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Bathroom solutions

Scary walls and doors that don't shut!

I wouldn't be caught dead wearing clothes with embarrassing stains on it. So, imagine the devastation that I felt when one day, I looked up and saw the wall above my guest toilet completely blotched!

These are freshly painted walls; the coat of white paint has only been on for about three months. Now, it's a kaleidoscope of horrid peach, brown and black. Not a pleasant sight, and the thought of what is actually leaking from above (which presumably is the site of my upstairs neighbour's toilet) makes me queasy.

However, if it was the paintwork alone that needed doing, I wouldn't have minded so much. The thing is, the leak, which occurred right above the door also somehow affected the door – it wouldn't close because moisture seeped into it.

This door was also changed at the same time my house was repainted. So there are in total three

things that I have to work on: Paint, door and frame.

In retrospect, if I had gotten professional advice before renovating my home, I'd probably have avoided the problem. See, the old door was already warped when I bought my home, and I thought that it was merely due to "old age", but apparently not.

I have learned not to take things for granted. If there's something wrong in the first place, there most probably would be deeper underlying problems that would come back to haunt us.

Tan T.T.
Kuala Lumpur

Type of unit: Apartment
Nature of disaster: Leaking ceiling
Estimated cost of repairs: RM2,500



Leaks destroy anything that's in its way. In this instance, the door and its frame.

No retaining wall!

My horror began two years after I moved into my new home in a Petaling Jaya suburb. I began noticing that the lower part of my walls in the ground floor of my two-and-half storey intermediate house were always damp.

My suspicion that something was amiss was confirmed when the dampness rapidly spread and the paint began to peel. Its repainting proved useless as the problem kept recurring.

What made matters worse was that on investigation, I found that my lower half-floor – built below the ground level – was constructed without a retaining wall.

According to my house's architectural plan, there is supposed to be a retaining wall, so I concluded that it was omitted by the developer.



Upset, my wife and I spent a lot of time in and out of the developer's office, hoping for recourse, but to no avail. My neighbours (who also faced the problem) sought to file a class action suit against the developer, but that didn't materialise partly due to legal costs and time constraints.

Now I've been told that the

six-year statutory period to file legal action is over.

A plan to convert this part of my house into a workplace-cum-study has been ruined. An eyecore, it is rarely used ... even then, it is only used to store

bric-a-brac.

Kesavan
Petaling Jaya, Selangor

Type of unit: Split-level terrace
Nature of disaster: Retaining wall not built
Estimated cost of repairs: RM20,000

Dark water

It was a bright and sunny Sunday morning when, after a quick inspection, I decided to buy a quaint single-storey terrace house in Subang Jaya. There was my folly, for I hadn't thought of rain.

When the wet season began, so did my nightmare. Just three weeks after moving in, my once freshly painted house began to eerily resemble the set of a certain Japanese horror flick, courtesy of a roof that leaked in several places. Ominous black shapes also began appearing on my ceiling and ghostly brown streaks ran down my white walls – just like that movie "Dark Water".

At night, when the imagination really runs wild, I half expected to see an up-side-down head dangling from these darkened spots. But

that wasn't the end of it!

A month later, a water pipe running through my bathroom wall burst, creating more terrifying images on both sides of that wall.

Needless to say, I had to dig deeper into my nest-egg to exorcise the problems, but the final blood-curdling scream came when I saw the bill.

Lesson learnt? There were two, actually: Not every day is a (sunny) Sunday, therefore, take a good look before you leap.

M. Pereira
Subang Jaya, Selangor

Type of unit: Single-storey terrace
Nature of disaster: Leaking roof/water pipes
Estimated cost of repairs: RM8,500

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If you have a horror story, we'd like to hear it. Email your entries to ret.property@gmail.com or post it to NST-Property, "Worst Nightmare Competition", 4th Floor, Balai Berita, 31 Jalan Hong 59100 Kuala Lumpur.

All stories judged worthy of publishing every fortnight will win a Dortez lockset and be in the running to win the top prize of furnishing by Kian Contracts plus quality Dortez locks worth more than RM18,000 in total. Competition closes June 16, 2008.