

Beyond
the rainbow,
A city lies waiting

Lightning Falls

and a
world is
under threat.

Hello!

I'm so thrilled to be writing to you about my book *Lightning Falls*. It's a book that was written and edited over the most unimaginable year, and I felt very lucky indeed that I was able to take myself off into this fictional world of ghosts and family mayhem.

Sometimes, stories start with the characters, and sometimes they start with a place. *Lightning Falls* started with both – an image of the Ghosthouse, built by a looming viaduct, with a thundering waterfall and a cemetery just beside it; and of my girl Valerie, enchanted by the glittering river, knowing that she is loved by the ghost family who found her abandoned in the old crypt, but that there is far more to discover about herself and the world.

While travel was impossible in reality, Valerie and I adventured together through that house with her proud ghost sister Meg, discovering strange secrets, and dangerous magic.

There is always some mayhem going on at *Lightning Falls*, always some ghostly trickery to keep the guests entertained – and something darker hiding in the cellar. When stranger Joe appears on the viaduct over the waterfall, he brings with him a whole new world of trouble, and it's up to Valerie to find answers before everything comes crashing down around them.

I so hope you'll enjoy reading it!

With all my
very best wishes,

Amy Wilson



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Discussion Sheet

The setting of *Lightning Falls Ghost House* is the very first thing we see in the book, and its appearance on the banks of the river with the viaduct and the cemetery and the crashing waterfall was something I loved creating. What sort of first impression did it give you? What did it lead you to expect?

Valerie's discovery of Orbis is both shocking and exciting, and has a rather perilous journey involved! What sort of adventure would you have if you could cross a bridge into a magical land?

One of the themes in *Lightning Falls* is Valerie's sense of belonging – she loves her family and she is loved by them, but she always feels a bit different. Perhaps we're all a bit different, in our own ways – how do you think you'd feel, if you were here, and what would you do about it?

Valerie's magic is stored in her pendant, for when she needs it – not that she knows that at first! If you had magic, what vessel would you choose to store it in, and how do you think you'd use your magic?

If you were a guest in the ghosthouse what sort of experience do you think you would have? Would you venture into the cellar? Would you make friends with the ghosts? And what food would you order from Ted the chef?

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Design a Ghost House!

'The Ghost House sits upon the shore of the river, beneath a great hulking viaduct, next to a graveyard. It is built of dark, damp stone bricks that wink in the moonlight. Its windows are small, its ragged rooftops swoop down low, and lights flicker within. The edge of the river reaches out and grabs at the gardens with greedy silver fingers; the waterfall thunders and echoes throughout the valley. A battered sign swings at the entrance to the car park, metal fixings creaking with every push of the wind. LIGHTNING FALLS, it reads, and anybody who stumbles upon it realizes this is not the place to come for a restful night.'

- Chapter 1, *Lightning Falls* by Amy Wilson



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What Kind of Ghost Are You?

In the grounds of the ghost house of *Lightning Falls*, there's all kinds of different types of ghosts floating about and causing family mayhem. From hauntings to mysterious apparitions, ghosts new and old - why not discover which kind of ghost you're most like in spirit!

Circle your answers to the questions below.

Would you describe yourself as mysterious?

- A. Yes, I don't talk about my past
- B. No, I am very straight forward
- C. Yes, I like to keep people guessing
- D. No, I am happy to share...at length

Have you got a secret in your past?

- A. Yes, but I am still working out what it means**
- B. No, I don't like secrets**
- C. Yes, and I'm not telling!**
- D. Yes, too many to remember**

How do you react to having too many feelings?

- A. Distract yourself with somebody else's problems
- B. Can't sleep, too restless
- C. Run away and hide
- D. Stomp, moan and be dramatic

What's your favourite type of storm to watch?

- A. Meteor**
- B. Whirl wind**
- C. Lightning**
- D. Blizzard**

Do you enjoy playing practical jokes on people?

- A. No, I prefer riddles**
- B. Yes, but not mean ones**
- C. No, I have other things to keep me occupied**
- D. Yes, the sillier and scarier the better!**

Do you like solving problems?

- A. Yes, I have to find a solution
- B. No, I'd rather stay out of it
- C. No, I want it fixed right away
- D. Yes, but I prefer making them

What's your favourite outfit?

- A. Whatever I'm wearing today!**
- B. Something that reminds me of home**
- C. Black, all black**
- D. Dressing up in fancy dress**

If I was a ghost, I'd most like to haunt:

- A. Somewhere with lots of interesting new friends
- B. A place that's familiar
- C. Not a fixed place
- D. Somewhere where I'm in charge

Now count up your answers.
Did you get mostly As, Bs, Cs or Ds?
Turn the page to find out
what kind of ghost that would make you
and where you'd fit in at *Lightning Falls*.



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What Kind of Ghost Are You?

Check your answers, are you mostly As, Bs, Cs, or Ds?

A - Hallowed Ghost

Valerie is a bit of a mystery, not quite a ghost, and not living either. She died at the stroke of midnight, Halloween, and that made her a Hallowed Ghost, caught between life and death. People can see her more easily than they can the other ghosts, and they can hear her. She needs to eat and drink, and use the loo and sleep. But she can float if she needs to, and she can pass through walls, just like the rest of her ghost family. She's keen to find the answers to the things that trouble her, but scared to delve too deep into her own mysterious past.

B - Gentle Spirit

Meg has been here a long time and knows most of the ghost tricks. She can appear – or disappear – before guests at will, but mostly she's a pale wraith-like figure who pulls her hair and moans when guests are at afternoon tea. Physical contact is tricky among ghosts and Meg isn't good at it. She gets restless, and doesn't really need to sleep. Meg is Valerie's best friend, her strange, ghost sister, flitting like an ice fairy by her side.

C - A Mysterious Spectre

The boy from the viaduct is dressed all in black, like a mourner at a funeral, with glasses and longish white hair. Tiny black and silver sparks make the air around him seethe, so bright that your vision swims and when you encounter him outside the ghost house, he sees you and rushes away, seeming to vanish entirely. You try to follow him but by the time you've made it through the old revolving doors the lobby is empty. He's gone.

D - Old Ghost

Cecil is the chief ghost, one of the original caretakers of the house and our top poltergeist. There's a constant shiver in the air around him, and it's cold wherever he is. He was a sea captain before he came to work here. **Great-Aunt Flo** is an ancient ancestor of Lord Rory's, who died hundreds of years ago. During one of her fits of melancholy, she keeps to the upper floors and moans and stomps about, making all the ceilings rattle.

Now you know what kind of ghost you'd be, I so hope you enjoy finding out more about these characters in *Lightning Falls*.

With all my
very best wishes,

Amy Wilson

