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

Ghoul Dinners
(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

GHOUL DINNERS



St Sebastian's new dinner lady, Miss Grub, was hunched over a huge metal vat of green gruel. She was muttering phrases and stopping, then starting again. She scratched her head and huge flakes of dandruff drifted into her cooking.

The caretaker, Mr Wharpley, decided to have a taste. *It looks a bit thin, but I know women love it when you flatter their cooking*, he thought to himself.

James, Lenny and Alexander saw what was about to happen. As the man raised a spoonful of bewitched soup to his lips, the boys sprang from under the table and charged towards him. James ran the fastest, with his arms outstretched, ready to knock the spoon out of Mr Wharpley's hand.

'Noooooo!' he roared. But it was too late. Mr Wharpley had already pushed the spoon of soup into his mouth, and had swallowed.

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 . . .





Ghoul Dinners

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 3238 8

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



Alexander Tick

Headmaster's son
and official brainiac



Lenny Maxwell

Strong as an ox,
gentle as an
unusually tall lamb

. . . Ghoul!

Loud-mouthed ringleader of the plague-pit ghosts



Edith Codd



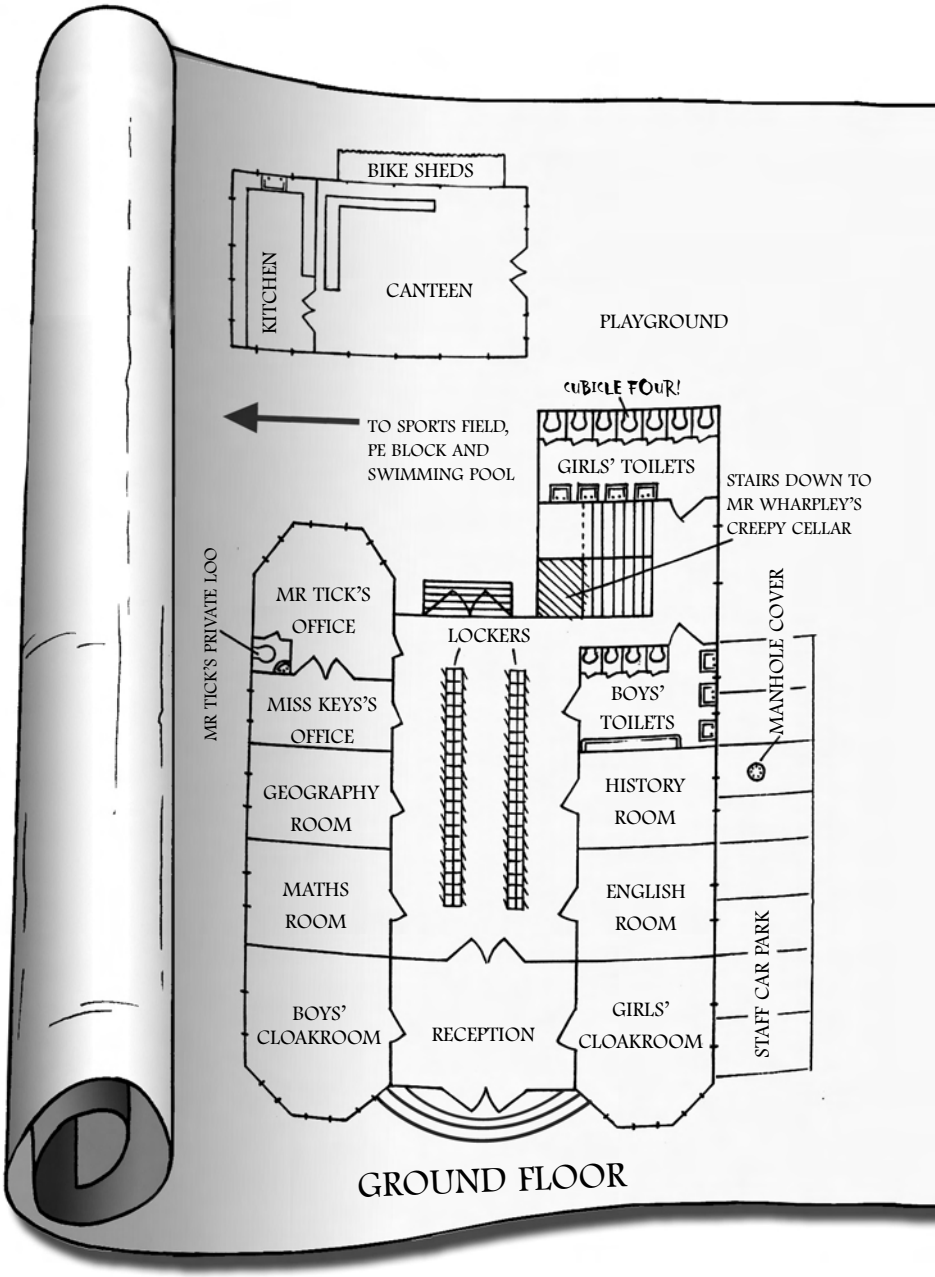
Young ghost and a secret wannabe St Sebastian's pupil

William Scroggins

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



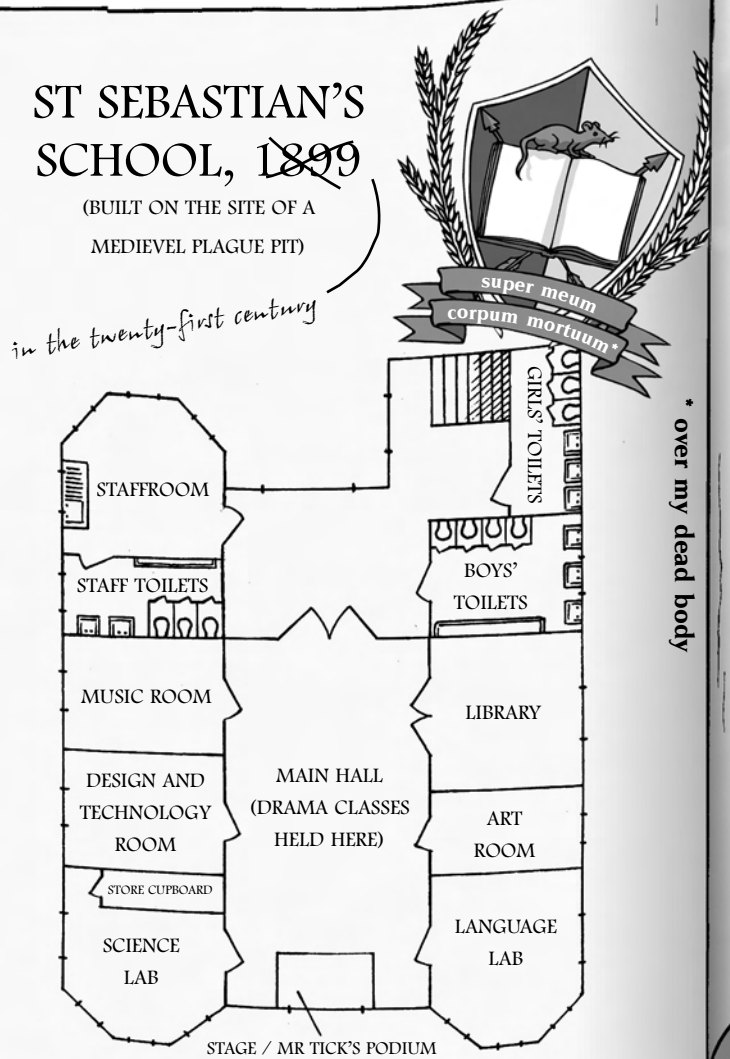
Ambrose Harbottle


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

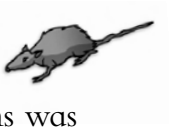


FIRST FLOOR

* 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.

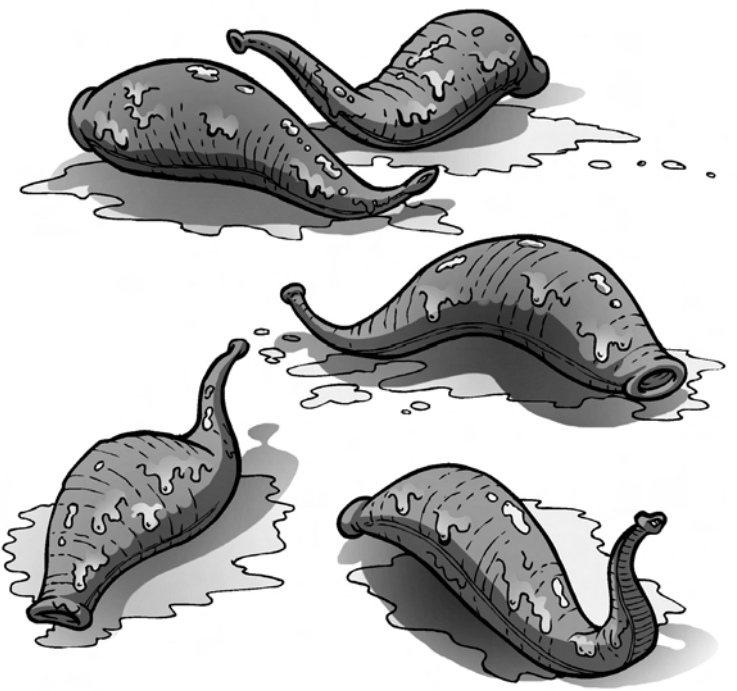
PS - Should you wish to file a report on any suspicious supernatural occurrences at your school, visit **www.too-ghoul.com** and fill out the relevant form. We'll pass it on to O.F.S.T.(E.D.) for you.

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	NERVOUS WRECK	1
2	WORMING IN	14
3	WORTH NOTING	19
4	MONSTER MAYHEM	29
5	WELCOME NEWS	40
6	RECIPE FOR DISASTER	49
7	TV DINNERS	59
8	AYE, EYE!	69
9	STAR-STRUCK	80
10	SPELLING LESSON	90
11	PLAN-TASTIC	100
12	BABY FOOD	114
13	MAGIC STICK	121
	EXTRA! FACT FILE, JOKES AND YUCKY STUFF	129
	ATTACK OF THE ZOMBIE NITS! SNEAK PREVIEW	135



CHAPTER 1
NERVOUS WRECK

Mrs Cooper, St Sebastian's longest-serving dinner lady, was singing happily to a song on the radio. A huge vat of bolognese sauce bubbled on the cooker top, and the kitchen was filled with the rich smell of tomatoes. She danced across to the huge fridge, her bottom swaying as she moved in time to the music, shaking a jar of oil in one hand like a maraca.

'Cheese . . . that's what I need . . .' Mrs Cooper sang, as she grabbed the door handle. The door swung open and icy vapour curled out of the



fridge. 'Funny . . . I must have the setting too cold . . .' she muttered to herself, pulling the door open wide.

She shrieked as she came face to face with a severed head, sitting on the top shelf. It dripped blood on to the shelves below. The head blew her a kiss, and winked.

'Hello, darling!' a raspy male voice laughed.

Mrs Cooper dropped the jar of oil and it shattered on the floor with a crash. Mrs Meadows, her fellow dinner lady, rushed into the kitchen carrying a huge bag of frozen chips.

'What's the matter, love? Did you cut yourself?' She rushed over to Mrs Cooper's side. 'I heard you scream . . .'

'It's . . . it's . . .' Mrs Cooper pointed at the fridge with a shaking finger. Mrs Meadows nudged her out of the way.

'Can't see anything that bad, Lynn. There's a mouldy-looking piece of cheddar but we can cut the edges off . . .' she rummaged further.

'But there's a – a head!'

'Of slimy lettuce. Yes, I know – if the headmaster sees it we'll get another lecture about "the importance of running a tight ship", but it's not *that* bad. Here! I'll stash it in the bins.'

She bustled past Mrs Cooper who was still staring at the fridge, wide-eyed. 'You have a



sit-down, love,' Mrs Meadows frowned. 'I'll pop the kettle on for a brew – that'll make you feel better!'

Mrs Cooper sat down heavily. Her eyes kept darting back to the fridge. The kettle started to boil with a loud whistle and she jumped out of her seat.

'You are jittery this morning, Lynn! What's wrong?' Mrs Meadows asked, turning off the kettle and putting her arm around her friend.

'N-n-nothing, Sue!' Mrs Cooper smiled, bravely. 'Just my imagination playing tricks again.' She shook her head and her perm bobbed up and down. 'Our Alex had us all awake late last night playing his flaming rock music. I'm just tired, that's all!' she laughed shakily and got up.

'Oh – don't get me started on teenagers! Our Joanne has me in a flap most days. Kids! Come on – I'll make that tea. Then we'd better get the fryer going for these chips.'



Mrs Cooper looked over her shoulder towards the fridge and shuddered, then she turned on the tap to fill a huge pan with water for the spaghetti.

Deep in the store cupboard, something was stirring. A mouse nibbled at the corner of a packet of raisins and squeaked with excitement as the brown treasures tumbled out of the hole. It didn't notice the green, glowing mist that slid along the shelf behind it. The mouse stuffed its cheeks happily with sweet treats.

The mist rose until it towered over the creature. It started to take on a shape: first a fat, furry body and then a long, fluffy tail, next came four paws with long, razor-sharp claws and, finally, a face topped by pointed ears and a mouthful of teeth like daggers.

The mouse stopped eating. Its whiskers twitched and it cocked its head on one side to listen. A strange, rumbling sound filled the store

cupboard. It had heard that noise before – it was the sound of a cat purring!

The mouse spun round to see green eyes glittering in the darkness. A huge paw shot out and stamped on its tail. The mouse was trapped. It pulled and squeaked, its heart beating fast. It gave an almighty heave, and its tail stretched thin.

At that moment, the cat lifted a paw and the mouse shot away across the cupboard, hitting packets as it fell, like a furry ball in a pinball machine. The cat seemed to smile, and then started to dissolve back into mist. It liked torturing small, defenceless things. And dinner ladies.

Back in the kitchen, Mrs Cooper was whisking a bowl of chocolate mousse. After her cup of tea, she felt much better. She poured the sticky mixture into lines of plastic pots. Putting the bowl in the dishwasher, she opened the store-cupboard door.



‘Hmmm, where did I put those pots of sprinkles . . .? Oh – these will do!’ she grabbed a large plastic tub of jelly drops. ‘I hope there’s enough left . . .’ she raised the tub to look and screamed. It was a jar of eyeballs!



Mrs Cooper dropped the tub and ran backwards and forwards in the cupboard in blind panic. She knocked bottles and jars off shelves and as she fell back on to a tall, wobbly set of

shelves, a bag of flour toppled over and covered her in a white cloud.

Mrs Meadows came barrelling in to the cupboard and grabbed Mrs Cooper, who screamed even louder.

'Lynn! It's me! Calm down!'

'Eyes! Eyeballs! They were looking right at me . . .' Mrs Cooper groaned and swayed. Mrs Meadows steered her back into the kitchen.

'Sit there!' she ordered, picking up the phone and ringing Mr Wharpley, the school caretaker.

'Reg? It's Sue here, in the kitchen. I need your help. No, nothing's broken – well, nothing I can't deal with,' she sighed, looking at the broken jars and bottles on the floor of the store cupboard. 'It's Lynn. She's ill, and I need someone to drive her home. Thanks, Reg. Yes, I owe you a chocolate fudge cake for this!' she smiled.

She put the phone down and bobbed down next to her friend. 'I think you need a rest, love.



Reg is going to take you home, and I'll ring your Kev at work to let him know you're poorly.'

Mrs Cooper stared past Mrs Meadows, chewing her lip. 'Eyeballs . . .' she whispered.

Moments later, Mr Wharpley and Mrs Meadows steered the shaking dinner lady into Mr Wharpley's van.

As it pulled away from the kerb noisily, Mrs Meadows sighed. 'Poor Lynn!' She shook her head. 'And poor me!' she groaned.

Then she trudged back to the kitchen to prepare three hundred portions of chips by herself.



The next day, the headmaster, Mr Tick, was humming to himself as he played solitaire on the computer in his office. A cup of coffee steamed on his desk, and Miss Keys had left a plate of his favourite crumble creams within easy reach. All was well with the world.

Mr Tick looked up, thinking hard about his next move, when he saw a shadow through the frosted glass in his office door. He sighed and his shoulders sagged. He opened the Department for Education web page to hide his game of solitaire and called, 'Enter!'

His secretary, Miss Keys, scuttled in, biting her lip nervously.

'Well? What is it? Something important to justify disturbing my work, I presume . . .?' Mr Tick growled.

'Erm, I'm afraid Lynn Cooper has just rung to say she won't be in today and won't be back in the foreseeable future. Well, it was her husband, actually. He said she was very poorly and couldn't come to the phone. The doctor has signed her off work with her nerves.'

'Well, he couldn't sign her off without her nerves, could he?' chuckled Mr Tick at his own joke.



Miss Keys looked puzzled.

Mr Tick sighed. 'I don't know why I bother . . .' he grumbled under his breath and frowned. 'Lynn Cooper? I don't remember any teachers called Lynn Cooper . . .'

'Erm, she's not a teacher, Mr Tick. She's a dinner lady. She works in the kitchen.'

'Ah – of course!' Mr Tick nodded, his eyes blank. 'Her nerves, you say? How frightening can a vegetable rack get? How scary can a deep fryer be?' he chuckled at his own jokes.

Miss Keys just looked at him, baffled.

'I'm wasted here,' he sighed to himself. 'So, off on account of her nerves for the foreseeable future, eh? Hmm . . . We'll have to advertise straight away for a replacement.' He sighed deeply.

Mr Tick pulled his gold-plated fountain pen out of his top pocket and scribbled details of the advertisement on a piece of school notepaper.

The pen left huge blobs on the paper that dribbled as he handed the sheet to Miss Keys.

'There you go! Type this up ASAP, Miss Keys! We can't have the school kitchen grinding to a halt, can we? We'll end up with one of those fussy celebrity chefs swooping down on the school and banging on about healthy eating if we're not careful!' he chuckled.

Miss Keys looked even more confused.

Mr Tick rubbed his forehead wearily. 'The advertisement, please?' he sighed.

Miss Keys scampered off to her desk and began to type. She read the words carefully and checked them twice. She pressed 'print'. At that moment, Mr Tick took a huge slurp of his coffee and realised it had gone cold. Gagging, he shouted for Miss Keys. 'This coffee is cold! Really, Miss Keys! This will not do!'

The secretary scurried off to the coffee machine and rushed back in to the headmaster's

office with a steaming fresh cup. A gust of wind pushed its way in through the open window. It tickled the papers on Miss Keys's desk, lingering over the advertisement.

Then, caught by the wind, the advertisement flew into the air and danced out of the window, eventually coming to rest on the sports field.

Miss Keys stumbled back to her desk, pink-cheeked and embarrassed. Fancy letting Mr Tick's coffee get cold! *I hope Lynn's nerves aren't catching!* she shuddered.

She reached for the advertisement. It wasn't there.

I could have sworn *I'd printed that already . . .* Miss Keys shivered, closing the window against the chill.