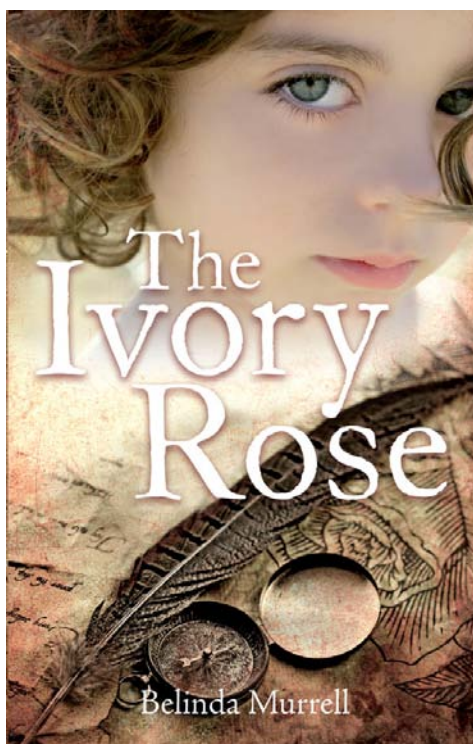


# THE IVORY ROSE

BELINDA MURRELL



## TEACHING SUPPORT KIT

by Belinda Murrell

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## PLOT SUMMARY

Jemma has just landed her first job, babysitting Sammy. It's in Rosethorne, one of the famous Witches' Houses near where she lives. Sammy says the house is haunted by a sad little girl, but Jemma doesn't know what to believe.

One day, when the two girls are playing hide-and-seek, Jemma discovers a rose charm made of ivory. As she touches the charm she sees a terrifying flashback. Is it the moment the ghost was murdered? Jemma runs for her life, falling down the stairs and tumbling into unconsciousness.

She wakes up in 1895, unable to get home. Jemma becomes an apprentice maidservant at Rosethorne – but all is not well in the grand house. Young heiress Georgiana is constantly sick. Jemma begins to suspect Georgiana is being poisoned, but who would poison her, and why? Jemma must find the proof in order to rescue her friend – before time runs out.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

At about the age of eight, Belinda Murrell began writing stirring tales of adventure, mystery and magic in hand-illustrated exercise books. As an adult she combined two of her great loves – writing and travelling the world – working as a travel journalist, technical writer and public relations consultant.

Now, inspired by her own three children, Belinda is a bestselling, internationally published children's author currently writing her eleventh book. Belinda's books include her fantasy adventure series for boys and girls aged 8 to 12 – The Sun Sword Trilogy – and her three timeslip adventures – *The Locket of Dreams*, *The Ruby Talisman* and *The Ivory Rose*.

Belinda comes from a very literary family, with a history of Australian writers stretching back 180 years. Her great-great-great-great grandmother, Charlotte Atkinson, published the first Australian children's book in 1841.

Belinda lives in Manly in a beautiful old house overlooking the sea with her husband, Rob, three gorgeous children and lots of animals, including a faithful Rhodesian Ridgeback called Asha, who was the inspiration for one of her fantasy characters.

You can learn more about Belinda Murrell by visiting her website:  
[www.belindamurrell.com.au](http://www.belindamurrell.com.au)

## AUTHOR NOTES ON WRITING THE IVORY ROSE

Ghosts have always fascinated me, so I have been longing to write a tale of ghosts, murder, mystery and a haunted mansion. Ten years ago we bought a hundred-year-old cottage in Manly, the oldest house in the street. When we moved in, the house was full of mysterious creaks and groans, and doors that would bang shut by themselves. My children, who were six, four and two, announced that there was a ghost living in their

bedroom. I thought they were imagining things until a mysterious note appeared on their bookshelf one day . . .

For many years my sister, Kate Forsyth, and her family lived in Annandale – just a couple of streets back from the Gothic Witches’ Houses, one of which was reputed to be haunted. Every time I would visit her I would pass these amazing houses and wonder about their history. Once, Kate was visiting the Abbey, which was home to a huge family of cats. Kate was given a little black kitten that she called Shadow. She’s now an old, old cat – and the inspiration for the Shadow in this book.

So when I started searching for a spooky old house to be the setting for my ghost story, I immediately thought of the Witches’ Houses. Researching their fascinating history, along with the history of the area, gave me lots of ideas that found their way into *The Ivory Rose*. The charm itself is based on a carved rose pendant that was given to me many years ago by my godmother, but sadly the pendant was stolen when our home was robbed – just a couple of weeks before I moved into the cottage with the haunted room. I hope that ghost is now haunting whoever stole it from me!

– Belinda Murrell

## THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Friendship
2. Growing Up – finding your voice, discovering what is important to you, self-awareness
3. Making a Difference – an individual can make a difference to their own life, and the lives of others
4. Equality and Justice – rich and poor, men and women, right and wrong
5. History – Federation of Australia, women gaining the vote, the Depression of 1890s, learning from the past
6. Family Relationships
7. Coping with Change – economic, social, political and personal
8. Magic – talismans, time travel, ghosts

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you think is the most important theme of *The Ivory Rose*? Find examples of scenes and quotes in the book that explore this theme. How is this theme relevant to you in your own life?
2. Do you think Jemma changes through her adventures in the past? How does her attitude and behaviour alter? Brainstorm a list of adjectives to describe Jemma’s character at the start of *The Ivory Rose*, then make a list of ways in which she is different by the end.
3. There are many different families in Jemma’s life – her own, Ruby’s, Sammy’s, Georgiana’s, Ned’s and Connie’s. Describe these families and how they differ from each other. Think about the characters of Jemma, Ruby, Georgiana and Connie. How are they influenced by their families?

4. Women couldn't vote; many children worked long and hard from a young age; babies frequently died . . . People in nineteenth-century Australia thought very differently about issues such as equality, behaviour, education, health, culture and politics. Can you list some of the differences between Australia in the 1890s and today?
5. If you could travel back in time, where would you go and when?

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

### Letter writing

Pretend you are Jemma stuck in the past. Write a detailed letter to Ruby explaining what has happened and how you feel. Describe three of the characters you've met in the past, and tell Ruby what you think of them.

### Living in nineteenth-century Australia

Georgiana and Connie are about the same age and live in the same house, yet their lives are vastly different. Make a list of some of the differences between them (food, clothing, schooling, lifestyle, family, opportunities, etc.). Compare their way of life to children of today.

### The crisis

Rewrite the climactic scene when Jemma disappears from the past. Imagine it from the point of view of one of the other characters in the room, like Georgiana, Ned, Aunt Harriet, Connie or Agnes. Describe what you see, what happens and how you feel, thinking about that person's character and relationship to Jemma. You could write this as a scene in a story or as a letter to Jemma.

### Setting

Identify two of the main settings described in the book. This could be Rosethorne in the past and the present, or Jemma's house in 1895 and now, or any of the other places described in the book. Find passages that describe these settings and highlight words and language devices that the author has used to create the sense of place. Compare the atmosphere and physical details of these different settings.

### Write a ghost story

Imagine you have an encounter with a ghost. Describe the setting – is it a spooky abandoned old building, or a modern scene? Think of smells, sounds, sensations. Describe how you discover the ghost. What happens – is it frightening, funny, terrifying, dangerous? How do you feel? Is the ghost friendly, distressed or malevolent? What happens next?

### Time-travel story

Write a short story about travelling back in time. Where would you go? How would you get there? (For example, Jemma slips down the stairs wearing the ivory pendant). Who would you meet? What do you see? What happens? How do you get back home? How

do you feel when you are safely home (relieved, happy, sad the adventure is over, angry)?

### **Excursion to the Witches' Houses**

Organise a visit to the Witches' Houses in Johnston Street, Annandale, or research them on the internet. Identify the Abbey, Kenilworth (where Sir Henry Parkes lived) and Highroyd (similar to Rosethorne). Write a description of one of the real houses that are still standing. Find historic photos of the houses and Johnston Street from the nineteenth century. Visit some of the other settings from the book, such as the back lane, Booth Street, the Hunter Baillie Memorial Church and Breillat Street.