

# The Vexatious Haunting of Lily Griffin

AUTHOR

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ILLUSTRATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Upper Primary



## SYNOPSIS

When Lily Griffin finds a girl trapped inside a magic mirror, she uncovers a long-forgotten family secret and sets in motion a remarkable chain of events.

Lily is a singular character, hilariously funny, sweetly poignant and deeply daggy. Plagued by social doubts and her own peculiarities, she is the perfect person to investigate the many secrets of her grandfather's house and, along the way, mend some family relationships, discover enduring friendship and learn to play netball.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paula Hayes has a BA in Literature and History and a Diploma of Education from the University of Western Australia. Her short story 'The Universe Under My Bed' was published in *Alphabet Soup*, a children's literary magazine (now blog), and she has self-published a young adult novel, *Heart*, about the supernatural journey of a lost WWI Perth soldier. Paula is a book reviewer for *Creative Kids Tales*. She is married with four children, three dogs and five rabbits.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Katy Jiang, also known as Hong Jiang, was born, raised and educated in Shanghai, China. From a young age, Katy learned traditional Chinese ink painting. Later, she studied Western painting directed by Chinese artist, illustrator and art educator Chen Youqun. She excelled at still-life drawing, figure painting, Chinese ink painting and Chinese Baimiao drawing. Katy also has a bachelor's degree in interior design, but after she immigrated to Australia in 2006, she quit design and returned to art and illustration.

Katy lives in Fremantle, Western Australia, with her husband and two boys. Since she joined the SCBWI West in 2017, she has contributed her artistic talent and knowledge to create children's picture books.

## THEMES

- Family
- Friendship
- Love
- Dementia
- Elderly
- Identity

- Mystery
- Supernatural
- Bullying
- Anxiety.

### STUDY NOTES

- Before you begin reading, make five predictions about this book based on the title and cover.
- What does the word 'vexatious' mean?
- This book is written as a journal using the first-person point of view, so Lily shares her thoughts and feelings. Do you enjoy this style of writing? Why/Why not?
- This story includes supernatural elements like ghosts and magical objects. Can you think of three other books which include supernatural elements?
- Do you believe in the supernatural? Have you ever experienced supernatural events?
- Lily's grandad loves to cook for his family. Why do you think cooking is so important to him?
- Do you think Lily makes a good protagonist (main character)? Why or why not?
- When Lily feels stressed or anxious, she uses techniques to calm herself, like counting or visualising book covers. What techniques do you use to calm yourself when you feel stressed or anxious?
- Which of the three stories did you most prefer? Why?

### PART ONE: LILY IN THE MIRROR

- Chapter one introduces the reader to Lily and her siblings. Divide a piece of paper into four equal sections and list what you know about each sibling in one section each. As you continue to read part one, add additional information you discover about these characters.
- How would you describe the character Lily to a friend?
- How does Lily change from the beginning to the end of part one? How does her relationship with Other Lily help her grow and become more confident?
- Lily says she 'hates typical' (p 8). What does Lily mean by this and why do you think she feels this way?
- What does Lily desire at the start of part one? Does she get/achieve this by the end of part one?
- How do Lily's feelings towards her family change over the course of the book?
- Lily loves to extend her vocabulary with interesting words. Read her explanations of the following words and use each in an original sentence:
  - familiar (p 8)
  - circa (p 13)
  - dapper (p 14)
  - doppelganger (p 18)
  - erroneous (p 34)
  - initialism (p 39)
  - confidante (p 45)
  - wretched (p 59)
  - foible (p 66)
  - execute (p 100)
  - touché (p 116).
- Create a table with two columns. In one column, write a list of old-fashioned words used by the older characters like Other Lily and Grandad. In the other column, list modern slang/colloquial language used by the younger characters, like Lily and Linden.
- According to Lily, 'In our family when someone says the same word a lot, my dad calls it their "ism". This means it is one of their catchphrases.' (p 34) Do you or your family have any 'isms' or catchphrases?
- Lily is fascinated by the dark and mysterious. Which sections of part one are dark and mysterious?

- Part one ends on a cliffhanger with Lily finding a mysterious box. Why do you think the author chose to end part one at this point? What do you predict is in the box?
- According to Lily, 'It is usually unloved orphans who have all the magical luck.' (p 7) Lily is referring to a trope (a common theme) of the supernatural fiction genre. Can you think of other supernatural stories that feature orphans? Can you identify any other tropes in part one?
- Lily is a fan of the Harry Potter series and mentions many characters and events from the series in part one. What are the pros and cons of an author including references to another book in their story?
- After hearing Other Lily's mirror story, Lily's brain is 'overloaded with questions' (p 49). Write three questions you would like to ask Other Lily.
- Lily's grandmother Lucy has dementia. Research online to find out the symptoms and treatments for dementia.
- How did these characters deal with Lucy's illness:
  - Lily
  - Grandad
  - Linden.

### PART TWO: LILY IN FULL BLOOM

- Describe what is happening in the illustration on p 132.
- What is the double meaning in the title Lily in Full Bloom?
- Lily's full name, Lilly Marigold Griffin, includes the name of her great aunt Lily and her grandmother Marigold. Does your full name include any references to family or significant people?
- What can you infer (read between the lines) from these quotes from part two?
  - 'The threat of a new school has increased my consumption of toilet roll by 100%.' (p 144)
  - 'Dad says I have the green-eyed monster.' (p 145)
  - '“Where did you get that?” His eyes were literally popping out of his head.' (p 161)
  - 'GG just looked at him as if he was an alien.' (p 169)
  - 'Our old school was totes multicultural. I was rejected for myself and not for my heritage. (p 238)
- The author uses a variety of language in part two, including colloquial (slang) language, similes and metaphors. Find two examples of each in this section.
- The reader learns more about Lily's grandmother, Pinkie. Choose five adjectives to describe Pinkie.
- Find three quotes from part two that show Lily is maturing.
- Compare and contrast the Quinn family (Cat's family) with the Griffin family (Lily's family).
- Isabella and Cat created a Harry Potter fan club to share their love of the series. What fan club would you like most like to start or join?
- With a partner, play your own game of Finish that Quote (p 187) using a book or movie you both know well.
- On p 187, Lily mentions a Hagrid quote: 'I am what I am.' What do you think this quote means? Why do you think the author chose to include it in part two?
- On page 221, Lily describes Clive as 'bully bait'. What can the characters of Clive, Linden and Breanna teach you about bullies and their targets?
- Lily's mother felt it was important to learn about her heritage. Why do you think she wanted to learn about her past at this point in her life?
- Were you satisfied with the ending of part two? What parts did you like and dislike?

### PART THREE: LILY IN A PICKLE

- The idea of a poltergeist who smells like caramel and loves sweets is funny and unexpected. What funny and unexpected characteristics would you give a ghostly character?
- On p 277, what onomatopoeia and simile does Lily use to describe the noise Edgar makes?
- Throughout part three Lily refers to building her 'kindness muscle'. Do you believe you can get better at being kind and thinking kindly through practise?

- Lily sprinkles hashtags throughout her writing, for example on p 282 she writes, ‘Clive (#Secret #LoveInterest) ...’
  - What are hashtags?
  - Why does Lily include hashtags in her journal?
  - Why has the author chosen to include hashtags in the book?
- A ‘character arc’ is the way a character grows or changes during a story. Describe the character arc of Linden, Dad or Edgar.
- Lily is very observant and often understands more than the adults around her think. Find an example from part three that demonstrates this.
- When Lily discovers that Edgar’s parents called him ‘dolt’ she writes, ‘Words can be like poisoned barbs. Dangerous and harmful.’ (p 399) What previous experiences have led to Lily to feel this way about words?
- What caused Mrs Lloyd to have a change of heart on p 417?
- What similarities and differences can you find between Cat’s life and opportunities, and her grandmother Aoife’s life and opportunities at roughly the same age?
- The way a character speaks can help a reader understand more about them, their life and their history. What can you learn about Kitty Little (Aoife’s mother) and Mrs Lloyd Pommeroy (Edgar’s mother) by comparing the way they speak?
- Why do Lily and her friends spell Aoife’s name incorrectly in chapter eight?
- Look online to discover how a zoetrope works.

## ACTIVITIES

- Write a character description for your own character trapped in a mirror. Your character and mirror don’t have to have the same characteristics as Other Lily and her mirror. For example, your character could be sinister, an animal or be happy to be in the mirror.
- In part one, Lily uses primary sources like photos, newspaper clippings and letters to piece together the family mystery. Create some fake primary sources that include clues to Other Lily’s mystery.
- Create a lotus drawing that tells a story from your family on its petals, like the one from part two, Chapter Twenty-Four.
- Write a short story inspired by one of these quotes from the book. Your story should include an introduction/ orientation, complication/s, climax and resolution.
  - ‘I am being packed off to my grandfather’s down south for two weeks ...’ (p 9)
  - ‘The potential for magic and love is unlimited.’ (p 135)
  - ‘Life is magic free, so I decided to make my own.’ (p 141)
  - ‘I hope you don’t find them.’ (p 417).
- Using descriptions from the book and your imagination, draw a picture of one of the following:
  - Grandad’s house (outside)
  - The Rosy Room
  - The Quinn family’s photo hallway
  - The dream house
  - The ‘little house’.