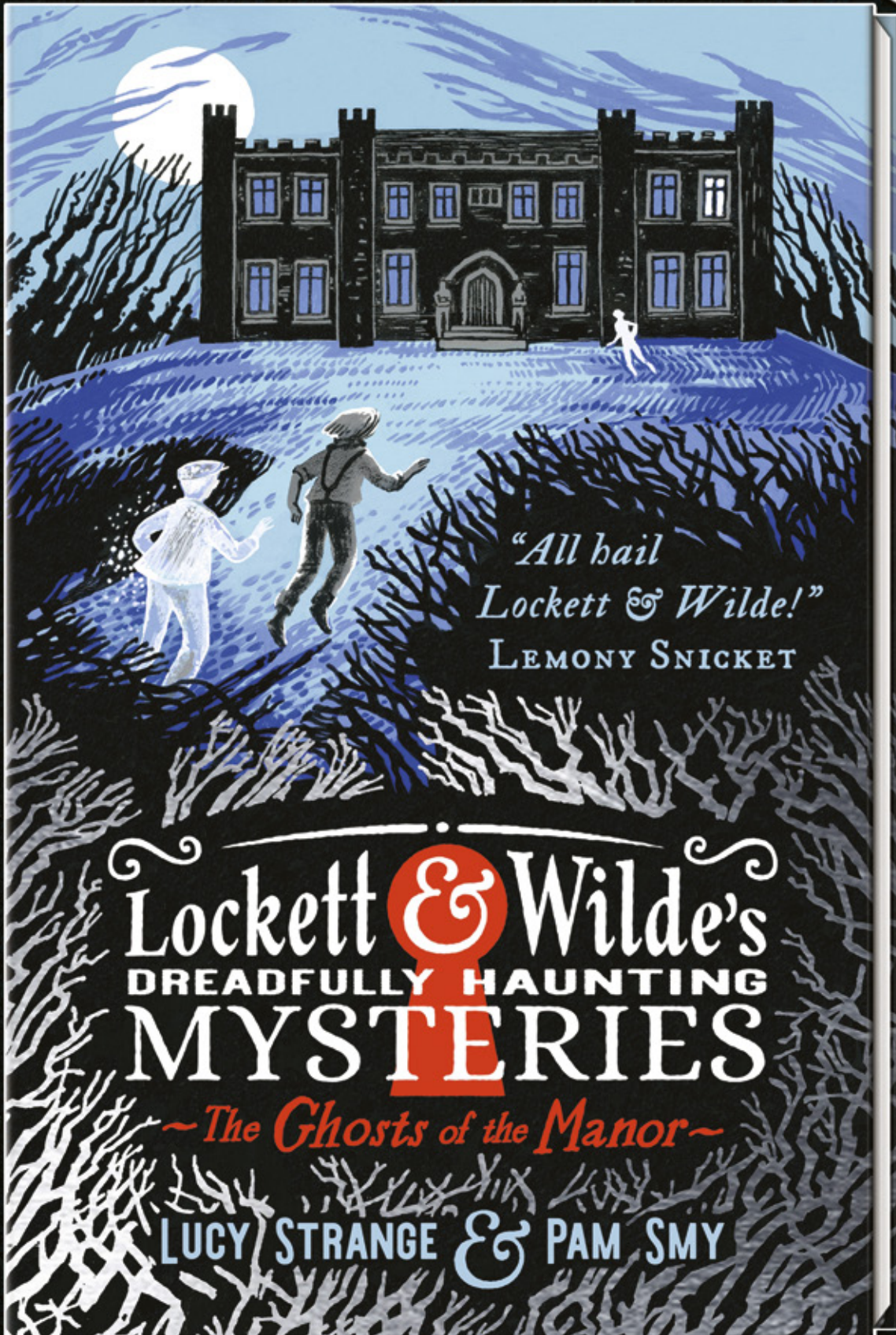


DISCUSSION GUIDE



*"All hail
Lockett & Wilde!"*
LEMONY SNICKET

Lockett & Wilde's DREADFULLY HAUNTING MYSTERIES

~The Ghosts of the Manor~

LUCY STRANGE & PAM SMY

9781529516005 • HB • £10.99 • 9 years +

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~The Ghosts of the Manor~

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ABOUT THE BOOK

This utterly charming introduction to the world of Lockett & Wilde will have readers eagerly anticipating the next instalment. Full of wit, humour, mystery and ghostly goings-on, all offset by Smy's beautifully atmospheric illustrations, Strange's novel is perfect for emerging and confident readers. In it we meet Matilda Lockett, slightly reluctant assistant to her aunt, who is pursuing a dubious career as a psychic medium. When they are called to a strange and haunted manor, Matilda starts to realize there might be more to the world of ghosts than she had thought. With missing jewels, shady characters and a parakeet who loves rude limericks, Matilda must work out what's really happening with the help of her new and unexpected friend, Wilde.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

With many interesting topics and angles, *Lockett and Wilde* should provide plenty to discuss, from the intricacies of the story and the illustrations to comparison with other ghost stories and detective mysteries. Group members should be encouraged to follow their interests and, where possible, to take the lead in discussions. Below are a series of questions and areas for discussion, to support this.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Getting started:

Ask what group members liked about book. Why? What was anyone's favourite part? Is it a ghost story? A detective story? A mystery? All of these? Explore the idea of genre (check understanding) and whether a book can represent multiple genres.

1. Lockett

"The darling ghost girl, otherwise known as Matilda Lockett, was clambering up through a hidden trapdoor..." – p.15
How would anyone describe Matilda Lockett? How does she feel about being part of her aunt and uncle's performances? Does her character change across the novel? How does she cope with discovering that she can see ghosts? Is she a good detective? Why (or why not)? How is Matilda's character different from, say, Evelyn's? Or Barnabus'?

2. Wilde

"'Edgar Wilde, at your service,' he said. 'At least ... I was Edgar Wilde.'" – p.103

How are we introduced to Edgar Wilde? Is there any indication of what period in history Edgar is from in the text/in the illustrations. How does he feel about being a ghost? How would the novel be different if it was told from Wilde's perspective, and not Lockett's?

EXTENSION: Challenge members to rewrite a scene between Edgar and Matilda but from Edgar's perspective. They should think about how Edgar might be feeling before he meets Matilda, and how they could portray his personality in their writing.

3. Frauds

"I was sceptical, Mr Symmonds – I suspected a small amount of quackery, but THIS!" – p.132

There are lots of instances of fraud in the book – what do we mean by a "fraud"? Talk about all the different times people were guilty of "fraulent" activity – from Matilda's aunt and Barnabas, to Wynn Symmonds and even the Baroness. Are some episodes worse than others? Why? How does the reader discover all these different "frauds"? Why does Strange reveal them in this way? Whose side did members find themselves on when they were reading? Did their opinion change? Did anyone "see through" all the frauds from the beginning? How?

4. Colin

"Matilda looked at Colin. 'Perhaps he really is spiritually sensitive,' she said." – p.139

What part does Colin play in the novel? Is he "comic relief"? Does he contribute to the plot? Why has Strange created Colin? Why does Colin rarely finish his rude limericks? Revisit these as a group – can anyone finish them?

5. Ghosts

"So, there are two kinds of ghost. Actual ghosts – like me; and then there are wisps." – p.135

What might it be like to meet a ghost, or be one of only a few "sensitives" with the power to see a ghost? What are the ghosts in *Lockett and Wilde* like? Are they scary? Sad? Pitiably? How do they compare to ghosts group members may have come across in other books and stories? How are they similar? How are they different?

6. Misinformation

"So the ghost is ACTUALLY saying—" – p.183

Like all good mysteries, this book is full of misinformation and misdirection. As a group try to think of all the snippets of information the reader comes across that don't quite make sense (Aunt Evelyn and Barnabus's conversation; the overhead ranting of Wynn Symmonds; Lawrence Waterfall's ghostly wailing; the house listing in the paper, etc.). What is Strange doing when writing in these clues and red herrings (check understanding)? Did anyone work out where the diamond was before the reveal? How? What makes a good mystery? Why?

7. Illustration

How do Smy's illustrations help to create the atmosphere of the novel? How important are the illustrations to the book? (Lead group members towards the fact that some speech is only contained within the illustrations and not the printed text.) How would anyone describe the illustration style? Consider the number of colours used, the feeling the illustrations create, whether they're funny, or foreboding, or both, etc.

EXTENSION: Using a limited colour palette, and guided by examples from the book, illustrate another scene from the story in Smy's style.

8. Tethers

"Gosh. I suppose I must be tethered to you, Matilda Lockett." – p.220

The ghosts in *Lockett and Wilde* are "tethered" to the world based on something that happened when they were alive. What do we mean by "tethered"? Revisit the descriptions from Edgar from p.134. Are all the reasons serious? Why does Strange introduce humour in the novel, particularly around the ghosts? What tethers the specific ghosts we meet in this story? Imagine you were a ghost – what might tether you to the world? Why?

9. Together but apart

"I'm awfully fond of you, Barney darling, but I don't want to be anyone's wife." – p.112

What is "independence"? Who in the novel is "independent"? Why? Or why not? Why might Evelyn not want "to be anyone's wife"? How might this have been seen in the society in which the book is set? What message does this give to Matilda? How independent are the other characters in the novel?

10. Family

"He smiled sadly. 'She was a bit of a daredevil, my mum.'" – p.140

Family is important in the novel, but no characters seem to have a traditional family structure (any more). Evelyn, Matilda, the Baroness, Edgar: they all live, in part, within the shadow of those missing from the story. Why might this be? Who is reliant on whom? What do we know about Matilda's parents? And what about Edgar's? Does anyone think this might become important in future novels in the series? Why?