



MEL FOSTER AND THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

By Julia Golding

Mel Foster gazed out of the window at the sleet splattering the London pavement. Slush heaped in the gutter, piled there by the crossing sweeper. A most unpromising day, but that was something he was determined to change. Mel drum-rolled his fingers on the sill.

‘Eve, I want something to happen.’

Eve Frankenstein looked up from her sewing. At over seven feet tall, she was making a dress for a ball at Buckingham Palace from a bolt of green velvet. She would look like one of the towering firs in the Queen’s gardens when she put it on, but Mel was too tactful to mention that.

‘What kind of thing, Mel Foster?’ Eve asked.

‘An adventure.’

‘Is living in the headquarters of the Monster Resistance not enough adventure for you?’ When Eve smiled, her oddly

stitched together face lifted in one place and pulled in another, showing where her creator, Frankenstein's monster himself, had connected spare body parts. When Mel first met her during a voyage to the North Pole, he had found this alarming; now he just grinned back. Until a year ago, when Londoners found out that monsters existed side by side with common folk and the Monster Resistance had become famous for saving the Queen and the Empire from certain doom, Mel had always thought himself an ordinary boy. Then he had discovered both his monstrous talent for zapping things with electricity and his knack for solving extraordinary crimes, and his life had become one adventure after another. Now it was time for a new one.

'But everyone else is busy.' He counted his friends on his fingers. 'The Jekyll twins are investigating a rogue werewolf in Whitechapel. Viorica has gone to visit her vampire relatives on the Orient Express, and the monster fairies have gone with her to sample this year's Paris fashions. The raven is in moult. Even the mummy is busy, repairing the motorcar. That just leaves us.'

'You're supposed to be doing your schoolwork.' Eve gestured with her needle to the books on a side table.

Mel tugged at his stiff shirt collar. He still missed dressing as an urchin. 'Being with you, Eve, is an education all by itself.'