

Mutant ZOMBIES Cursed My School Trip!

A disastrous coach trip
creative writing session with

Matt Brown

Listen to Matt Brown read the below
extracts and introduce the task here:

<https://youtu.be/kMyUU67cLE0>

Extract from *Mutant Zombies Cursed My School Trip!*

Packing the bag

“Well thanks very much for interrupting,” he said. “We were actually just about to begin an exciting acting project. And now you’ve barged in like a stupid great big blundering pile of dog plops and spoiled it all. AGAIN!”

He walked over to Ian’s mum, who had no idea he was there, picked his nose and smeared a trail of silvery snot right down the side of her face. Ian sniggered and Remington Furious III disappeared in a triumphant puff of smoke.

“Now then,” said Ian’s mum, who couldn’t feel the snot trail because that was also part of Ian’s imagination. “Shall we pack alphabetically or by body zone?”

“Mum, the school trip isn’t until Tuesday. Do we really have to do this now?”

Ian’s mum stopped sorting through socks and looked at him. She had a strange faraway look on her face. A bit like the sort of face Ian made when he went for a secret wee in the sea.

“It’s the very first time you’ve ever spent a night away from home,” she said. “How on earth are you going to cope without your mummy to look after you?”

She paused for a moment. “It’s not too late to change your mind, you know? You could back out if you wanted and stay here with me.”

Ian sighed. “Mum, I want to go. I’ll be fine,” he said. “I am nearly eleven years old. I can cope with being away from home for a couple of days.”

Ian’s mum was always acting like this, like he couldn’t handle anything without her.

“Well, in that case, let’s begin,” she said, looking back at the clothes on the bed. “Pants.”

She handed Ian seven pairs of pants.

“Seven pairs?” he said. “Are you sure? The trip only lasts two nights.” Ian’s mum looked at him in horror.

“Two nights?” she said. “Good point, my little walnut whip. Better make it ten pairs. You never know when you’ll need them.”

Ian made a face and took the pants. He noticed his mum had packed a pair that had a cartoon alien, with the words TAKE ME TO YOUR TOILET written on the front. There was no way he’d be able to make friends if the person he was sharing a room with saw those, so he quickly hid them under the bed. As he put the rest of the pants in the suitcase he picked up a strange-looking bundle that was inside.

“What’s this?”

“It’s a special hand-hygiene parcel, just for you,” said Ian’s mum. “To make sure you’re all clean and safe I’ve put in a mini, pump-action, hand-sanitizer gel dispenser. Wrapped around that is a packet of wipes to wipe the mini, pump-action, hand-sanitizer gel dispenser, and then wrapped around the wipes is a packet of extra wipes, to wipe the first packet of wipes.”

Ian groaned inside. His mum always overreacted to everything and fussed around him all the time. Sometimes, Ian imagined that life would be so much easier if he was some sort of mutated human, who could remove his ears and pop them in his pocket so he didn’t have to listen to her any more.

The sound of a car pulling up outside interrupted the chat about hand sanitizer.

“That’ll be your father,” said Ian’s mum.

A minute later, the front door opened and Mr Ian’sson came rushing up the stairs and burst into the spare bedroom. His face was bright red, contrasting perfectly with his extremely green Widdle uniform.

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Picking coach partners

The class cheered at the news. Ms Husk held up her hands to quieten the commotion.

“Unfortunately, the ceremony is taking place on Wednesday afternoon, which means that we will all miss the big moment because we are going on our school residential trip to Leviathan Hall on Tuesday.”

Ms Husk looked at Eric and Vinnie.

“I’m afraid it’ll mean you two won’t be coming on the trip,” she said. “This award is just too prestigious for you to miss.”

Eric and Vinnie shrugged awkwardly for a moment and then sat down.

“Now, the second thing I wanted to mention was that we need to sort out coach partners for our school residential,” said Ms Husk. “I want everyone to pair up with who they want to sit next to on the journey.”

Ian suddenly felt cold sweat gather at the back of his neck. Had he been given some warning, he might have tried to catch the eye of Beano or Haroun and introduced himself properly. But everything happened so quickly that Ian simply didn’t have a chance. The whole classroom erupted in a whirlwind of shouting and laughter as everyone ran around and sat with their preferred coach partners. After just thirty seconds of mayhem, everyone was sorted. Everyone except Ian. Nervously, he put his hand in the air.

“Yes, er, er, er...” said Ms Husk, looking straight at him.

“Ian,” prompted Ian.

“Er, yes, Ian,” said Ms Husk. “What do you want?”

“I haven’t got a partner,” he said.

Ms Husk counted up all the coach partners and saw that he was right. He was the one person in the whole of the class who didn’t have anyone to sit next to. Ian knew this was bad. Very bad. The pairing up of coach partners was one of the most crucial aspects of any school trip. The journey could last several hours so it was important to sit next to someone fun.

“Don’t worry, Liam,” said Ms Husk. “You can sit with me.”

“It’s Ian,” sighed Ian.

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The coach and coach driver

The door slowly hissed open and the driver walked down the steps. She was wearing dark glasses and had a walkie-talkie strapped to her belt, and looked more like a prison guard than a coach driver.

“Right,” she said, pulling up her trousers and resting her hands on her belt. “Let’s get a few fings straight before we start. No cans, no shoutin’, no talkin’ to the driver.”

She whipped off her dark glasses, her eyes scanning everyone’s face.

“And absolutely no singin’, I HATE singin’,” she added, before walking to the side of the coach and opening up a compartment. “Right, bags in here. NOW!”

A few minutes later, all the bags were safely stowed in the hold and the driver was back on board.

“Okay then,” shouted Ms Husk, standing next to the open door. “When I call your names please make your way onto the bus and find a seat. Hattie and Grace? Tom and Eddie?”

As the coach partnerships were announced, each pairing ran up the steps of the bus, laughing and screaming, and made for seats as close to the back as possible. Before long, only Ian was left. Ms Husk looked at him.

“Er, er, er,” she stammered, flipping through some pages on her clipboard.

“It’s Ian,” said Ian.

“Right, right,” said Ms Husk. “Ian, of course, of course, you’re with me, aren’t you? Hop on board then.”

Mrs Iansson grabbed Ian by the shoulders and began kissing him repeatedly on the cheeks.

“Oh, Ian, Ian, Ian,” she said, through streaming tears. “Be safe, my little pudding.”

“Mum,” Ian hissed. “You’re embarrassing me.”

“STOP EMBARRASSING HIM, WHIFFY,” shouted Remington Furious III, doing a handstand on Ian’s mum’s shoulders.

Ian fought his way out of his mother’s vice-like grip and walked up the steps of the coach, followed by Ms Husk. The door hissed shut behind them.

“We’re over there, in those seats,” said Ms Husk, pointing at two seats right next to the on-board toilet.

Ian walked over to them and sat down. Ms Husk sat down next to him and smiled.

“I’ve just remembered that I made some name badges for everyone,” she said, slapping a sticky label on his chest with IAN written on it.

Ian looked at his name badge as the coach gears crunched and they slowly pulled out of the school playground and trundled off down the road. As the coach went over a speed bump, the toilet door banged open. Ian caught a whiff of something that smelled equal parts floor cleaner, runny cheese and rotten eggs. As he looked around, Ian noticed that he was the only one wearing a name badge.

Task

Write a new chapter for the book describing what happens on the disastrous coach journey to Leviathan Hall. Make the chapter as funny as you can and think about all the different things that go wrong for Ian on the journey.

You might want to think about the following questions:

- What happens if Ian takes his bag on the coach and it accidentally springs open?
- What happens if someone starts singing on the bus?
- What happens if Ian falls asleep?
- What happens if someone tries to talk to the bus driver?
- What happens with the toilet?
- What does Ian talk to his teacher about?

Matt Brown's Top 5 Tips on Writing Funny Stories

1. Think about what makes you laugh and write about that. If you can make yourself laugh then you'll make other people laugh too.
2. You can add jokes to just about anything. Names of characters, place names, dialogue between characters, things characters are holding, things characters do etc. You can also make some of the boring bits of story writing into jokes. If you use a simile to describe something then why not make it funny or ridiculous. E.g. he moved faster than a cheetah that was riding a motorbike, on skis.
3. Just because you can add jokes to anything, don't add jokes to everything. Be sparing with your funny lines, they'll have much more impact. Like a sausage roll.
4. Read your story back to yourself, out loud. Use different voices and accents for different characters. You'll be amazed how many errors you pick up when you read your work out loud.
5. I haven't really got a fifth point. I was just asked to come up with five things but when I thought about it, I only really had four things. So, this point isn't much of a point, I'm afraid. Oh no, wait, I've got it. No, sorry, I've forgotten.

We'd love to read some of your stories and know that Matt Brown would too.

Why not ask your parent or guardian to share them on social media and tag Usborne Books at Home and Matt Brown in them. Who knows, you might even be funnier than Matt Brown!