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opening extract from

School Spooks Day (Too Ghoul for School)

written by

B. Strange

published by

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SCHOOL SPOOKS DAY



'*Go!*' screamed the PE teacher, Ms Legg, over the sound of the starter's pistol.

Lenny launched himself forwards. The race would all be over in a matter of seconds, and this was the best opportunity to secure a lead.

Lenny focused on the red tape of the finish line ahead, fluttering in the wind. He could hear feet thumping into the ground behind him.

Suddenly, a ghost shot up from the grass in front of him, playing some sort of musical instrument made of rib bones.

Lenny jumped and landed awkwardly, twisting his ankle and crashing to the ground.

Luke Thomas leapt over him and burst across the finish line, and Lenny watched as the musical spirit sent the crowd running and screaming.

The attack had begun.

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 . . .





SCHOOL SPOOKS DAY

B. STRANGE

EGMONT

Special thanks to:

Tommy Donbavand, St John's Walworth Church of England Primary School and Belmont Primary School



EGMONT

We bring stories to life

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‘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



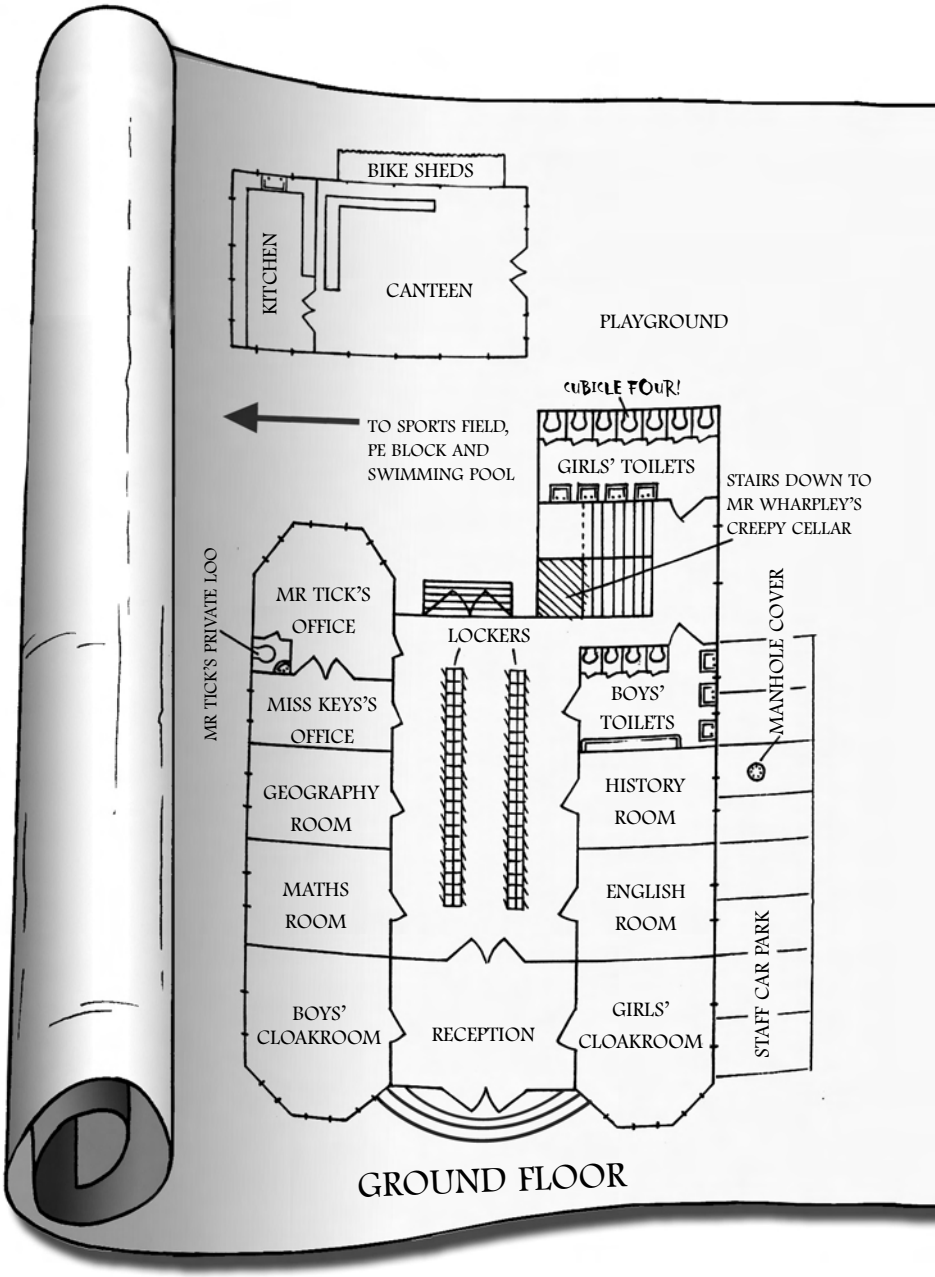
Young ghost and a secret wannabe St Sebastian's pupil

William Scroggins

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



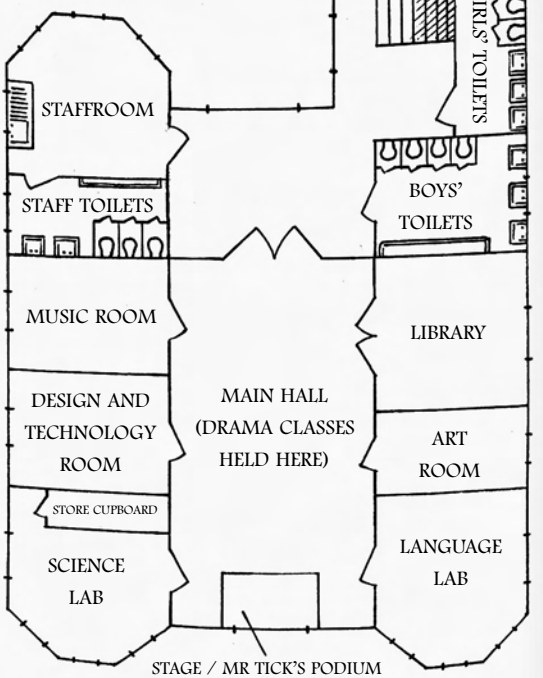
Ambrose Harbottle


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

super meum corpum mortuum*

* 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 . . .

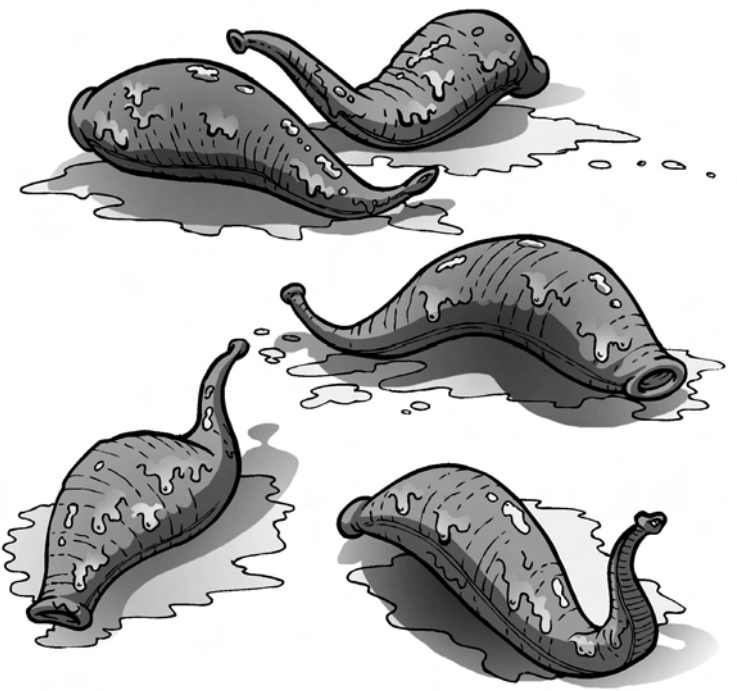
Yours sincerely
The Publisher.

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.

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ELVIS PRESLEY

The American singer Elvis Presley is mentioned quite a few times in *School Spooks Day* (Mr Wharpley, the school caretaker, has a huge collection of his records).

Here are some interesting facts about Elvis:

- He was born in 1935 and died in 1977
- He is often called 'The King of Rock 'n' Roll'!
- He wiggled his hips when he was singing – older people thought this was disgusting!
- He once shot a TV set with a gun because he didn't like the show that was on!
- He was one of the most famous performers of the twentieth century, and is reported to have sold over one billion singles and albums, which would make him the biggest-selling solo artist of all time!



CHAPTER 1
SWAMPED

'U-huh-huh,' crooned Mr Wharpley, caretaker of St Sebastian's School, and owner of the world's greasiest hairstyle. He'd tried to shape it into an Elvis-style quiff, but the gunk from the school kitchen's deep-fat fryer just didn't work as well as real hair gel, and his fringe flopped about like a dead rat.

Picturing himself as his hero, Mr Wharpley spun the mop around to use it as a microphone, but mistimed the move and slapped himself in the face with the sopping wet sponge.

Spluttering, he quickly looked around the changing rooms of the school's indoor swimming pool to make sure no one had seen the incident. Certain that he was alone, he whipped a master key from his shirt pocket, used it to open a nearby locker, and grabbed the clean trunks of a year-eight boy to dry his face.

Slamming the locker closed, Mr Wharpley spun the volume control of his ancient CD player as 'Hound Dog', his favourite Elvis tune of all time, began to ring out. He sang along, gyrating his hips in a way he believed made him look like The King of Rock 'n' Roll but, in reality, gave the impression that his underwear was full of itching powder.

Suddenly, there was a loud clanking sound, followed by a grating of metal on metal that set the caretaker's teeth on edge.

'What *now*?' he moaned, using the handle of his mop to switch off Elvis. He went in the



direction of the pool, taking care to avoid the footbath as he left the changing room. No point cleaning his boots twice in one month.

Mr Wharpley stood at the side of the swimming pool and gazed into the water. Something wasn't right, but he couldn't quite put his finger on it. The water was clean, the broken tiles had been repaired, and the swimming lanes had been repainted on the bottom with paint he was almost certain wouldn't be poisonous if swallowed. The water looked perfectly clear and still.

Perfectly clear and still. That was it. The flippin' pool filter had packed up! It was supposed to constantly drain whatever mess the little brats left in there and churn out clean water to replace it, but it had stopped.

The caretaker shuffled around the edge of the pool to the machine room on the far side. 'Make sure everything's ready for school sports day,



Mr Wharpley!' he whined, imitating the headmaster, Mr Tick. 'Everything has to be perfect for when the parents arrive!'

'The only way this school will be perfect is if we get rid of the little monsters that make my life a misery every day!' Mr Wharpley allowed himself a little smile at the wondrous thought of a school with no pupils as he searched his pockets for the key to the machine room.

Unlocking the door and tugging it open, he stared in horror at the mess in front of him. A metal lifesaving pole had fallen from its place on the wall and jammed in the cogs of the ancient pool filter. Despite clear instructions from health and safety that the lifesaving equipment needed to be available at all times, Mr Wharpley kept it all locked safely away in the machine room. He was now beginning to regret the decision.

Grabbing the handle, he tried to pull the pole free of the machine into which it was jammed.



It wouldn't move. Perhaps if he pressed his foot against the side of the filter to get a better grip? The elderly man raised a dirty boot and pushed hard while yanking at the pole. Yes! . . . The cogs were starting to turn.

In one swift movement, Mr Wharpley's foot slipped off the side of the filter and swung upwards, whereupon the turn-ups of his right trouser leg became caught in the machinery along with the pole.

'Oh, great!' groaned the caretaker, hopping on his free foot to try and stay upright. He let go of the pole with one hand and stretched out to try and free his leg. These trousers were only twelve years old, he had to be careful not to rip them.

Suddenly, the cogs jerked forwards a little more, snagging the left sleeve of his shirt in their teeth, along with the pole and his trousers.

'Oh, for flip's sake!' yelled Mr Wharpley. He would never live it down if anyone came in and



found him like this. He had to escape from the clutches of the pool filter.

With his free hand, the caretaker gripped the largest of the cogs and tried to turn it. The metal teeth bit into his fingers as he slowly . . . ever so slowly . . . began to spin the cog around . . .

That was when the foot he was balancing on slipped from underneath him and Mr Wharpley spun upside down. His favourite tie – the one with the orange and brown spanner print on it – caught in between the cogs and pulled tight as the caretaker fell to the floor.

'Kkkxxggghhh!' gurgled the angry caretaker as the tie threatened to cut off his air supply. He . . . had . . . to . . . free . . . himself . . .

There was only one option left open: switch the filter to reverse. That way, he would have a second or so to pull his shirt, trousers and tie clear of the machinery as the cogs began to turn the opposite way. The problem was, he couldn't reach the lever with his one free arm. That just left his mouth.

Gripping the handle between his teeth – and cursing himself for buying such foul-tasting polish – Mr Wharpley pulled down hard on the lever. It had been years since the filter had been run in

reverse, and the handle was rusted in place. The caretaker gripped tight and pulled even harder.

The lever didn't move for a few seconds. Then, suddenly, it slammed into the reverse position, sending the cogs of the filter spinning in the opposite direction.

Mr Wharpley's trousers, shirt and tie came free and he fell backwards, grabbing for the handle of the pool pole. The pole came free of the cogs and fell away from the machine as the caretaker was catapulted backwards through the machine-room door and into the swimming pool with a splash.

Spluttering, Mr Wharpley made it back to the surface of the water just in time to see generations of slime, hair and sticking plasters come belching out of the grilles around the edges of the pool. Within seconds, the caretaker was swimming in what appeared to be a swamp filled with dead skin, scabs, rotting earplugs and old toenails.





Mr Wharpley spat out a mouldy verruca sock and shuddered as he paddled wildly to stay above the now crusty surface of the pool.

Elvis had never gone through anything like this.