

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT:

Lucy Strange

Bestselling children's author Lucy Strange lives in Kent with her partner and their little boy. Her novels for booklovers aged 9+ include *The Secret of Nightingale Wood*, *Our Castle by the Sea* and *The Ghost of Gosswater*. *Sisters of the Lost Marsh* is coming in November 2021, and *The Mermaid in the Millpond* will be published in January 2022.

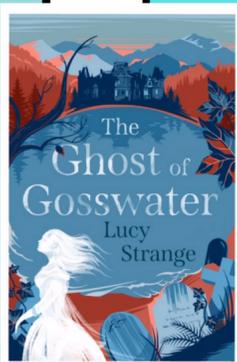


WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE CHILDHOOD BOOK AND WHY?

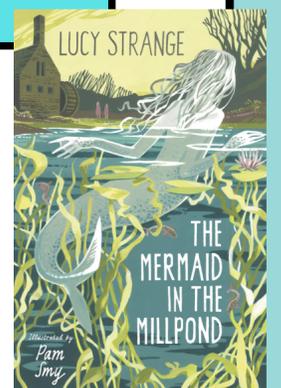
So many to choose from – I devoured all sorts of adventures and mysteries as a young bookworm. *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett will always be a favourite, and a clear influence on my writing too – it's so full of magic and mystery and hope. I used to listen to the audiobook every night when I went to bed, and I think the words seeped into my unconscious brain as I slept!



WHICH OF YOUR OWN BOOKS IS YOUR FAVOURITE AND WHY?



The book I most enjoyed writing was my spooky gothic mystery story *The Ghost of Gosswater* – I had that brilliant feeling of being lost in an imaginative world: I fell asleep thinking about it, and I woke up thinking about it, and I couldn't wait to get back to my desk to write the next chapter! I've also LOVED working on *The Mermaid and the Millpond* – a new, short, illustrated novel for Barrington Stoke. It was such a fun challenge to fit all my favourite story ingredients into a much shorter book!



WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO READ?

It isn't always easy to find time to read, but I'm always glad when I do. I put my phone out of reach and get all comfy with a hot drink. Then I open my book . . . It is time for me to think and to imagine, to escape to other worlds and to live other lives. Reading has given me so much: it has filled my brain with words and ideas; it has filled my heart with adventures and magic. To quote one of my own characters – Grammy, in *Sisters of the Lost Marsh*: 'Even if they are made up, stories are full of the truth. Stories are the places where we learn and feel and dream . . .'

