

MEDIA KIT

L.M. Merrington

Author of *Greythorne* and *The Iron Line*

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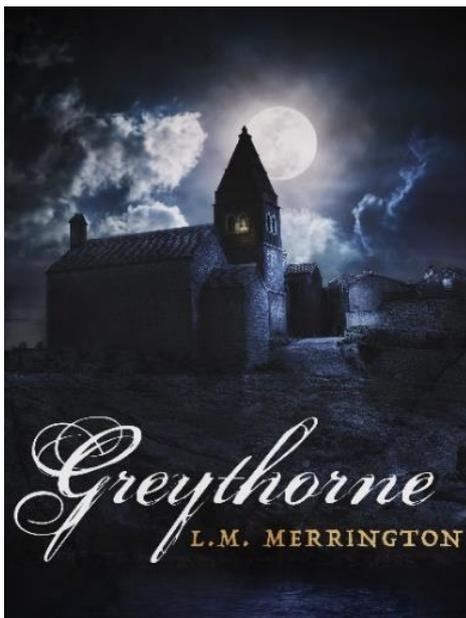
Biography

L.M. Merrington was born in Melbourne, Australia. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in media and communications and Chinese, and a PhD in international relations. A former journalist, strategic analyst, and university communications manager, she currently runs her own business, [Pure Arts Communications](http://PureArtsCommunications.com). She is also the author of a non-fiction book, [Communications for Volunteers: Low-Cost Strategies for Community Groups](#), released in early 2017. She lives in Canberra with her husband, Tristan. Her first novel, [Greythorne](#), was published in 2015, and her new novel, [The Iron Line](#), will be released on 4 December 2017. Her website is www.lmmerrington.com.

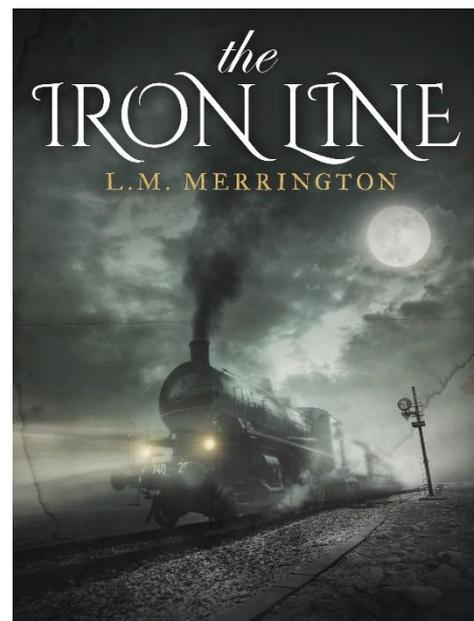
CV and publication list

A full CV and publication list can be downloaded at:

<https://pureartscommunications.com/about-2/dr-louise-merrington/>



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BOOKS

Greythorne

How did Lucy Greythorne die?

From the moment she arrives at the isolated, windswept Greythorne Manor, Nell Featherstone finds herself haunted by the fate of the mistress of the house. Employed as a governess to eight-year-old Sophie, a fey, half-wild child, and entranced by the girl's father, the enigmatic Professor Nathaniel Greythorne, Nell is drawn deep into the house's mysteries. Why does Sophie go missing from her bed? What caused Lucy to run away the night she died? And why will no one in the nearby village speak of Greythorne Manor and its secrets?

When a violent storm reveals Lucy's body is not in her grave, Nell begins to develop suspicions about the Professor's research. What she discovers in his laboratory, however, will turn all her ideas about life and death, morality and creation on their head, leaving her to face an impossible choice.

The Iron Line

"There's a ghost train that runs along here at night. They say it carries the souls of those bound for hell."

Jane Adams is only twenty-three, but she's already a widow. A daughter of the railway, after her husband's death she takes a job as a level-crossing gatekeeper in the little town of Tungold, out at the end of the line. But all is not right in Tungold. The townspeople are frosty and unwelcoming, and Jane's only ally is the new young police constable, Alec Ward, an outsider just like her.

When a railway superintendent is murdered, Jane and Alec become determined to get to the bottom of the town's secrets. Who killed Brian Mathieson? And what is behind the mysterious ghost train? But Jane is also hiding a secret of her own — one that will put her life and everything she cares about on the line.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What inspired you to write Greythorne?

I'd never written a Gothic novel before – most of my previous fiction (unpublished) has been fantasy. The actual idea came quite suddenly; I was reading Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black* and I started to doze off. When I woke up, I had a rough outline of Greythorne in my head, with characters and a loose plot structure. I initially intended it to be more of a ghost story, but as it developed it delved into the realm of pseudoscience and became more about the moral choices the characters have to make, as well as the mysteries surrounding Lucy Greythorne's death and the Professor's research. I wanted it to be a book that would appeal to older teenagers as well as adults, in the tradition of nineteenth-century adventure stories by the likes of Charlotte Bronte, Robert Louis Stevenson and Jules Verne.

2. What do you like about this genre?

I've long been fascinated by the nineteenth century – it was a time of rapid technological and social change, especially for women. I'm passionate about exploring women's stories, because they are often left out of traditional histories. I enjoy the Gothic genre because it gives me an opportunity to bring together the best parts of the mystery, historical fiction and fantasy/sci-fi/adventure genres and at the same time to push my characters into situations where they're faced with some difficult choices and conflicts.

3. How long have you been writing for?

I've been writing fiction since I was around 10 years old, but *Greythorne* is my first published work of fiction. However, I've published extensively in journalism and academia (under my full name, Louise Merrington). My first article was published when I was 12 years old, as part of a program for school students run by the local paper. I've also been published in *The Age*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Canberra Times*, *The Bulletin*, *Inside Story*, and *East Asia Forum*, among others, and have contributed chapters to *Engaging India* (ed. Ian Hall, Georgetown University Press 2014) and *Australia and India: Bridging Different Worlds* (ed. Brian Stoddart and Auriol Weigold, Readworthy Publications 2011). My first non-fiction book, *Communications for Volunteers: Low-Cost Strategies for Community Groups*, was published in March 2017.

4. Can you tell us a bit more about your background?

I was born in Melbourne, Australia. As an only child, I spent a lot of time reading and would often imagine myself into my favourite stories – for a while I was the unknown sixth member of the Famous Five. I knew from early on that I wanted to be a writer, but chose initially to pursue journalism instead as I felt it would provide more security. I completed a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne, majoring in media and communications and Mandarin Chinese, which included 6 months of language training in Beijing (I also spent 6 months in Yunnan, in southern China, teaching English when I was 18). While at university, I worked as a freelance journalist and also had a regular job with *The Age's*

student newspaper, *SAGE*. I completed internships at the Walkley Foundation for Journalism and at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Asia-Pacific Focus program in Sydney, as well as the ABC bureau in Beijing.

I wrote my honours thesis on media regulation in China, and during that year I decided that I'd rather pursue research than journalism. I received a scholarship to the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra to do my PhD, where I focused on conflict and cooperation in the China-India political relationship, and spent seven months in India and China conducting fieldwork. After graduating in 2012, I joined the Department of Defence, where I spent three and a half years, and worked as an editor for Defence publications. Throughout 2014 I held a part-time visiting fellowship at ANU's Australian Centre on China in the World, where I worked on turning my thesis into a book, and in 2015 I returned permanently to ANU as the Deputy Communications Manager for the College of Asia and the Pacific. I now run my own consultancy, Pure Arts Communications, which specialises in helping community groups and non-profits improve their governance, strategic planning and communications. In March 2017 I released my first non-fiction book, *Communications for Volunteers: Low-Cost Strategies for Community Groups*.

I'm thrilled that after 20 years of writing, I've finally achieved my dream of getting a novel published. One of my biggest inspirations was my grandfather, Ken Sillcock, who was also a writer, and I know he'd be very proud too.

5. *How long did it take you to write Greythorne?*

I wrote the first draft of *Greythorne* as part of NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month), which is an international challenge where participants try to write 50,000 words during November. Although I didn't meet the 50,000 word goal, I had a first draft within three months. I then spent the next nine months editing it. The novel went through four distinct drafts before it was accepted for publication, with around 20-30,000 words being rewritten between them.

6. *How did you get it published?*

In November 2014, I attended the Australian Society of Authors' 'Literary Speed Dating' event in Sydney, which brings together a collection of publishers and agents for aspiring authors to pitch to. I pitched *Greythorne* to an editor from Pan Macmillan Australia who asked to see the first three chapters, and then eventually the entire manuscript. She also acquired for Pan Macmillan's digital-first imprint, Momentum Books, and offered me a contract with them in April 2015. Momentum was a really good fit for *Greythorne*, because the novel is quite short (50,000 words) and would probably have had a hard time finding a home with a traditional publisher. In 2016 Pan Macmillan closed Momentum, so I got my rights back and have since rereleased *Greythorne* under my own imprint, PAC Books, which will also publish *The Iron Line*.

7. *Why did you choose not to pursue a traditional publishing contract for The Iron Line?*

Deciding to go indie wasn't an easy decision to make, because there's still a fair bit of stigma around self-publishing, and I've had other authors tell me it would make my work appear less legitimate. But after researching the process at length I concluded that it was the right decision for me business-wise. I like having control over my work, and indie publishing also pays significantly higher royalties. It's still possible to make a decent living as an indie author, whereas it's very difficult to do as a traditionally published one. I also quite enjoy marketing and love interacting with readers, so being able to reach my readers directly without needing an intermediary was also really attractive. I found it very frustrating when I had a traditional contract that I had to do pretty much all the marketing but had no access to any data (like sales figures) or tools (like the ability to offer discounts) that are proven to make a difference. I still get my books professionally edited and designed – in fact, my cover designer is the same person who designed my traditionally published book – because I'm committed to producing books that are of the same quality as traditionally published ones. If you're interested in reading more about my journey from traditional publishing to indie, I recently wrote an article about it for online cultural magazine *Inside Story*, which you can find [here](#).

8. *What was the inspiration for The Iron Line?*

I'd never written anything set in Australia before, and I loved the idea of exploring the Australian Gothic tradition. I set it in a (fictional) small town in southern New South Wales, near Goulburn, which is an area I'm quite familiar with. It's a beautiful part of the world but the bush can be quite eerie. It's also got a fascinating colonial history, so I tried to capture all of that.

9. *What was the biggest challenge writing it?*

They say the second novel is always the hardest, and this one seemed to take much longer than *Greythorne*. It probably didn't help that I was starting a new business at the same time. I also wanted to push myself as a writer, so I chose to use an unreliable narrator, which added an extra challenge. Sounding authentically Australian without being too modern was also tricky.

10. *Are you working on another novel?*

At the moment I've got a steampunk trilogy in the planning stages – I love steampunk because it's the perfect combination of Victorian history and fantasy – and I'm also tossing around ideas for a collection of dark fairytale-style short stories.

11. *What's your proudest writing moment so far?*

Getting *Greythorne* onto the Year 8 reading lists of two schools (Tintern Grammar and Kilvington Grammar) in Melbourne has been fantastic. I love doing author talks and creative writing workshops, and I've had the great privilege of being able to do these with both

students and English teachers. I was lucky enough to attend a school with fabulous English teachers who really fostered my love of books, so I'm really enjoying being able to work with the next generation of readers and hopefully inspiring a similar love of books and writing in them.