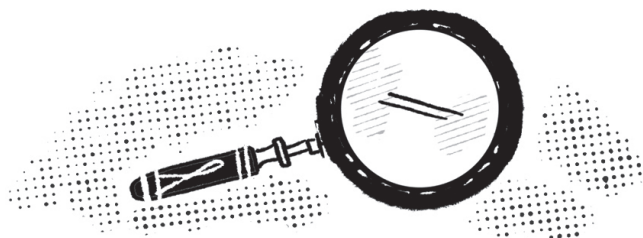
'This is it, Scratch, I can feel it in my claws. This is the case that will finally put the Werelock and Scratch Detective Agency on the map. Solve this, and there'll be no more missing pet cases for us. We'll finally get proper mysteries with real bite!'

'I dunno, kid,' said Scratch. 'That last missing pet case

felt like it had plenty of bite. My tail feathers have only just recovered.'

I grabbed my detective bag. 'Come on, there's not a moment to lose! To the mayor's office! A mystery is afoot!'





CHAPTER TWO

The Most Ghastly of Crimes

I squeezed my way through the furry, smelly and, occasionally, tentacled limbs that had gathered outside the mayor's office until I stumbled into the looming legs of Jeeves, the mayor's butler.

‘NO ONE PASSES!’ he bellowed at the swarming crowd, stretching out his mismatched arms to block the way through the splintered door. ‘THIS IS A CRIME SCENE!’

‘Indeed it is!’ remarked a shrill, nasal voice from the office.

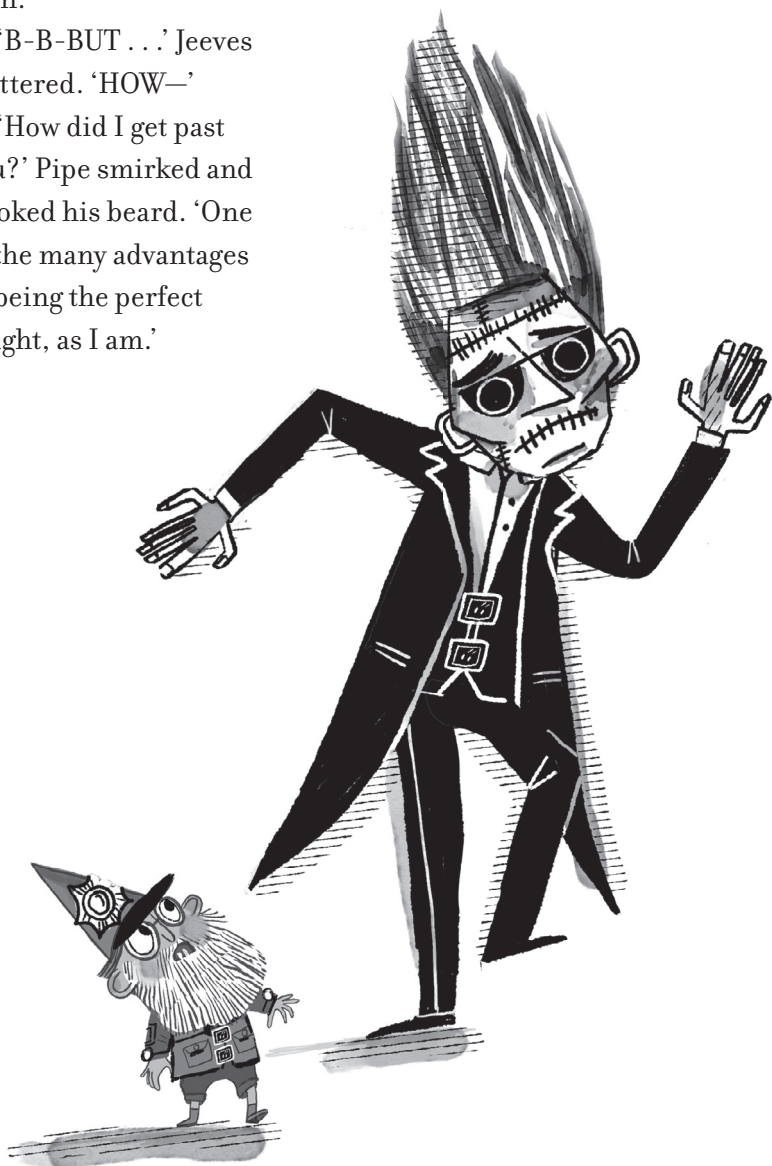
Jeeves spun around to face the intruder, his arms flailing as a small gnome police officer looked up at him from the ground far below.

‘Ugh, not him!’ Scratch groaned. ‘*Sergeant Dwaine Pipe*,’ he whispered. ‘Joined the Gothica Police Force a year ago and has been a right pain ever since. He’s the first ever gnome on the force and is constantly badgering me to file

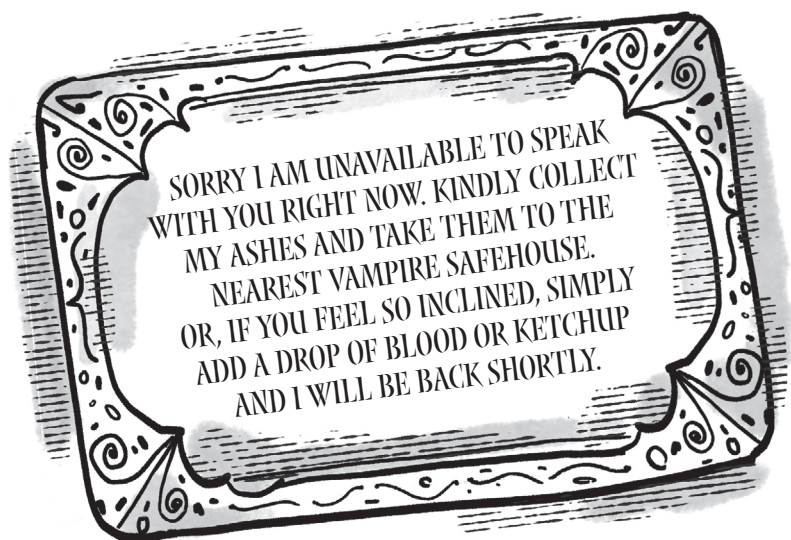
forms and receipts and all that nonsense for the Raven Network. I bet he's chuffed to have a proper crime to deal with.'

'B-B-BUT . . .' Jeeves stuttered. 'HOW—'

'How did I get past you?' Pipe smirked and stroked his beard. 'One of the many advantages to being the perfect height, as I am.'



With Jeeves distracted, I crept forward to get a better view of the crime scene. The door was hanging from its hinges, its wooden panels cracked and broken. But other than that, at first sight, nothing seemed out of place. Then I spotted the tiny slip of metal lying in the middle of the rug. I didn't need to read it to know that it would say:



Every vampire carried one. It was essential when you turned to ash every time you encountered sunlight, holy water, camera flashes, garlic and stakes. But the ground around this slip was *empty*. A chill ran down my spine.

‘Mayor Alucard’s ashes are missing!’ I turned to Scratch. ‘If they’re not found, he really will have been—’

‘Murdered!’ said Pipe, rubbing his hands together.

A gasp rippled through the crowd.

‘Yes,’ said Pipe. ‘Tonight, in this very room, the most ghastly of crimes has been committed. A murder. But do not fear.’ Pipe puffed out his chest, the brass buttons of his blue jacket gleaming brightly. ‘For, without even dusting for a single finger or paw print’ – he snapped his dusting kit shut with a flourish – ‘I have solved this case.’

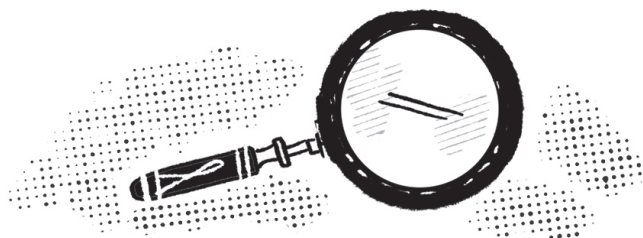
He pointed to where five deep grooves slashed through the edge of the mayor’s desk, then plucked out a sharp black claw from the woodwork.

‘The murderer is none other than Luna Howls.’

A heavy silence fell as the crowd parted to reveal a wide-eyed werewolf with one claw missing from her right paw. My stomach sank.

Pipe had just accused my mum of murder.





CHAPTER THREE

Case Closed

‘Me? A murderer?’ cried Mum. ‘That’s preposterous! I’m head of the Hairy Not Scary Alliance. I wouldn’t hurt anyone! Yes, the mayor and I had a little . . . disagreement earlier about the rent for the Alliance’s meeting room, and things may have got a tad heated. But when I left this office, the mayor was undead and well.’

Pipe rolled his eyes. ‘Exactly what a murderer would say.’ He turned to Jeeves. ‘When was the last time you saw your master?’

Jeeves scratched his head. ‘NOT SEEN MAYOR SINCE MS HOWLS STORMED INTO OFFICE AT HALF PAST ELEVEN. AT JUST PAST MIDNIGHT I TAKE MASTER HIS TRAY.’ He pointed to a silver tray of popcorn on the floor. ‘HE NOT ANSWER. DOOR LOCKED. I SMASH AND CRASH IT DOWN.’ His bottom lip wobbled. ‘MASTER GONE. I NOT GO INTO ROOM AND NOT LET

ANYONE ELSE IN. THEN YOU—’

‘Yes, yes,’ said Pipe. ‘That’s us all caught up. Well, that’s enough for me. Case closed.’

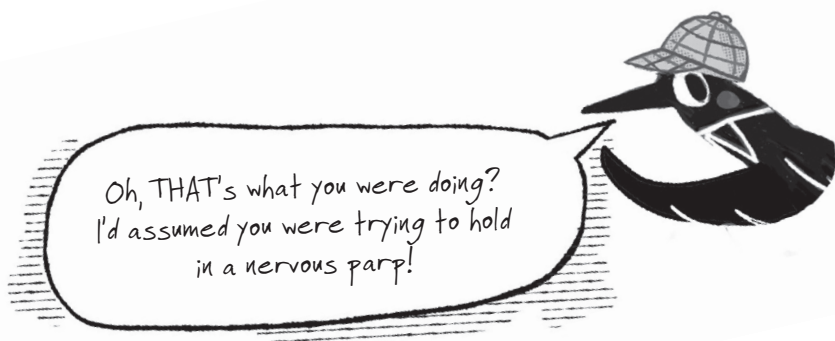
He leaned against the pink fluffy cushion on the low visitor’s chair by the mayor’s desk. ‘Ms Howls, you’re under arrest for the murder of Mayor Alucard. I trust you’ll reveal the location of his ashes once I get you back to the station.’

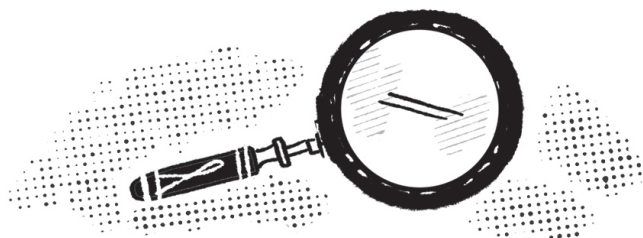
‘No, you’ve got it wrong!’ Tears filled my eyes as Pipe led Mum away in handcuffs.

She looked back at me, her paws clenched angrily. ‘Don’t you worry, poppet. I’m innocent and I shall make sure everyone knows it. Just don’t you two get any ideas about investigating.’

‘Too late,’ I muttered to Scratch. ‘Werelock and Scratch Detective Agency is *already* on the case.’

Doing my best detective impression, I narrowed my eyes and stared moodily off into the distance.





CHAPTER FOUR

Dark Magic Stews

Finally alone at the crime scene, Scratch and I went into full detective mode. I ran my claws over the deep grooves my mum had left in the desk. She was grumpy at the best of times, never mind the night before a Full Blood Moon.



But as grumpy as my mum could be, she'd never hurt ANYONE. Pipe was wrong. My mum was innocent and I was going to prove it.

‘Okay,’ I said, ‘first things first. Jeeves said that the door was locked when he got here.’ I frowned as I examined the remains of the door. ‘The key’s in the lock on the *inside*. Do you think someone could have locked it from the outside while the key was there?’

Scratch shook his head. ‘No. Unless, that is, they used some sort of magic.’

I nodded and looked around the office. A long bookshelf filled the wall beside the desk and on the other walls hung portraits of Mayor Alucard with various famous creatures he’d met over the centuries. One thing the office didn’t have was windows. Hardly surprising, since vampires aren’t fond of sunshine.

‘Hmm.’ I stroked the fur on my chin in a cool, detectivey way. ‘I suppose Jeeves could be lying, but my gut says he’s telling the truth. That means whoever killed the mayor escaped from a locked, windowless room – OR they have the world’s most boring door-locking magic power.’ I grinned. ‘My mum has many skills, but they don’t include walking through walls or sorcery.’ I shuddered. ‘Though I wouldn’t be surprised if she concocts her veggie stews using dark magic. But unless mushy overcooked carrots give someone door-locking powers, there’s no way she could have done this.’

Scratch sighed. ‘Pipe won’t admit he’s wrong that easily. We need more if he’s gonna believe us. And besides,

imagine the look on Pipe's face when we're the ones to catch the real murderer.'

'You're right.' I grinned and pulled out my magnifying glass. 'Time to stop being Werelock Howls, son of accused murderer, and become Werelock Howls, the greatest—'



'—werewolf detective in Gothica City. It's time to gather some clues.'



CHAPTER FIVE

Clue Spotting

Working in silence, Scratch and I searched the mayor's office. In his rush to 'solve' the case, Sergeant Pipe had missed a huge number of clues. Flipping open my notebook, I reviewed the evidence we'd found.







After just a few minutes of highly skilled detecting, we found:

- Two plates with carrot cake on them.
- || The slice on Mayor Alucard's side of the desk was untouched (vampires don't eat vegetables). The slice in front of the visitor's chair had small bites taken out of it.
- A small pile of dust in the corner. Added some emergency ketchup I always carry and it just made a gooey sludge. Definitely NOT the mayor's ashes. The rest of the office was dust free. Suspicious.
- An appointment in the mayor's diary with 'Arch Nemesis' at midnight. |||
- Some torn wrapping paper next to a small wooden cube with a price sticker from Spells R US in Mystic Market. Upon further testing was found to be a 'Sunlight in a Box' cube. Deadly to vampires.
- || MURDER WEAPON?

I grinned at Scratch in relief. ‘So now we know that the murderer is either able to escape from a locked room or use magic to lock doors AND they have a small mouth or are a very dainty eater – either way, NOT my mum.’

Scratch frowned. ‘And they like making little piles of dust?’

‘Yeah,’ I said. ‘I’m not sure what to make of that, but my detective instincts tell me it’s relevant, so it’s staying in the notebook. We also have the likely murder weapon – the Sunlight in a Box. It’s not something that needs any particular strength, skill or size—’

‘So not that helpful then.’

‘Except that it’s given us a lead. Maybe Spells R Us can tell us more. And then there’s the meeting with this mysterious “Arch Nemesis”.’



My fur tingled with excitement. ‘Nobody turned up for a meeting AFTER the murder had been discovered. Maybe because they’d already been and gone, having murdered the mayor. Scratch, we have our first prime suspect!’

