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opening extract from

Terror in Cubicle Four (Too Ghoul for School)

written by

B. Strange

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TERROR IN CUBICLE FOUR



The door to the girls' toilets opened slowly, and James cautiously took a step inside.

'What's the matter?' asked Alexander, forcing the door wide and pushing past him. 'Scared something might bite you?'

'No,' answered James, 'it's just that I've never been inside the girls' toilets before.'

Suddenly, the loo inside the closed cubicle let out a loud burp, and Lenny backed away from the door. 'Leandra says that one's the haunted one,' he muttered.

Alexander laughed. 'A haunted toilet is a scientific impossibility.'

But the words stuck in his throat as the toilet let out another enormous belch. James gasped as a withered, grey human hand launched itself up from the water, and landed on his face.

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 . . .





TERROR IN CUBICLE FOUR

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

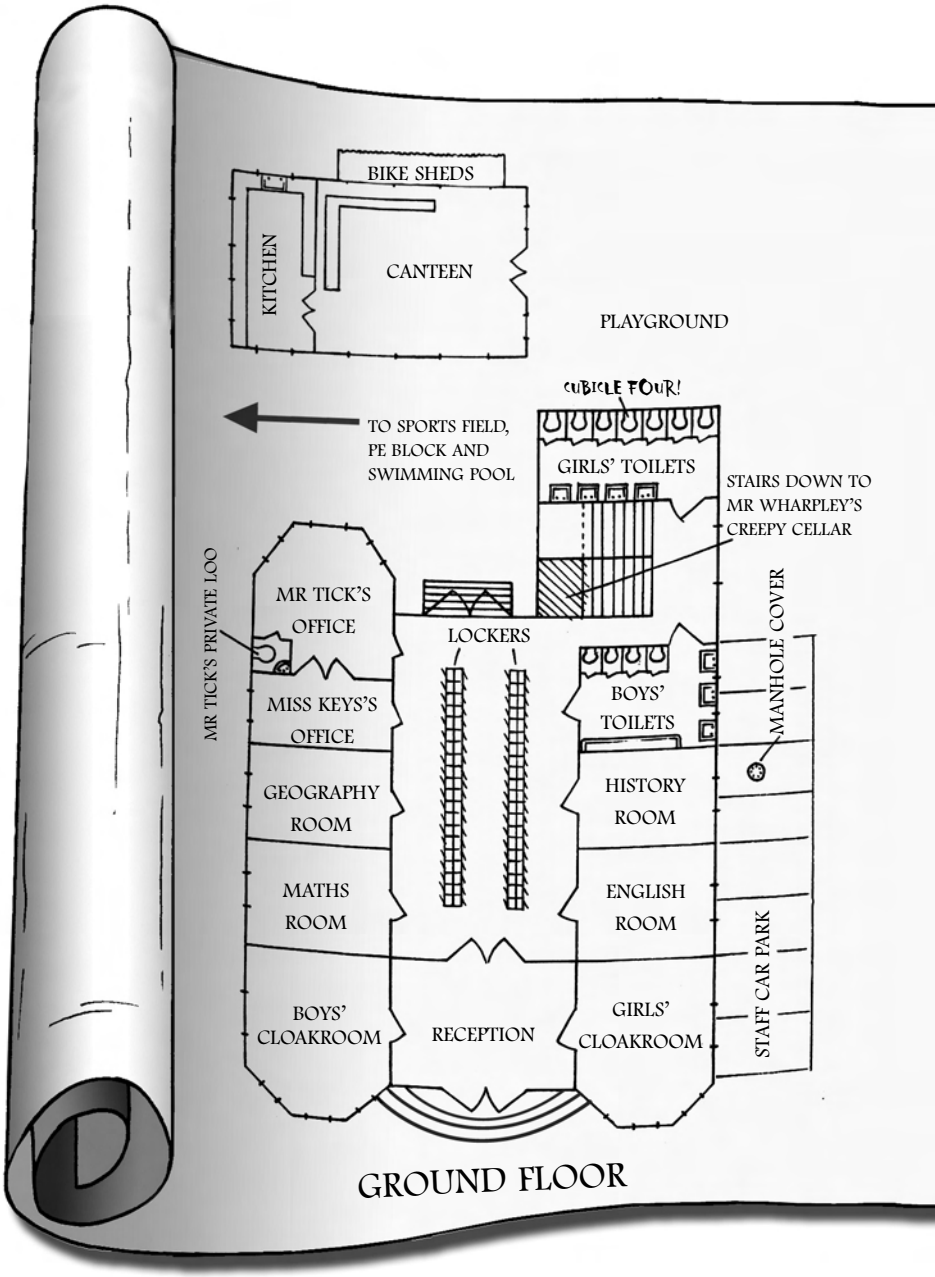


William Scroggins

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



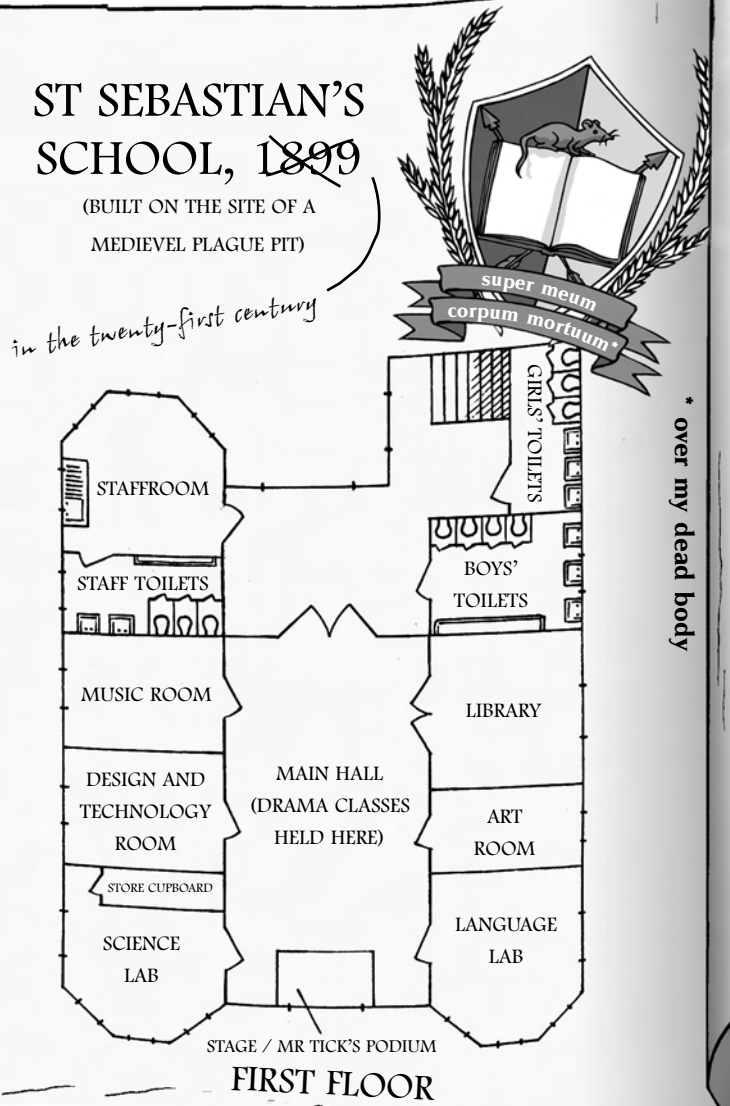
Ambrose Harbottle


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

* 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.

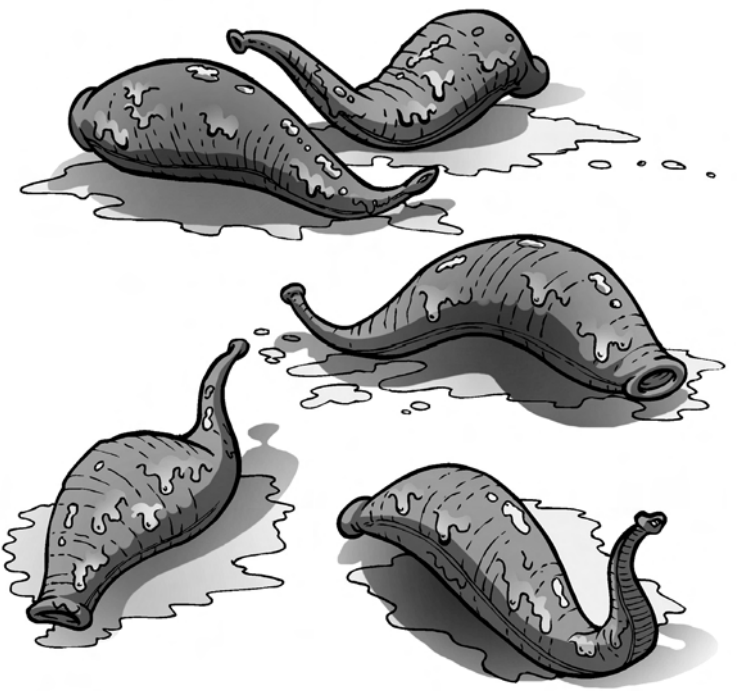
PS - Should you wish to file a report on any suspicious supernatural occurrences at your school, visit **www.too-ghoul.com** and fill out the relevant form. We'll pass it on to O.F.S.T.(E.D.) for you.

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	FEELING FLUSHED	1
2	A BIG HAND	12
3	GOING UNDERGROUND	22
4	GHOUL'S OUT	32
5	BEST CELLAR	41
6	THE BLUEPRINT	51
7	THE WHOLE TRUTH?	60
8	RAT FANS	68
9	WHARPLEY ON THE WARPATH	78
10	WORSE	89
11	A TENTS SITUATION	100
12	BULLY BAITING	109
13	SKY HIGH	119
	EXTRA! FACT FILE, JOKES, QUIZ AND STUFF	131
	THE BUBONIC BUILDERS SNEAK PREVIEW	137



CHAPTER 1
FEELING FLUSHED

'No, I can't fill in the remaining three wives of Henry the Eighth myself!' roared Gordon as he pushed Alexander's head into the toilet bowl and flushed for the second time. 'I want the headmaster's son to do it for me!'

James Simpson leapt forwards and managed to grab a handful of the bully's shirt before the heel of a hand pushed into his face and sent him sprawling across the greasy floor of the boys' toilets. Lenny Maxwell dashed over to help him up.



‘We have to do something!’ hissed James, rubbing his bruised nose. ‘If Mr Tick gets wind that we were in here when this happened to his son, we’ll be in detention for the rest of our natural lives.’

Lenny nodded. ‘Right!’ he said, more to himself than to anyone else. ‘Here I go, doing something! I’m going to do something!’



Alexander's head appeared from the toilet bowl after his third flushing. 'Step in any time you want, boys!' he cried out.

Lenny took a cautious pace towards the bully, and immediately pulled back.

'What's wrong?' asked James.

'A plan,' mumbled Lenny, 'I need a plan.'

Alexander came up for the fourth time. 'You don't need a plan!' he screamed. 'Just *do* something!'

Lenny cracked his neck from side to side as James busily rubbed his shoulders. 'You're a bully-fighting machine!' James told him. 'A giant of a man! You're a contender!'

'A contender!' repeated the giant of a man.

Alexander reappeared briefly. 'In your own time, Lenny. Don't mind me!'

Lenny took a deep breath and drew himself up to his full 1.7-metre height. He clamped a hand on Gordon's chest and spun him round.



‘What?’ the bully spat, his nose just centimetres from Lenny’s chin.

‘Leave him alone, Carver,’ said Lenny, as calmly as he could. He gripped the bully’s jumper even tighter in an attempt to disguise his trembling hand. ‘He’s already done your maths and science homework this week. I’d have thought even a numpty like you could look up a little bit of history and copy it out for himself.’

The expression that flooded Gordon ‘The Gorilla’ Carver’s face was something Lenny had only seen before on nature programmes: pure, animal rage. Behind him, Alexander clambered unsteadily to his feet, shaking his head in an effort to clear the dizziness.

‘I’ll give you three seconds to let go of me, Maxwell,’ growled the bully. ‘Or it’ll be your fat head that gets flushed next!’ Drops of stinking toilet water splashed across the back of Gordon’s neck and, realising that Alexander was now

standing, he reached out and grabbed the boy's face, pushing him back down towards the toilet bowl once again. 'Did I give you permission to get up, Stick?'

'Leave him ALONE!' yelled Lenny, stepping backwards and pulling The Gorilla out of the cubicle with him. There was a ripping sound, and both boys looked down to see the torn St Sebastian's School badge in Lenny's fist. A gaping hole of the same shape decorated Gordon's jumper.

Silence filled the toilets as all three of his victims held their breath.

'Mummy!' muttered Lenny, the first to speak. 'I . . . I didn't mean . . .'

The Gorilla sprang forwards and grabbed Lenny by the throat, pushing him back over the row of sinks that lined the far wall, his head pressed hard against the one remaining mirror. 'Do you have any idea what my dad will do to



me for this?' he shouted, slamming Lenny back against the graffiti-covered glass. 'Give me your jumper!' With his free hand, Gordon began to pull Lenny's jumper up over his head.

James and Alexander glanced nervously at each other, then raced to help. They grabbed Carver's shoulders and tried to pull him off their struggling friend, but the bully was too strong. James jumped on to The Gorilla's back and wrestled him backwards, only collapsing to the floor when a well-aimed elbow crashed into his stomach and took the wind out of him.

Lenny's jumper was halfway over his head when a scream rang out. At first, James thought Alexander had been hit, maybe punched in the face – but, as he used the ageing iron radiator to pull himself to his feet, he realised that the sound had come from next door. From the girls' toilets.

Gordon froze at the sound, just long enough for Lenny to wriggle free of his grip and pull his

jumper back down. Another scream echoed out, and James took his chance, stepping directly in front of the bully.

'Ms Legg will have heard that,' he said. 'She's on duty today. She'll be here any minute. You want her to see this?'

Gordon Carver struggled to catch his breath. 'I'll be back for that jumper!' he snarled, pointing menacingly at Lenny. He reached out and snatched his torn school badge from the boy's hand, then dashed out of the toilets, pausing to spit a gobful of phlegm at Alexander before disappearing through the door.

'Are you OK?' asked James.

Lenny slumped against the wall and nodded silently, trying in vain to reshape his badly stretched jumper. There was a mechanical whirr as the hand dryer clicked in to action and Alexander stuck his head underneath it, rubbing furiously at his spit-covered hair.



'Thanks for the help,' he shouted over the noise of the machine, 'but it wasn't necessary. I could have handled Carver myself.'

'Yeah, of course you could,' replied James. 'You were just keeping your face down in the toilet bowl until you found the perfect time to strike.'

'Not handled like *that*,' said Alexander. 'I'd simply have put in his homework that Henry VIII's last three wives were called Daphne, Melissa and Chantelle. He'd have got into serious trouble for that.'

James nodded. 'And you'd have been on his hit list for the next ten years. I tell you, something's got to –'

Another noise interrupted him – this time not a scream, but the sound of a girl crying.



James, Alexander and Lenny stepped out of the ground-floor boys' toilets to find a crowd of

year-eight girls outside the girls' toilets across the passageway. At the centre of the group was Stacey Carmichael, sobbing and trembling as her friends tried to calm her. Lenny spotted his older sister – and Stacey's best friend – Leandra, among the crowd and pulled her to one side.

'What's going on?' he asked. 'Was Stacey the one who was screaming?'

Leandra nodded. 'She was in one of the toilet cubicles, trying on her new ballet pumps and just lost it! Something must have happened in there.'

'Like what?' asked James.

'No idea,' shrugged Leandra. 'We haven't been able to get a word out of her.'

'I'd better find out so that I can tell my dad,' announced Alexander and, before James could stop him, he pushed his way through the group of girls. When he got to Stacey, he stopped and stared. She was wearing new ballet pumps but, along with everything below the hem of her ridiculously short

school skirt, they were covered in lumpy, green slime. 'What happened?' asked Alexander.

Stacey looked up at him through red, tear-filled eyes and fought to hold back her sobs. 'The t-toilet!' she mumbled. 'It j-just threw up over m-me!' She pulled a handful of tissues from her school bag and tried unsuccessfully to clean her legs; the slime simply spread further across her skin. 'My new b-ballet pumps are ruined!' She began crying again.

Leandra pushed through and put an arm around Stacey's shoulders, staying clear of the



gunk that was now oozing on to the floor of the passageway.

Alexander looked up. James and Lenny were now standing with him. 'Stacey,' he said, gravely, 'which toilet cubicle were you in?'

Stacey looked up again, tears streaming down her face. 'C-cubicle four!' she sobbed.