Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

opening extract from

The In-Spectres Call
(Too Ghoul for School)

written by

B. Strange

published by

Egmont Books Ltd

All text is copyright © of the Author and/or the Illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

THE IN-SPECTRES CALL



The gym was filled with pupils whirling, swimming and laughing in the air. The PE teacher, Ms Legg, stared up at them, open-mouthed. *I don't remember this part of the display* . . . she thought.

'Look down there!' James pointed at the In-Spectres. They were staring up at the pupils floating past, pointing and giggling and poking each other in the ribs.

'Look – they're leaving!' hissed Lenny. The pair were now grinning and nodding to one another. The woman reached her hand up and waved her fingers slowly at James and Alexander. Her eyes flashed red as she mouthed 'Bye-bye!'

'That was *weird*!' James shuddered.

'James Simpson, master of understatement!' Alexander laughed nervously.

www.egmont.co.uk

St Sebastian's School in Grimesford is the pits. No, really – it is.

Every year, the high school sinks a bit further into the boggy plague pit beneath it and, every year, the ghosts of the plague victims buried underneath it become a bit more cranky.

Egged on by their spooky ringleader, Edith Codd, they decide to get their own back – and they're willing to play dirty. *Really* dirty.

They kick up a stink by causing as much mischief as in inhumanly possible so as to get St Sebastian's closed down once and for all.

But what they haven't reckoned on is year-seven new boy, James Simpson and his friends Alexander and Lenny.

The question is, are the gang up to the challenge of laying St Sebastian's paranormal problem to rest, or will their school remain forever frightful?

There's only one way to find out . . .





The In-Spectres Call

B. STRANGE

EGMONT

Special thanks to:

Lynn Huggins-Cooper, St John's Walworth Church of England Primary School and Belmont Primary School



EGMONT

We bring stories to life

Published in Great Britain 2007
by Egmont UK Limited
239 Kensington High Street, London W8 6SA

Text & illustrations © 2007 Egmont UK Ltd
Text by Lynn Huggins-Cooper
Illustrations by Pulsar Studio (Beehive Illustration)

ISBN 978 1 4052 3236 4

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

A CIP catalogue record for this title is available
from the British Library

Typeset by Avon DataSet Ltd, Bidford on Avon, Warwickshire
Printed and bound in Great Britain by the CPI Group

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

‘More books – I love it!’
Ashley, age 11

‘It’s disgusting. . .’
Joe, age 10

‘. . . it’s all good!’
Alexander, age 9

‘. . . loads of excitement and really gross!’
Jay, age 9

‘I like the way there’s the brainy boy,
the brawny boy and the cool boy that form a
team of friends’
Charlie, age 10

‘That ghost Edith is wicked’
Matthew, age 11

‘This is really good and funny!’
Sam, age 9

We want to hear what *you* think about *Too Ghoul for School*! Visit:

www.too-ghoul.com

**for loads of cool stuff to do
and a whole lotta grot!**

School versus . . .



James Simpson

Year-seven new boy
and chief spook-hunter

Headmaster's son
and official brainiac



Alexander Tick



Lenny Maxwell

Strong as an ox,
gentle as an
unusually tall lamb

. . . Ghoul!

Loud-mouthed ringleader of the plague-pit ghosts



Edith Codd



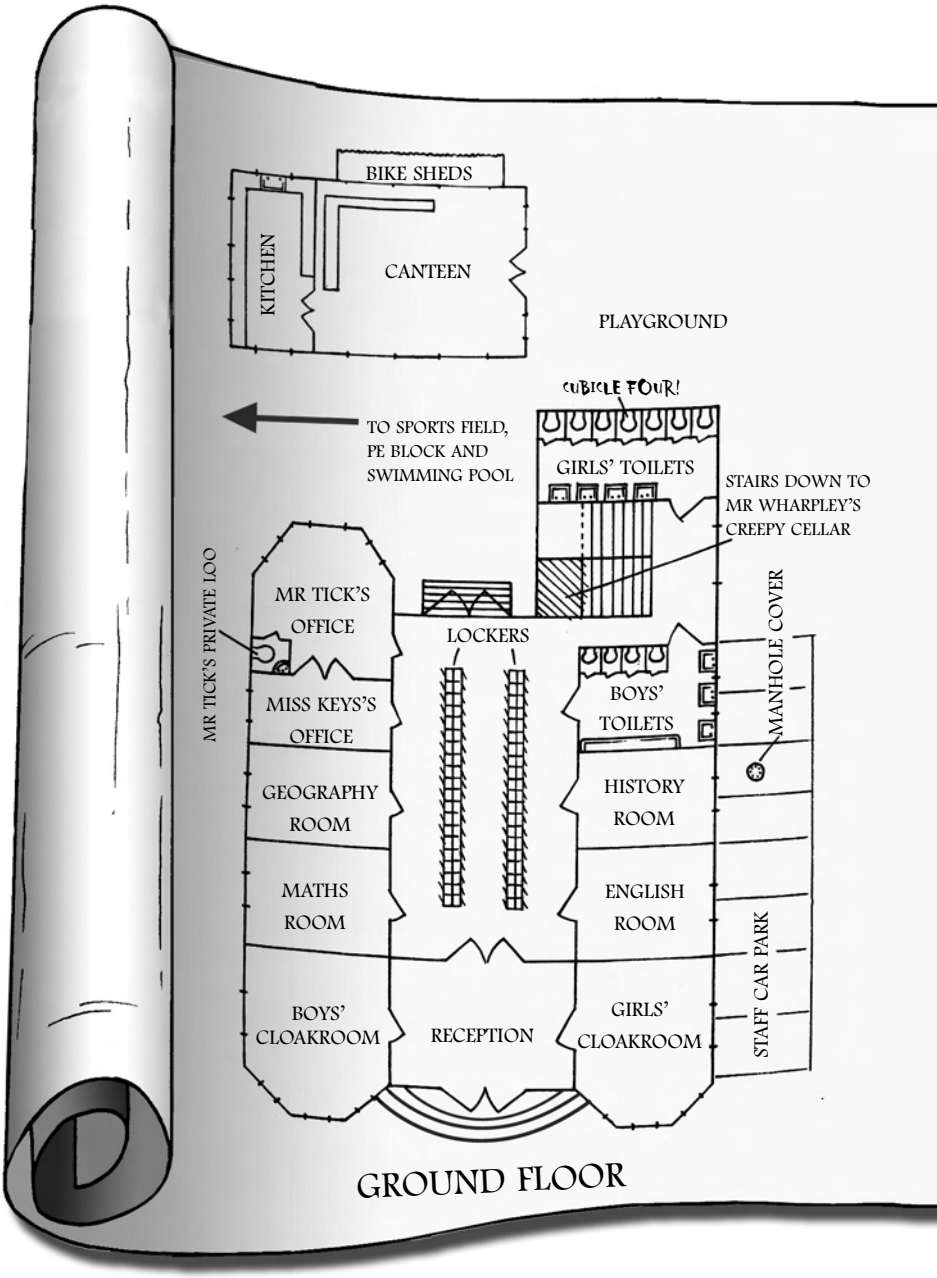
William Scroggins

Young ghost and a secret wannabe St Sebastian's pupil

Bone idle ex-leech merchant with a taste for all things gross



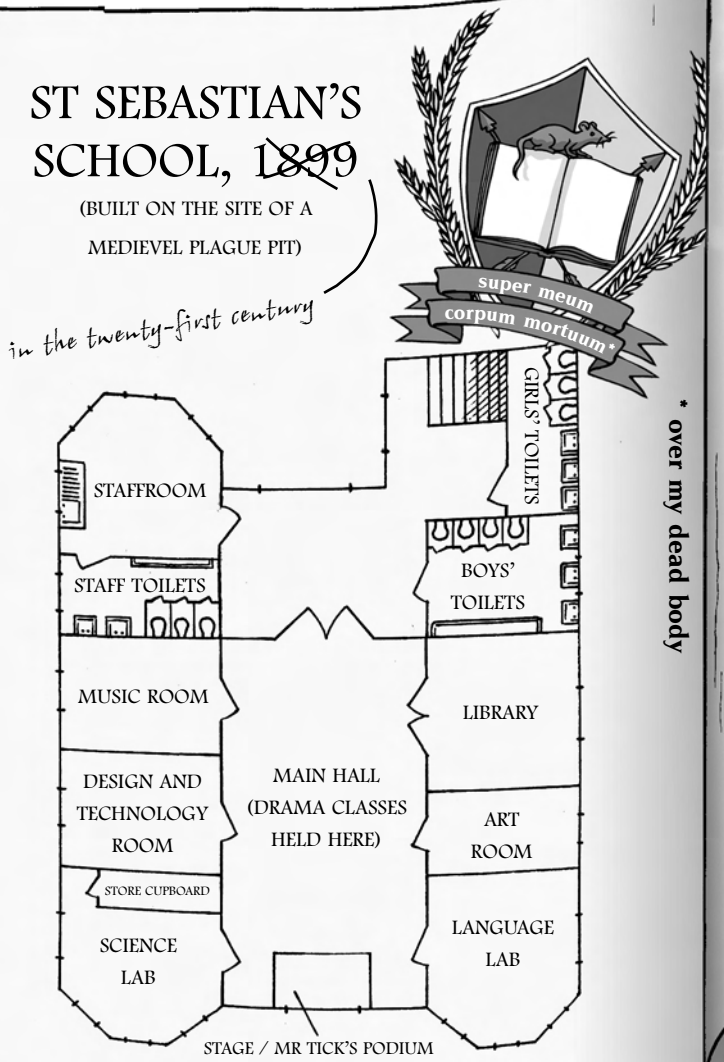
Ambrose Harbottle


BIKE SHEDS
KITCHEN
CANTEEN
PLAYGROUND
CUBICLE FOUR!
TO SPORTS FIELD, PE BLOCK AND SWIMMING POOL
GIRLS' TOILETS
STAIRS DOWN TO MR WHARPLEY'S CREEPY CELLAR
MR TICK'S PRIVATE LOO
MR TICK'S OFFICE
LOCKERS
MANHOLE COVER
MISS KEYS'S OFFICE
BOYS' TOILETS
GEOGRAPHY ROOM
HISTORY ROOM
MATHS ROOM
ENGLISH ROOM
STAFF CAR PARK
BOYS' CLOAKROOM
RECEPTION
GIRLS' CLOAKROOM
GROUND FLOOR

ST SEBASTIAN'S SCHOOL, ~~1899~~

(BUILT ON THE SITE OF A MEDIEVEL PLAGUE PIT)

in the twenty-first century



FIRST FLOOR

* over my dead body

About the Black Death

The Black Death was a terrible plague that is believed to have been spread by fleas on rats. It swept through Europe in the fourteenth century, arriving in England in 1348, where it killed over one third of the population.



One of the Black Death's main symptoms was **foul-smelling boils all over the body called 'buboes'**. The plague was so infectious that its victims and their families were locked in their houses until they died. Many villages were abandoned as the disease wiped out their populations.

So many people died that graveyards overflowed and bodies lay in the street, so special **'plague pits'** were dug to bury the bodies. Almost every town and village in England has a plague pit somewhere underneath it, so watch out when you're digging in the garden . . .



Dear Reader

As you may have already guessed, B. Strange is not a real name.

The author of this series is an ex-teacher who is currently employed by a little-known body called the Organisation For Spook Termination (Excluding Demons), or O.F.S.T.(E.D.). 'B. Strange' is the pen name chosen to protect his identity.

Together, we felt it was our duty to publish these books, in an attempt to save innocent lives. The stories are based on the author's experiences as an O.F.S.T.(E.D.) inspector in various schools over the past two decades.

Please read them carefully - you may regret it if you don't . . .

Yours sincerely
The Publisher.

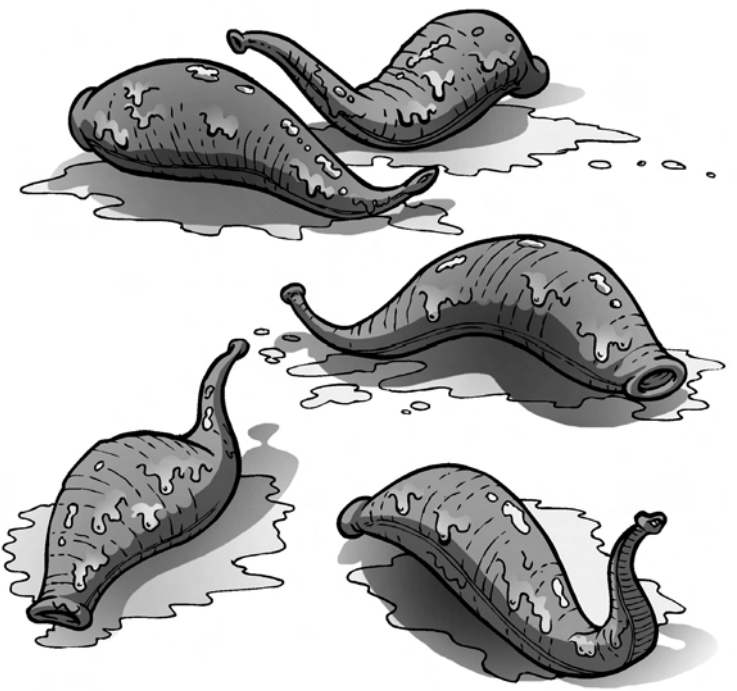
PS - Should you wish to file a report on any suspicious supernatural occurrences at your school, visit **www.too-ghoul.com** and fill out the relevant form. We'll pass it on to O.F.S.T.(E.D.) for you.

PPS - All characters' names have been changed to protect the identity of the individuals. Any similarity to actual persons, living or undead, is purely coincidental.



CONTENTS

1	EARWIGGING	1
2	A BIG ANNOUNCEMENT	9
3	VIP (VERY IMPORTANT PLAN)	16
4	THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS . . .	26
5	A WHIFF OF TROUBLE	39
6	THE ONLY WAY IS UP	48
7	ARRIVAL TIME	59
8	HANGING AROUND	66
9	FIRST IMPRESSIONS	76
10	AIR DISPLAY	82
11	STRANGE BREW	93
12	BITTERSWEET VICTORY	105
13	RED-LETTER DAY	113
	EXTRA! FACT FILE, QUIZ, JOKES AND STUFF	129
	SCHOOL SPOOKS DAY SNEAK PREVIEW	135



CHAPTER 1
EARWIGGING

'What's that droning noise?' grumbled Edith Codd, leader of the plague-pit ghosts. She frowned and glared about the cavernous amphitheatre that had been built over the centuries in the sewers deep under St Sebastian's School.

Ambrose Harbottle, a leech merchant before the Black Death had carried him off over six hundred years earlier, was leaning against a stone pillar. He was humming a happy little ditty about 'juicy little leeches' to himself as he sorted through a tin of them. He popped one



in his mouth and chewed noisily, like a dog gnawing gristle.

'Shhh!' Edith hissed, scowling. '*Listen!*'

A loud voice was carrying down the pipes from the school above. 'It's that horrible headmaster,' she said. 'He thinks he's so incredibly important!'

‘He’s not the only one . . .’ Ambrose whispered to William Scroggins, a young ghost who sat at his feet. William choked back a giggle.

‘He’s such a bore! I can’t think *why* he imagines anyone wants to listen to him . . .’ Edith went on, shaking her head.

Ambrose nudged William and smirked. William spluttered.

‘He’s so full of his own importance – he’s like a puffed-up town crier!’ grumbled Edith.

‘Takes one to know one,’ Ambrose muttered. William sniggered.

‘It’s bad enough having to put up with those horrible children laughing and shouting all day,’ moaned Edith. William smiled wistfully at the thought of the fun the pupils were having, ‘without that idiot droning on and on!’

She stopped suddenly, frozen in place like a stoat scenting a particularly delicious rabbit. Her large nostrils flared and her eyes narrowed.



'What was that . . .? A visit from the *who* . . .?' she hissed. She pressed her ear up against the rusty pipe.

A small spider gasped, screwed up its face, spat and ran away as a waft of Edith's breath hit it.



Up in the school, high above the ghosts, Mr Tick the headmaster was in St Sebastian's staffroom, trying hard to get the attention of the assembled teachers. They lay slumped in their chairs, sipping coffee.

'Listen, everybody!' Mr Tick demanded, clapping his hands. 'We are having a visit from the school inspectors this afternoon. There is, of course, nothing for *most* of us to worry about. May I remind you that the inspectors will be listing the strengths and weaknesses of the school during their visit. The last time they came, they noted a lack of care and guidance from some of



the teaching staff. Can't possibly see how they got that idea, ha, ha! I will, of course, be showing them round all the new facilities personally, and Miss Keys shall serve them tea in my beautifully decorated office –'

'Won't they want to talk to the children, too?' asked Ms Legg, the PE teacher.

'Why on *earth* would they want to do th– I mean, no, I shouldn't think so – busy people and all that . . .'

Edith pressed her ear against the pipe. 'A visit from the In-Spectres? That sounds interesting . . .' whispered Edith to herself. 'It sounds very *official* . . .'

'I remember the last report,' Mr Watts, the science teacher, grumbled. 'I seem to recall that school leadership and management weren't seen as too hot either –'

'I don't remember any such thing,' harrumphed Mr Tick. 'You must have misread the report . . . Anyway – right! That's settled then. Everyone must be on the look-out for visitors with clipboards. I shall be accompanying them round, of course . . .'

Edith could *hear* the man smiling, his voice was so smarmy.

'We always know when there are visitors in school,' a female voice said quietly. Edith strained



to hear. 'We actually get to *see* the headmaster in the classrooms for once . . .'

Edith jumped backwards as a hoot of laughter that suddenly changed to a coughing fit rumbled down the pipes.

'I heard that!' the headmaster growled. 'Look – the bottom line is this: we must all pull together to convince the inspectors that we have a smooth-running school filled with caring teachers and happy pupils, or St Sebastian's will close. I don't think anybody here wants to be out of a job, do they?' Edith could hear rustling, as though people were shuffling about in their seats. 'No. Funny that – I didn't think so. There aren't too many jobs in Grimesford, unless you count the glue factory, and I don't think they're hiring. So it's up to you lot.'

Edith heard heavy footsteps as someone stalked out of the room. She heard the doors swish and then a murmuring as people started to talk.



'Well, I'm not looking forward to it, I must say! Those people breathing down your neck. What do they know about life in the raw, at the chalkface . . .?'

'At least it'll keep old Tricky Ticky on his toes!' a voice laughed.

'I get nervous when I'm being watched . . . I set fire to my tie in the lab by accident last time . . .'

Edith jumped up, hugging herself with excitement.

'This is great news!' she giggled. The words sounded wrong coming from Edith's thin lips. William shuddered. 'These In-Spectres have got the teachers and that horrid headmaster rattled, so they *must* be a good thing! There was me thinking the man was totally useless, then he comes up with something that could sink St Sebastian's for good! Oh, happy days!'