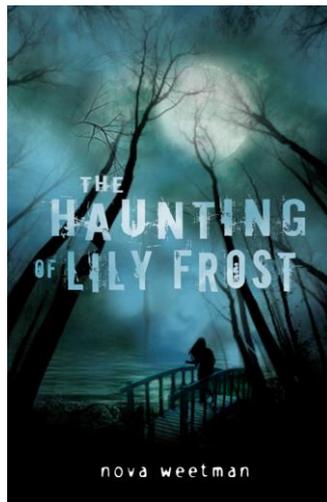


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# THE HAUNTING OF LILY FROST

## Nova Weetman



### Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising teacher librarian  
in context with the Australian curriculum  
(English)

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**SYNOPSIS**

When Lily's parents decide to move to the country, she is angry and fearful of losing touch with her best friend, Ruby. But something about the old house they move into lures her to the attic. A feeling. A presence. A spirit. And then Lily learns that she is living in the house of missing teenager, Matilda – or Tilly as her friends knew her.

Lily tries to uncover the truth behind Tilly's disappearance as she cannot escape the feeling that something or rather someone is trying to tell her something. Is she being haunted by Tilly's ghost or is it all in her imagination?

**THEMES**

Relationships:

- Lily is angry with her parents for moving the family to the country
- Lily is often critical of her mother
- Lily has a special bond with her father after he rescued her from drowning
- Lily becomes resentful of her best friend Ruby as she carries on with life without her

Ghosts:

- Tilly's ghost haunts Lily, trying to find peace and closure

Self-esteem:

- Lily is uncertain about herself; she lacks self-esteem but finds confidence as the text progresses

**WRITING STYLE**

*The Haunting of Lily Frost* is a ghost story for young adults. Written in first person, the text includes suspense and vivid description to tell the story of a young girl's disappearance. The motif of water runs throughout the story.

**STUDY NOTES**

- The opening pages of *The Haunting of Lily Frost* vividly describe Lily's near-death experience as a five year old. Discuss the way in which the author has used description to draw the reader directly into the text. The first sentence in particular is very effective.
- Discuss elements of narrative such as structure, characterisation, pace and the use of motifs that appear in *The Haunting of Lily Frost*.
- Map the structure of *The Haunting of Lily Frost* on a story graph. Analyse the way in which the author has been able to increase tension as the text progresses.

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- By taking Lily away from the city and her best friend, the author has made her a 'fish out of water'. Discuss how this is an effective way to create tension and problems for the character. Why is this essential in narratives?
- The author gives us clues that something is not quite right in Lily's new house or the town of Gideon. Keep a list of these clues as you read. Discuss the way in which good readers speculate as they read, making inferences and using clues to help piece together the narrative.
- In your own writing, how can you lead your reader to speculate, rather than tell them everything explicitly? Discuss the importance of allowing readers room to speculate.
- The motifs of water and drowning flow throughout the text. Track the use of these motifs, discussing the way in which symbolism and cohesion adds to the story.
- On p15, Ruby tries to cheer Lily up, however Lily is not very receptive to her efforts. Write a reflection of a time you felt angry, hurt or upset. Did someone try to cheer you up too early? Do people sometimes need the time and space to feel down before they are ready to think more positively?
- What does Lily mean when she says she has, 'moved into punishing mode'? Who is she trying to punish? Why?
- Write a journal entry in the role of Lily after your first few days in Gideon. Demonstrate your understanding of Lily's character in this piece of writing.
- On p28, Lily describes the need to see the attic like, 'knowing you shouldn't look at something horrible, but you actually can't look at anything else.' Why does she describe visiting the attic in this way? Have you ever had this same feeling in your own life?
- Why is Lily so insecure about her ability to make friends? What advice would you give her?
- Stop reading after the end of Chapter 3. Write a reflection about the 'ghostly' elements of the story. How do things such as the ribbons under the bridge and the Alsatian add to the suspense of the text?
- Re-read the passage on p47 in which Lily describes her dreams. How do these dreams relate to the rest of Lily's experiences? Why has the author included this passage in *The Haunting of Lily Frost*?
- Create a visual representation of the relationship Lily shares with her dad. Include examples from the text to support your ideas.
- In what way is the plot of *The Watcher* that Lily's class is studying like the plot of *The Haunting of Lily Frost*? Draw comparisons and discuss (p132/133).
- Respond to the essay question that Lily is given in Chapter 9: 'Would you lie to protect your friends?' (p133)

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- How important is it that Lily's dad shares that he's had a breakdown? How might this news change Lily's attitude about moving to Gideon?
- Why does Lily sometimes feel as though she is drowning again? In light of this, discuss the symbolism present in the text.
- Create a soundtrack for a film version of *The Haunting of Lily Frost*. Justify your choice of songs, linking them to particular themes and events from the text.
- Plan your own ghost story. How might this ghost have died? In what ways will they haunt the main character? Use stimulus such as houses found on the internet or dark forests. Brainstorm possible settings and issues the protagonist needs to confront. What will be the ending to your story? Time permitting, write this story.
- Create a book trailer for *The Haunting of Lily Frost*.

**AUTHOR MOTIVATION**

I've been writing stories since I was 12. My first book was called *The Jelly People*, a post-apocalyptic story with some jelly throwing and jelly eating tossed in for good fun. The total joy I experienced writing *The Jelly People* all those years ago, meant I was never going to journey far from being a writer. I spent time writing for *Neighbours*, children's television shows like *H2O* and *Pixel Pinkie*, and short films that took me to overseas film festivals, but I was always desperate to get back to my first love – prose.

Having been a huge reader of fiction all through my teenage years meant I still fondly remembered the books that had changed me. *The Outsiders*. *The Pigman*. All of Judy Blume's books. I started reading contemporary young adult fiction and found a new world that was exciting and real. And I realised that by writing for young adults I could combine my love of prose and storytelling, with writing for teenage audiences. It felt like the perfect marriage of where I'd been heading in television, and where I wanted to be in writing books.

I've always loved ghost stories and horror films. I'm intrigued with the idea of ghosts and the notion that places can remain haunted long after someone has died. While I'm not a true believer in spirits, I like the story that a good ghost can bring. It delivers a whole other element of unreal to the world, and that's something that can be used in writing. So I went off to write a ghost story with lots of plot twists and lots of action. It would become *The Haunting of Lily Frost*.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Nova Weetman's prose has appeared in various literary magazines including *Kill Your Darlings*, *Island*, *Tirra Lirra*, *Wet Ink*, *Mslexia*, *Overland* and *Island*. She has written for the children's television series *Pixel Pinkie* and *Buzz Bumble* and wrote the short films *Ripples* and *Mr Wasinski's Song* for which she

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received an AWGIE nomination for best short screenplay, and the Best Short Film Award from the Melbourne International Film Festival. She has also won the HarperCollins Fellowship and the FAW Award for Best Unpublished Manuscript. Nova lives with her partner, a playwright, and their two children, in a falling-down house in Melbourne. *The Haunting of Lily Frost* is her first novel for young adults. She can be found online at [www.novaweedman.com.au](http://www.novaweedman.com.au).