

Dientzi, Hofi, Gymi and Bami – the four spooky shosts of our school

Dientzi, Hofi, Gymi and Bami - the four spooky ghosts of our school

It is a fact very little known by anyone but the old building of Dientzenhofer-Gymnasium Bamberg is home to a family of ghosts. Most of the time they sleep all day long because the loud noise of the hundreds of pupils is a fantastic lullaby¹ for them but at night, they roam around² the school.

Oh, maybe it would be polite to introduce our four little ghosts. Well, there are Gymi and Bami, i.e. daddy and mummy, and their two children: Dientzi and Hofi, their son and their daughter.

One sunny day in spring, a very strange thing happened to some pupils of class 6c, which made them feel very puzzled³. One of them even thought that what they had just experienced was so bizarre, so outlandish⁴, that there was something really fishy⁵ about it.

[Jalen's part:]

But let's start at the beginning. All the pupils of class 6c are without any exception really wonderful boys and girls but sometimes the teachers say that they are a little bit too loud. However, they can be quiet, too. So one sunny day in spring, Mr Forester, their German teacher, was too late for his German lesson because his train was late. So class 6c had another German teacher, who had to step in for Mr Forester and that teacher was very strict. Therefore, the pupils did not talk to each other. They obediently filled in their worksheets on German grammar when suddenly there was a weird noise, which somehow sounded like the voice of an old man. That strange voice asked: "What are you doing? Why are you so quiet? Me and my kids want to sleep!" Only a few boys heard that mysterious voice and they were shocked. Jalen said: "Guys, have you noticed that?" Dominik, Niklas and Nils said: "Yeah! That was so spooky, wasn't it?" The boys were frightened. "Be loud! We want to sleep!" There was that voice again. Now the whole class had heard it and they did not know what was going on here. Even the teacher, whose face was as white as a sheet now, wanted to know what that was. Was one of the pupils playing a trick on him?

¹ lullaby = Wiegen-/Schlaflied

² to roam around = umherstreifen, umherziehen

³ puzzled = verwirrt, fassungslos

⁴ outlandish = seltsam, absonderlich

⁵ fishy = seltsam

Some pupils of class 6c immediately left their classroom and they were walking around the whole school, looking in every nook and cranny⁶ when all of a sudden they heard the dark and deep voice again. Nils said: "It must be a ghost, I watched a very interesting documentary on ghosts last night." – "Okay, do you know how we can get rid of⁷ that ghost, Mr Smart-aleck⁸? Maybe there are even more ghosts that haunt⁹ our school? How can we expel them?" Niklas wanted to know. "We have to cast a spell¹⁰ on those nasty creatures," Nils pointed out and he showed Dominik, Jalen and Niklas a fat book with a lot of complicated spells that he sometimes carried around in his school bag to read it while the others were playing basketball. Most of the other pupils were too scared of that heavy book and ran back into their classroom. Nils opened it carefully. Already the first page, which depicted an ugly black magician with a very red, crooked nose, looked pretty dangerous. "And such a spell is supposed to work?" Jalen wondered but Nils was absolutely sure about that.

So they ran up to the second floor to the chemistry lab, took a long test tube as they did not have a proper wand¹¹ and together they shouted: "Siamiskas! Siamiskas!" And then right out of the blue, two little ghosts appeared and croaked: "Hi, we are Dientzi and Hofi. Why do you want us to go away?" – "Because you are so spooky!" Dominik whispered. "Oh, we didn't want to be so scary! Don't run away. Please stay. We just wanted to go back to sleep but we couldn't because your class was sooo quiet. You know, our bedroom is above your classroom and we can sleep best whenever there is an awful chaos in your classroom and when your teachers get really angry," Hofi informed the boys. They were completely puzzled and Niklas said: "But what are we going to do now?" The boys were staring at the ghosts when Jalen came up with a brilliant idea: "Come on. Let's leave those ghosts alone. They look so tired and they want to go back to bed. But, Dientzi and Hofi, we are only going to make some deafening noise for you if you promise that you guys, ahem ghosts, don't make us feel frightened again!" – "Yeah, okay. Deal." they said. The brave boys went back to their class again and announced proudly: "We've talked to the ghosts and settled the problem." The others looked up to the four boys with great admiration¹².

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⁶ in every nook and cranny = in allen Ecken und Winkeln

⁷ to get rid of something = etwas loswerden

⁸ smart aleck = Schlauberger

⁹ to haunt = heimsuchen, spuken

¹⁰ spell = Zauber

¹¹ wand = Zauberstab

¹² admiration = Bewunderung

Some days later, five girls of class 6c had a strange encounter¹³ with those ghosts as well. At breaktime they did not want to play in the schoolyard as it was very cold outside. So they stayed in the music room. Suddenly they heard a weird noise in the "forbidden room", i.e. the box room, where their teacher kept all the music instruments. On the one hand, the five girls were frightened but on the other hand they were curious. They crept very slowly and carefully to the box room, opened the door a few centimetres and looked inside. The girls couldn't believe their eyes and Theresa fainted¹⁴, which wasn't so good because she collapsed right into the door, which, as a matter of fact, stood wide open then. Four completely paralysed¹⁵ ghosts looked at the five wide-eyed girls. It did not take long and the girls took to their heels and ran back to their classroom. They told their classmates about the ghosts and Marco came up with an idea: "We could write a letter to the four spooky creatures and ask them for a meeting and maybe we could 'use' them to play some tricks at our school."



[Vivian's & Franka's part:]

Later the girls wrote:

Dear ghosts,

How are you? We, the pupils of class 6c, are okay again. But admittedly, we were really shocked when we saw you for the first time behind that door of the box room. Sorry, if we also terrified you because we were screaming so loudly. Well, the boys of our class told us that you were in fact quite friendly and talkative. So now we have come to think that it is absolutely cool that some ghosts live at our school and hardly anybody knows about you. And what is best, none of the teachers has got a clue¹⁶ about that.

Today we are writing to you because we need your help and it would be ever so kind of you if we could meet you in person, hmm or should we say "in ghost"? You know, it is April's Fools' Day soon and we would like to play some nasty tricks on our teachers. But this must be a well-kept secret.

¹³ encounter = Begegnung

¹⁴ to faint = ohnmächtig werden

¹⁵ paralysed = gelähmt

¹⁶ to have a clue = eine Ahnung von etwas haben

We would need a lot of ghosts for our tricks. You know, our teachers do not like tricks and pranks¹⁷. So we hope that maybe you could help us a little bit. Our teachers always want us to fill in so many worksheets and to do lots of homework and we have to do something about that. This has to stop. We have got a lot of great ideas what we could do. So could you please invite all your relatives to our school. We cannot say exactly what we are planning to do now. But could you come to the main entrance of our school tomorrow at 1:10 p.m.? Please be on time because we have no time to waste and we have to prepare a lot of things. We are looking forward to seeing you.

Kind regards

The boys and girls of class 6c

[Helena's part:]

Class 6c did not get any response during the next few days, though. It took the ghosts ages to write back. Some of the boys assumed: "Maybe ghosts are as lazy as pupils and they hate writing long texts, too. Do you think ghosts have got WhatsApp? Or perhaps they are even illiterate¹⁸?" Finally, after one week, they received their longed-for letter. After their P.E. lesson in the gym, when nobody had been in their classroom, somebody, or some ghost, had pinned it on the blackboard. Nobody really knew how it got there. But never mind. At last they had an answer: "Hi class 6c, of course, we are going to help you. It is a great pleasure for us. We love playing tricks on people. Meet us tomorrow, on 31st March, at the statue of that "Fat Nana" in your schoolyard at 12 o'clock. See you." All the pupils were grinning with fiendish¹⁹ joy.

[Vivian's part:]

The following day, all the other pupils of Dientzenhofer-Gymnasium had already gone home at 11:15 a.m. because the teachers had an important conference in the staffroom. So the boys and girls of class 6c gathered in the schoolyard at the "Fat Nana" statue. Dientzi, Hofi, Gymi and Bami were already there when all of a sudden even more ghosts came sailing down from nowhere. Niklas asked: "Oh my God, how many ghosts are you?" A very tiny ghost with

¹⁷ prank = Streich

¹⁸ illiterate = des Lesens und Schreibens nicht mächtig sein

¹⁹ fiendish = teuflisch

some staring turquoise eyes whispered: "We are 486 ghosts. Unfortunately²⁰, not all of our relatives could come along because 194 ghosts are sick and 214 of us are on holiday in Transylvania." First of all, the pupils tried to hide all those ghosts behind the statue of the "Fat Nana" so that no passer-by²¹ could see them. But this was impossible. So they decided to go into the gym. Yet there was a problem, the door to the gym was locked. Tom said: "Oh no. How can we get inside?" And Adrian moaned²²: "Maybe going to the gym wasn't such a good idea after all." However, one brainy ghost, who looked more intelligent than some of the others, interjected: "Just let that be our problem. Who needs a key²³? Ghosts can walk through every door, didn't you know that? Sometimes one asks oneself, what do children learn at school nowadays? All right, all the ghosts please squeeze through²⁴ that keyhole and wait inside the gym. I am going to fly to the staffroom, steal the master key and then I am going to unlock the door to the gym for the boys and girls of class 6c, who are by far too fat for keyholes." Lelia was really impressed and gazed adoringly at the supernatural beings: "You are such clever ghosts. With you on our side, nothing can go wrong." Some of the male ghosts blushed²⁵ because a blonde girl had said something charming to them and they felt extremely flattered²⁶.

When all the pupils and all the ghosts met inside the gym, the pupils realized that they could have actually stayed in the schoolyard because the ghosts announced that nobody apart from class 6c could see them. They were invisible²⁷ to everybody else. Nils said: "Why didn't they tell us before? All the fuss²⁸ about getting into the gym for nothing. I think, they just wanted to show off that they can walk through doors and we can't." But never mind, a few minutes later, the ghosts and the pupils started to talk about who they wanted to play a trick on and about all their ideas for nasty pranks. The ghosts were extremely proud that they had been asked to help and they were also gobsmacked²⁹ because they didn't expect our class to want all those mean things to happen...

²⁰ unfortunately = unglücklicherweise



²¹ passer-by = Passant, Vorübergehender

²² to moan = jammern, beklagen

²³ key = Schlüssel

²⁴ to squeeze through = sich durchzwängen

²⁵ to blush = erröten, rot werden

²⁶ to be flattered = sich geschmeichelt fühlen

²⁷ invisible = unsichtbar

²⁸ fuss = Aufregung

²⁹ to be gobsmacked = völlig baff sein

Finally, it was April Fools' Day. During the first lesson several things happened that you would expect to occur when ghosts are at your school. Worksheets were flying through the classrooms although there was no draught since no windows or doors had been opened. Some of the worksheets were sticking to the ceiling and the teachers were desperate³⁰ because all the pupils were laughing and nobody wanted to take those papers down from the ceiling to fill them in. In some classes the teachers were very impressed by their pupils because all of them knew the perfect answers to their questions and the teachers had to give them very good marks. Little wonder, the ghosts had written the model solutions on the worksheets beforehand. So some teachers were very pleased that day, some others, however, got extremely angry. Why? Well, how would you feel if you wrote something on the blackboard and as soon as you had put the piece of chalk³¹ away, a "magic sponge", or a sponge in the hands of an invisible ghost, wiped out everything that the pupils should copy into their exercise books. The teachers found that extremely frustrating. But the pupils were not too sad about that as the teachers could not give them any homework that day. And all the books could not be opened, either. Nobody knew how that had happened but all the pages of the pupils' textbooks were somehow glued together.

Hofi and Dientzi went to some classrooms, opened the doors very quietly, flew into the classrooms and made some spooky sounds. When Hofi saw a girl of class 6f who was a real spoilsport³², she put her hand on that girl's shoulder and whispered: "Good morning. Huhhh. Hahaha." Of course, the girl could not see anything because Hofi was invisible. The girl became as white as a sheet and everybody in the classroom was very frightened. The teacher, however, had not heard anything because he had been writing some strange calculations on the blackboard.

But then, all at once, there was an icy wind inside the classroom and the pupils heard somebody or something groaning in pain³³. A girl stammered: "Er, excuse me, sir, but, er, I think there is, er, er, a ghost in our classroom. Haven't you heard that strange noise?" The teacher rolled his eyes and grinned at the pupils. "I am sure that it is just a tiny mouse eating somebody's cheese sandwich. Don't even try to play a trick on me." – "But I am sure. There



³⁰ desperate = verzweifelt

³¹ a piece of chalk = ein Stück Kreide

³² spoilsport = Spielverderber

³³ to groan in pain = vor Schmerz stöhnen

must be a ghost somewhere, it is getting so cold in here. I am freezing," said another girl, who was very anxious now. The teacher rolled his eyes again and continued writing on the blackboard when he suddenly stopped moving. His eyes popped out as he must have seen something really ghastly³⁴ and a few seconds later he was covered in ice with icicles³⁵ hanging down from his arms. Some boys laughed: "Hey, that was a really cool lesson." But most of the pupils shouted: "Come on, let's get out of here and into the warm sunshine. And we need a very hot radiator to de-ice our maths teacher."

There were also some other odd incidents. Our pupils sometimes have their art lessons in the school's art collection where there are about ten marble busts of famous artists sitting on the shelves. On April Fools' Day, when the art teacher was complaining about the pupils' lack³⁶ of talent again, those busts of long-dead artists started to talk about the pupils' pictures. It was a heated discussion and they pointed out that they had never seen any more beautiful pieces of art before. They even thought that the pupils' drawings were slightly better than their own ones. Just imagine, Pablo Picasso, Vincent van Gogh and Salvador Dali saying that. As a matter of fact, the art teacher had a closer look at the pupils' pictures. She still thought they were pretty awful and just a multi-coloured mess but what could she do if great artists had such a high opinion of them? Then the art teacher had a brainwave³⁷. At the end of the lesson, she told the pupils to hand in all their drawings. Now guess what, the art teacher did not want to mark them but to sell them on the internet. However, with little success to this date.

Some of the ghosts helped the pupils of class 10 in another way. They had just written a very difficult chemistry test. The test was particularly demanding because the pupils had not learned anything. Everybody was really frustrated and angry because if they had done their homework properly, they would have passed that test easily. Later, nobody knew exactly how it happened. Suddenly, after the chemistry teacher had collected all the test papers again and put them on the teacher's desk, the Bunsen burner fell over and set fire to the tests. Strangely enough, no one had been standing next to the Bunsen burner and no one had bumped against the desk. How could something like that happen? And it took the pupils a long time to fetch the fire extinguisher³⁸ as there was no need for a rush. Finally, nothing was left of the

34 ghastly = schrecklich



³⁵ icicle = Eiszapfen

³⁶ lack = Mangel

³⁷ brainwave = Geistesblitz

³⁸ fire extinguisher = Feuerlöscher

chemistry test apart from ash. The pupils decided to dig a little grave³⁹ next to the main entrance and bury the test, or what was left of it.

Some other ghosts wanted to freak out several teachers, who were sitting in the staffroom. They put a load of salt into the teachers' coffee mugs so that many teachers were coughing⁴⁰ and swearing⁴¹. And just before they could get their breath back, the ghosts poured some slimy, green substance over themselves and then they were flying and hovering over the teachers' desks, looking at them out of big green eyes, dropping some disgusting green liquid on the teachers' faces and screeching with laughter. The teachers were trembling and collapsing into each other and they were unable to go to any classes for the rest of the day and many pupils could go home earlier than they had expected.



[Franka's part:]

Tim also had an amazing idea what the ghosts could do on April Fools' Day. He suggested: "Hey, ghosts, you are so thin, small and flexible – you can even change your shape. I am sure you can creep into every nook and cranny, can't you? So maybe you could squeeze yourself into Mr Berthe's grand piano⁴² before our music lesson starts. He always plays the grand piano and he gets on our nerves with his difficult exercises on musical intervals. You know, he wants to improve our sense of hearing. Your job would be to hold the little hammers inside the grand piano because if they do not move, they cannot make a sound on the strings⁴³. And then when Mr Berthe wants to open the lid to find out what is wrong, you have to make some crazy, shrieking sounds in your high-pitched voices." The four DG-ghosts became more and more excited and the pupils of class 6c burst out laughing. "It's fantastic, I like Tim's idea," Tom laughed. And Sophia sang in the same way as Mr Berthe always wants the boys and girls to sing: "I love to see Mr Berthe's red face, when he wants to play an octave and there is just some strange noise coming out of the grand piano."

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³⁹ grave = Grab

⁴⁰ to cough = husten

⁴¹ to swear = fluchen

⁴² grand piano = Flügel

⁴³ strings = Saiten

Later, after the break, everything went to plan, well to the pupils' plan, not to Mr Berthe's plan. And the ghosts surpassed⁴⁴ themselves because when the music teacher opened the grand piano's lid⁴⁵ after he had not been able to play any second, fourth or fifth, the ghosts did not only screech and scream. They also started to make some weird rhymes. Bami whispered: "Yes, we can hIDE as we are full of prIDE." Then Hofi continued: "We never say NO, inside the piaNO." After that Gymi shouted: "What a surprise. But, Mr Berthe, we are never nICE." That was when Mr Berthe fell into the grand piano and the lid closed above him.

[Vivian's part:]

After that the boys and girls of class 6c moved on to Mrs Cleary's office. "I am the new headmaster," Dientzi said and sat down on Mrs Cleary's swivel chair⁴⁶. "You are far too young. I am the new boss. I am better than you. You are too stupid for that," Gymi said. The two ghosts were arguing for a long time, but suddenly Bami called out loud: "Stop it. Nobody is the new boss. Mrs Cleary is the headmistress and we are just some stupid ghosts." – "What? We are just some stupid ghosts? What about me?" asked Dientzi. "I am a genius." So Bami tried to settle the dispute⁴⁷: "Okay, let's find out what kind of 'genius' you are. Let's do some maths. What is 12,340 mulitplied by 98,760?" It took Dientzi less than three seconds to come up with the solution: "It is 1,218,698,400." – Bami could not believe it. She used Mrs Cleary's pocket calculator, which was lying on the desk. It is true, some ghosts are excellent mathematicians. The result was absolutely correct. Bami said: "Well done, Dientzi. But you cannot become the headmaster of a school as nobody can see you. Yet a ghost that is so brainy should become Mrs Cleary's ghost writer."

Dientzi felt honoured, sat down on the black swivel chair again and when he was looking at the papers which were lying around on Mrs Cleary's desk, he saw that she had to prepare a speech for the school's Open Day event. This takes place every year and many primary school kids and their parents come to DG to have a look at the classrooms, to see what is going on at that school, to talk to some pupils and teachers, etc. in order to find out if they want to go to DG next year. Dientzi thought: "This is my first task as a ghost writer. Mrs Cleary will be



⁴⁴ to surpass somebody = jemanden übertreffen

⁴⁵ lid = Deckel

⁴⁶ swivel chair = Drehstuhl

⁴⁷ dispute = Streit

very pleased when she finds out that her speech is already finished and I know that this is an important speech. I have to start writing it now."

[A combination of Jalen's, Annalena's, Franka's and Tim's ideas:]

Dear parents and dear primary school kids of class four,

Welcome to our Open Day at DG. We are happy that so many of you are here to visit our school today. We hope that you will like it here so that many of you are going to come to our school in September. Why is DG the best school? I can tell you.

- The lessons are never boring because we have got several ghosts to entertain you. They make strange things all the time.
- Kids needn't wear a school uniform. They can wear whatever they like. Or if they feel like it, they can even become invisible. Our ghosts will help them.
- Nobody has to worry about good marks. If our pupils haven't learned enough or if they haven't done their homework, our ghosts are going to help them. They whisper⁴⁸ the correct answers into the boys' and girls' ears without the teachers realizing that.
- Apart from that, breaktime at our school is sensational as our ghosts play football and basketball with the pupils. Have you ever heard of something like that? I am sure, you haven't.
- And if pupils do not feel like it, they do not have to be at school before 9:30 a.m.
 because our ghosts always tell them what they have missed in the first and second
 lesson.
- Our ghosts also sort out any technical problems that pupils may have with their computers, laptops or iPads. But they do not help the teachers when they struggle with⁴⁹ their technical equipment. You will see, that is great fun to watch.
- But what is best, our ghosts sometimes take over the teacher's part. So your children learn things at our school that they would not learn at any other school, for example:

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⁴⁸ to whisper = flüstern

⁴⁹ so struggle with something = sich mit etwas herumschlagen

- o They learn to walk through walls.
- As you all know, ghosts can terrify people with their cold hands. Our pupils learn to have icy cold hands themselves and when they touch yoghurt, it turns into ice cream within five seconds. Yummy.
- Or they learn to howl⁵⁰. You may wonder, what's the point of that? But this is a very useful ability⁵¹. Many of our pupils have driven away burglars⁵² at their parents' houses, just because they were howling in a terrifying voice while a thief⁵³ tried to get in through the back door. You can imagine how spooky that is in a pitch-black night. It is the cheapest and most efficient alarm system.
- o A lot of our pupils also learned to move objects just with their eyes. They really appreciate⁵⁴ that ability when their parents tell them to tidy up their rooms. Now they can do that boring task by magic while they are sitting on the sofa.
- Our older pupils have also learned to become transparent⁵⁵. That saves them a lot of money because they no longer have to buy expensive tickets, e.g. when they want to go to a pop concert. They just float into the concert hall and mix among the audience.

If you have any further questions, just ask the pupils of class 6c. They are the greatest pupils we have. Goodbye and thank you for coming to our school today.

After that speech, many primary school kids wanted to go to Dientzenhofer-Gymnasium the following school year. Many children wanted to be taught at a haunted school and learn spooky tricks. But then something dramatic happened one day, something that nobody would have ever imagined in their wildest dreams: from one day to the next, all the cute DG-ghosts had left our school.

Only after several weeks class 6c received a letter, which read:

Dear class 6c,

Sorry, we had to leave your school. We were so sad because suddenly, without anybody telling us about it, you and all the other lovely pupils were no longer there. The whole school

⁵⁰ to howl = heulen, brüllen

⁵¹ ability = Fähigkeit

⁵² burglar = Einbrecher

⁵³ thief = Dieb

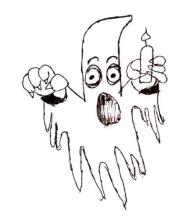
⁵⁴ to appreciate something = etwas schätzen

⁵⁵ transparent = durchsichtig

building was empty. There was a deadly silence, no laughter, no shrieking kids, no teachers admonishing⁵⁶ some pupils, no noise. As you know, noise is something we need to fall asleep. We were so sleep-deprived, we could not bear it any longer. And we were feeling very blue. You cannot imagine how we missed you. Then, one day, Gymi found a newspaper flying around in the empty schoolyard and he read something about a covid-19 crisis and that everybody had to stay at home as this was an awful disease⁵⁷, which had to be stopped. We fell into a very deep depression as your school and all the other schools were closed. But where should we go? It was the same everywhere. Lockdown. Then we heard that the schools would be opened in May. We were really looking forward to seeing you all again. However, only the older pupils came back to school and then we read on the noticeboard that everyone had to wear face masks from now on. "That is the end." Bami claimed. "How can you play tricks on anybody with a colourful mask in front of your face? Even if we stay invisible, everybody can see our masks. How awful." We shed so many tears⁵⁸ that the fountain in your schoolyard is full again. In fact, we wanted to drown⁵⁹ ourselves in it.

But then the new caretaker⁶⁰ watched TV in his bungalow – and so did we through the window. We all hoped that he would watch the movie "Ghost", our favourite movie, so that we would have some kind of distraction⁶¹. Lucky us, brainy Dientzi paid attention⁶² and listened to the news. "That's our rescue⁶³. Those humans are planning to introduce so-called 'ghost games', i.e. football games played behind closed doors and without any fans in the stadium." Dientzi told us. "Wow, let's go there. I always loved kicking a football around. Actually, I am really good at it," said Hofi. We are very sorry, kids, but that is why we left your school. We are off to new horizons and you can be sure that you will hear from us again as we are going to make headlines in the world of football.

Love and we will never forget you Dientzi, Hofi, Gymi and Bami



Class 6c & G. Merz

⁵⁶ to admonish somebody = jemanden ermahnen

⁵⁷ disease = Krankheit

⁵⁸ tears = Tränen

⁵⁹ to drown somebody = jemanden ertränken

⁶⁰ caretaker = Hausmeister

⁶¹ distraction = Ablenkung

⁶² to pay attention = aufpassen

⁶³ rescue = Rettung