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Opening extract from
The Ghost in the Bath

Written by
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Contents

This is for ghost-hunters everywhere.
Make sure you always have a bucket of
water handy.

1	Mrs Trouble and the Victorians	1
2	A Surprise Visitor	8
3	Fight!	18
4	A Visit to the Library	25
5	More of Ellie	34
6	More Trouble from Mrs Rubble	42
7	Buckets Galore!	50
8	Charlie's Grave	59

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Chapter 1

Mrs Trouble and the Victorians

Luke had a problem. He wasn't sure if the problem was his new school, his new house, or Mrs Rubble. Maybe everything was a problem, thought Luke. Sometimes that was how it seemed to be.

School was OK, or at least it would be OK if it wasn't for Mrs Rubble. Mrs Rubble was Luke's teacher and the subject she liked best was History. Luke didn't like most subjects at

all, including History. His only good subject at school was Home Time. And, oh yes, he liked Break Time as well and Lunch Time. They were good. But the bits in between were not so great.

“History is stupid,” said Luke, wrinkling his freckled nose. “It’s all about dead people.”

“Yeah,” said his new friend, Mohammed. “Dead people are – well, like, dead, aren’t they?”

“And Maths is stupid too,” Luke went on. “I mean, what’s the point? I’ve got a calculator.”

“Yeah,” nodded Mohammed. “Maths is like, well.” Mohammed stopped. What was Maths like?

“It’s all numbers,” Luke said. “Counting. And writing is stupid too, isn’t it? Scribble, scribble, scribble. What’s that all about? I



mean, why spend hours writing stuff down when you can just *tell* people it all?”

“Yeah, or you could text them,” said Mohammed.

“That’s almost the same as writing it down,” Luke pointed out.

Mohammed was silent. In fact he quite liked writing, and Maths. But he liked Luke even more. Luke had straight, brown hair and Mohammed’s was black and curly. He’d always wanted straight hair. On the other hand, Luke was shorter than he was. In fact everyone in class was shorter than Mohammed.

“What do you think of Mrs Rubble?” Luke asked.

“Don’t know,” Mohammed said. “What do you think of her?”

“I think,” he said slowly, “Mrs Rubble is trouble.”

Mohammed laughed. “Yeah. She’s Mrs Trouble! So what are you going to do for the History project?”

Mrs Rubble wanted everyone to do a project about the Victorians. It could be anything to do with that time in history. The class had been full of ideas the day she told them about it.

“I’m going to do Jack the Ripper!” Jack shouted. “It’s going to be full of blood! I’ll call it ‘Jack the Dripper’, because he drips blood everywhere.”

Grace shivered. “I’m going to do Florence Nightingale,” she said. “She was a nurse who made people better.”

“Jack the Dripper is better,” said Jack. “He was a killer who made people worse!” Jack

gave an evil laugh and stared hard at everyone. Jack had fierce blue eyes that seemed to look right inside you.

“You’re horrid,” said Grace.

“You’re stupid,” Jack said back, rubbing his short blonde hair. Jack liked Grace. She looked after the class goldfish. She was quiet and clever and pretty. She had a turned-up nose and green eyes. Grace wasn’t stupid at all. In fact Jack felt stupid for saying she was stupid.

“That’s quite enough,” said Mrs Rubble before they could say any more. “I want your projects in by the end of the week. Luke, what will yours be about?”

Luke’s mind went blank. It always went blank when Mrs Rubble spoke to him. Luke thought it must be the sound of her voice. It seemed to drive away any brain power he might have had. If only she’d keep quiet. He

started to shrug his shoulders but then had the best idea ever. His eyes lit up.

“I’m going to do the Vikings!” he said.

Mrs Rubble sighed. “No you’re not,” she snapped. “The Vikings lived in Viking times. Do you know who lived in Victorian times, Luke? I will tell you. The Victorians. Go home, find out about them and write about them.”

Now Luke sat at home and stared out of the window. The Victorians. What were they like? Boring, probably. He would have liked to ask one of them, but of course they were all dead. History. The only thing that seemed to happen in history was that everyone died.

Sometimes Luke thought it would be OK to be dead. At least then he wouldn’t have to do stupid projects for Mrs Rubble. Mrs Trouble.