

JACK & BEA'S
SURVIVAL GUIDE
TO
CHURCH

This work is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or events, is 100% coincidental. Like 100%. At least. Also, sometimes we've paraphrased the Bible and, if you want to, you can look up what it actually says. Some of the passages we've referred to are: **Genesis 4**, **Mark 5:21-43**, and **1 Peter 5:7**, but we recommend reading the whole thing. ;)

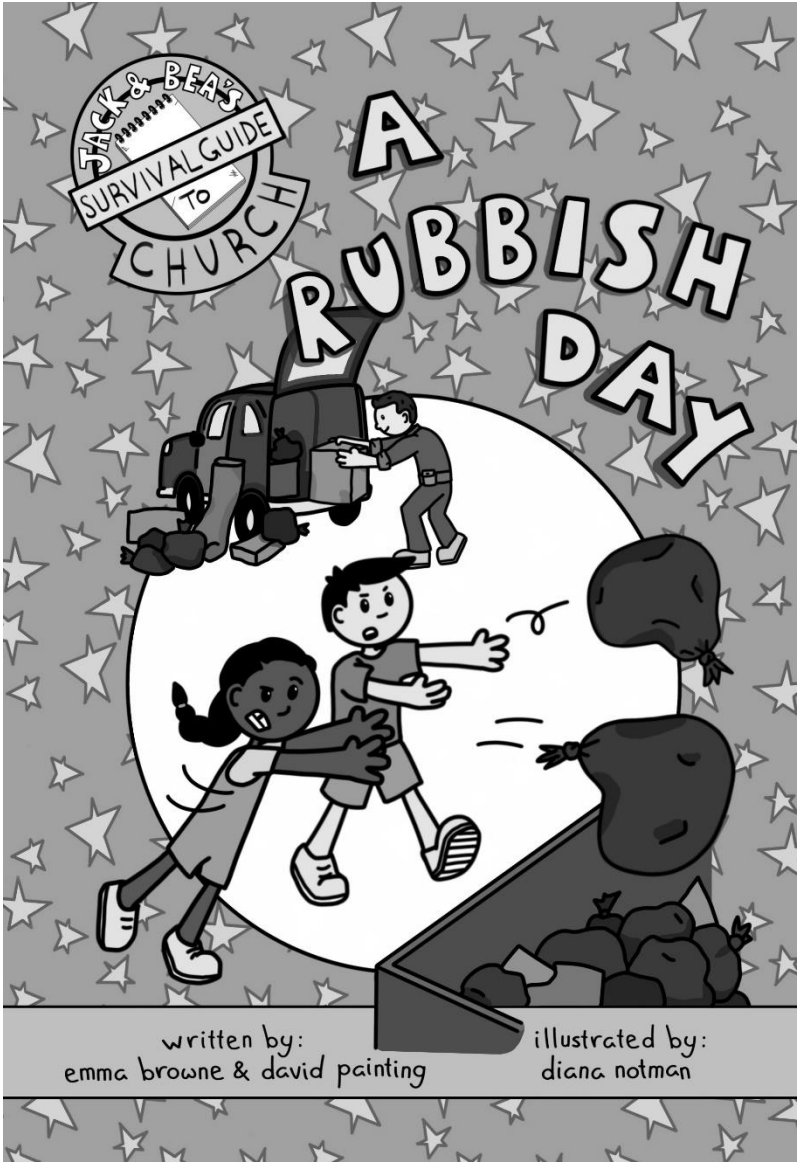
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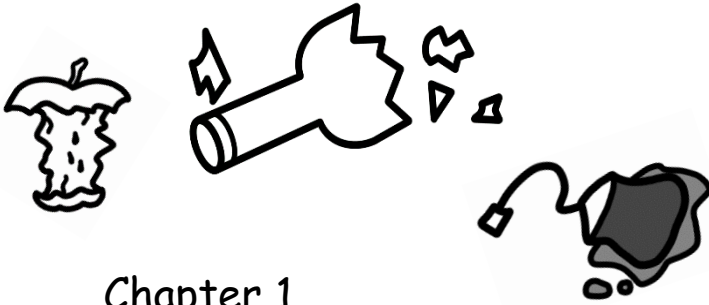


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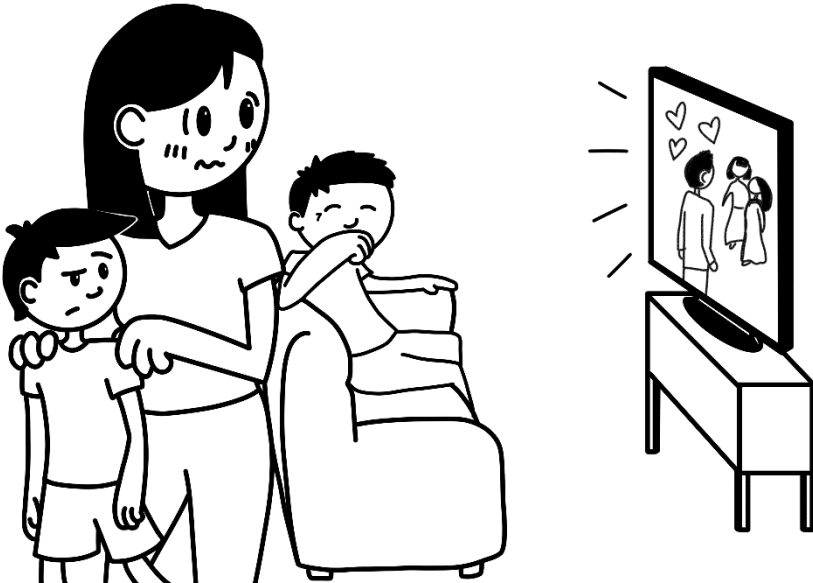
Caution!!

Read this book at your own risk



Chapter 1

I couldn't sleep last night, so I snuck downstairs and saw a bit of the TV programme that Mum & Dad were watching: 'Day 3 in the Big Brother House. Kirsty is throwing trifle at Adam, having been told that she is about to be the 4th person to be evicted.' Apparently, there are all these people locked together in a house, and people vote to set one of them free or something. It sounded fun, but when Mum caught me watching, she told me not tell any of her friends that they watch it.



Anyway, today, it's 'Day 3 in the Church Holiday Club House,' only nobody has voted to set me free.

And given how the Holiday Club started - with me accidentally making a massive mess and breaking a vase and stuff - I guess they're never going to set me free. I'll be stuck in Church Holiday Club for the REST OF MY LIFE with Bob the caretaker and Bea the girl with the amazing kick.

I mean, my shins are bruised... and my hands blistered from all the gardening.

And she thinks she is so clever.

OK, fine. She kind of is clever. But also, her kicks hurt.

'Jack?'

I frown as Mum's voice breaks through my thoughts.

'What?'

'I was just saying how exciting it must be to go to Holiday Club again,' Mum says, and smiles at me in the rear-view mirror. 'It's very kind of you and Bea to have volunteered to help Bob do his caretaking rather than being in the Holiday Club itself, but it sounds as though you've had a good time helping him?'

'Uh... Yeah.' I pull my lips into a smile that feels awkward on my face. Mum doesn't know that Bea and I didn't exactly volunteer to help Bob. 'It's been fun!'



'Do you know what you'll be doing today?' Mum asks as she pulls into the church car park.

I try to muster all my cheeriness. 'We're cleaning out a storage cupboard.'

My cheeks are starting to hurt from smiling so wide. And also - what kind of a stupid idea is it to get children to clean out the church storage cupboard??

'Right, well that sounds very helpful.' Mum gives me a hug. 'I'll be back in time for the closing ceremony at the end. Have a good day and don't forget your manners.'

'Mmm. Bye.' I walk up the steps to the church where Bea and Bob are waiting for me.

'Hi, Jack!' Bea says.

'Ooh, you don't want to shout that on an aeroplane.' Bob looks awfully pleased with his joke.

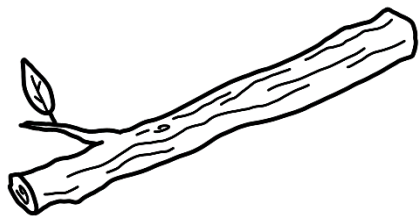
'Ha. Ha.' I roll my eyes at him. 'You're so funny; nobody has ever made that joke before.'

'My Dad tells terrible jokes all the time,' Bea says. 'I think it's part of being a Dad...'

I nod. My Dad tells awful jokes, too. Like this morning at breakfast, he asked, 'What's brown and sticky?' And the answer was... a stick.

Sigh.

Okay, it's kind of funny, but also...



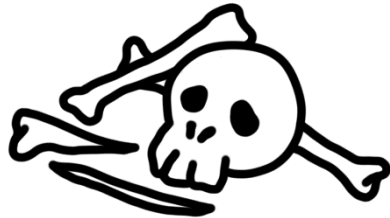
'In the beginning,' Bob says in a serious voice, and it sounds like he's reading from the Bible. 'God made Dads to tell terrible jokes to their children... and children to be brave so that they could face great danger when helping old caretakers.'

'What?' I look at him. Bob says some strange things sometimes.



'Well, today we're going to do something that will need you to be very brave.' Bob wiggles his fingers, and his eyes widen as he says, 'We're going to unlock a door that hasn't been opened in over five hundred years. There's rumours of ghosts and skeletons, but they're probably not true...'

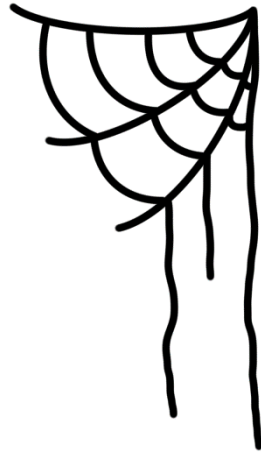
'Probably not?!' I swallow. I don't really believe in ghosts and stuff, but I wouldn't want to come across one. You know?



Bea sighs. 'It can't be that old. The church was built in 1897. There's a big brick with the date on it.'

I did say I don't believe in ghosts, didn't I?

'Haha,' Bob chuckles. 'I knew you would know. It's true, but it hasn't been opened for a while. It's the room where people put things when they don't know what else to do with them.'



'Hm.' Bea unsurprisingly doesn't seem very excited about spending all morning tidying a storage room.

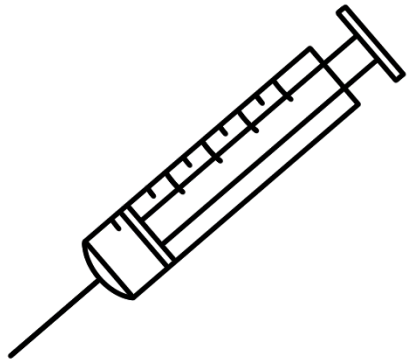
'And today we've got to sort it out.' Bob smiles as though he can't wait to get going.

'I bet there are some big spiders even if there aren't ghosts...' I say excitedly. There might be beetles and moths, and potato bugs too!

Bea snorts. 'Well, I'm not scared of spiders, so let's see what's in here.'

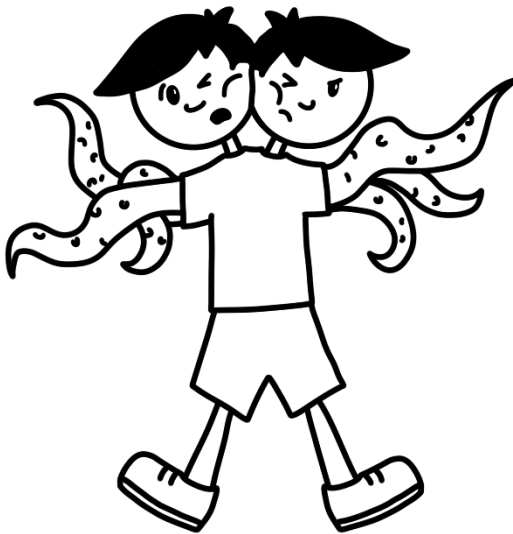
I don't think Bea is scared of much.

I'm not scared of much either. Just a few things. Like... well, I'm not super excited about going to the dentist. And I'm not super keen on having injections. And there's a man that lives on our street who looks scary - he's bald and has tattoos all over his head. Sometimes he yells at people, and I wonder if he's going to hurt someone. But



then one day I saw him feeding a cat, so I'm not sure what to make of him. Still, there's something in his eyes when he looks at me that makes me quite uncomfortable, like maybe he's just waiting for an opportunity to stab somebody.

Oh, and I reckon there are probably not aliens that are out to get us, but sometimes I think it would be pretty scary to meet an alien. Maybe they'd come to abduct me on their



flying saucer and take me off into space. Or maybe they'd inject me with some virus, and I'd start growing a second head and tentacles. That would be pretty scary. And also like the coolest thing ever.

So yeah - just a few things.

Bea pulls the door to the storage room open and Bob makes a squeaking noise behind me. I think he's trying to make it



all seem a bit spooky. And yeah, okay - the light isn't on, and who knows what's in the storage room, but I kind of doubt we're going to find a ghost dentist in there.

Just saying.

'Right, Bea, you go first as our intrepid leader. If you find some treasure, let me know.'

I have no idea what he means with that 'intrepid leader' thing, but I assume he means brave.

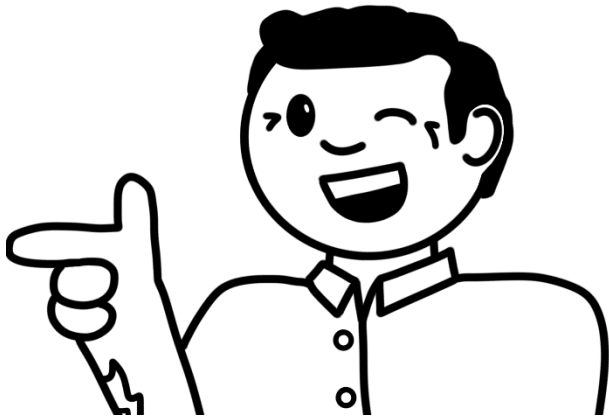
I clear my throat. 'And don't scream if there are big spiders... or ghost dentists...'

'I doubt we'll find any ghost dentists in here.' Bea chuckles. 'Ghost dentists would be bored to death here.'

'That's right,' says Bob.

'They'd have nothing to FILL their time with!'

He thinks he's SO funny.



'They'd be alright in the afternoon, though,' says Bea, joining in. 'Especially at Two Thirty.'

I must have a confused look on my face because she widens her eyes and says, 'Two thirty. Tooth hurty.'

I sigh. I have to spend the whole morning with these two.

'See if you can find a light switch.' I say to stop the terrible jokes. I put my arm against the wall and feel around for one. 'Yuck, I've just got bits of a cobweb in my mouth.' I wipe my hand over my mouth to get rid of it.

'Ooh, hope the spider wasn't on it...' Bob says, and I hear the smile in his voice.

I scrunch my nose. I like spiders, but maybe not to eat.

'Bob! Stop winding Jack up,' Bea says, and I bet she would have elbowed him if he had been her size.

'Ah, sorry Jack,' Bob says. 'Just a bit of fun. I hate spiders; that's why I asked Bea to lead the way.'

We're deeper into the room now, and I'm starting to feel like an explorer, but every time someone bangs into something, or Bob makes a creaking sound, my heart begins to race a bit. Ok, so maybe it is a bit scary. But also, fun - like the ghost train ride at the fair.

Suddenly, Bob's voice booms out: 'And there was light!'

He must have found the switch, because suddenly the light goes on - and I'm pretty sure he isn't God...

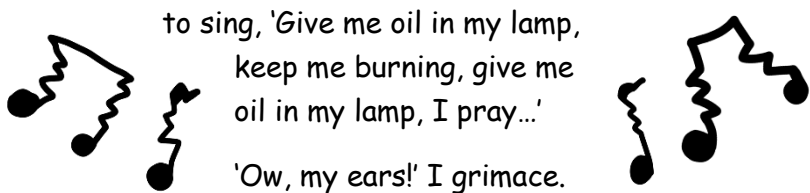


I sigh as I look around. We're going to be here all day. 'It's junk! Look at it: shelves and shelves of junk!'

'What is this?!' Bea takes something off a shelf and turns it over. 'I think it should be in a museum.'

I snort. 'Along with Miss Turner and Bob.'

'Thanks very much!' Bob says and reaches out to see what Bea is looking at. 'It's an old song book. I used to sing some of these in Sunday School.' He flicks through it and starts



to sing, 'Give me oil in my lamp,
keep me burning, give me
oil in my lamp, I pray...'

'Ow, my ears!' I grimace.

Bob isn't the best at singing. 'What is that about? Why do you want God to keep you burning?'

Bea looks at me with her know-it-all eyes. 'It's a story about...'

'Never mind. I don't really want to know...' I shake my head, and I can tell it annoys Bea that she doesn't get to finish whatever she was going to say. 'What are we supposed to do with all this? Most of it is broken or damaged - why is it still here?'

Bob holds his hands up as though he doesn't really have an answer. 'A few years ago, there was a flood.'

I frown. 'I thought Bea said the church wasn't that old. Noah must have lived a gazillion years ago!'

'Not that flood, Jack!' Bob laughs and his whole body shakes. Then he shakes his head. 'There was a burst pipe a few years ago during the week, and by the time people arrived on Sunday, the whole of this basement was under water. Lots of things got damaged. Come on, let's make some piles: things that are definitely too damaged to be of any use, and everything else.'

'Well, the church people should probably have sorted this out a few years ago, then.' I wonder what they've been thinking, just leaving all this here for years?? Still, I have a look around, and we start taking things off the shelves to put into piles.

