

LUCAS KENT & GRETA ROUGE

Rocio
Bonilla



Ghosts don't
exist, right?

bromera



MORE INFO

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Edición B

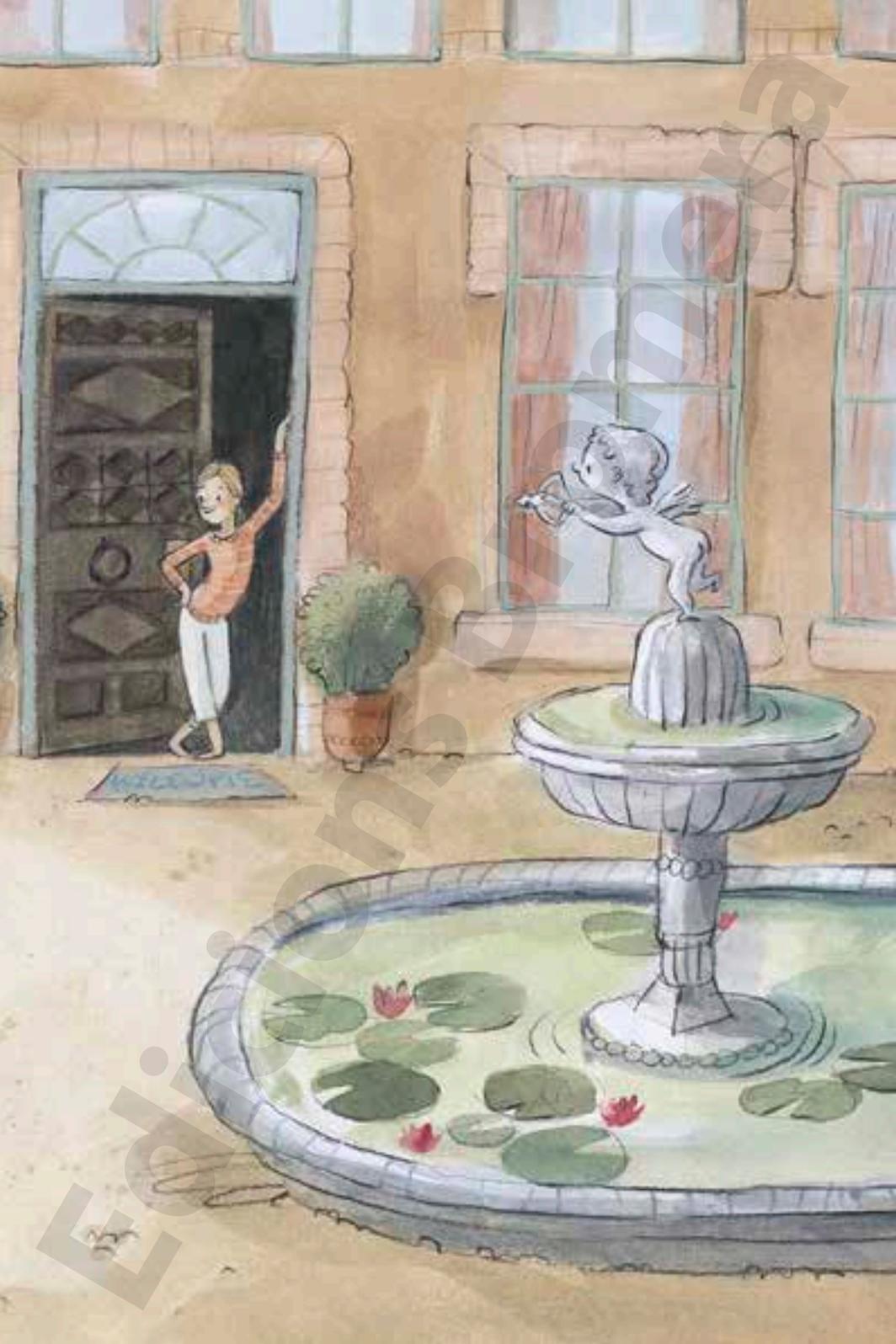
1

EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE

We had moved to the house on the hill, that big mansion we had inherited from my grandad Eudaldo Lucas. Well, technically, we hadn't inherited it, because he was still alive, but that's another story.

Mum worked from home and dad was on sabbatical. Yes, I also asked what that meant. It turns out it's kind of like taking a year off without going to work. Some nerve! I wish I could take a year off like that to stay at grandad's house,





but watching old movies, not like dad, who spends all day using the super-sonic hoover like a maniac.



Lita, my little sister, was delighted. She had made loads friends at our new school and there was always someone in the house who had come round for tea or to play with her, so she was annoying me a bit less than usual. Despite that, what can I say? She was still unbearable... At times I wish I could put a stamp on her and send her to Australia.





2

THE CHALLENGE

In Spanish class, I always fall asleep. Literally. As soon as I hear the teacher's voice talking about subordinate clauses and synonyms, I have to really make an effort to keep my eyes open. It's like they had shot me with a tranquiliser dart, but an elephant-grade one. Greta nudges me with her elbow to keep me awake.

On the other hand, Science is amazing and the hour flies by. The



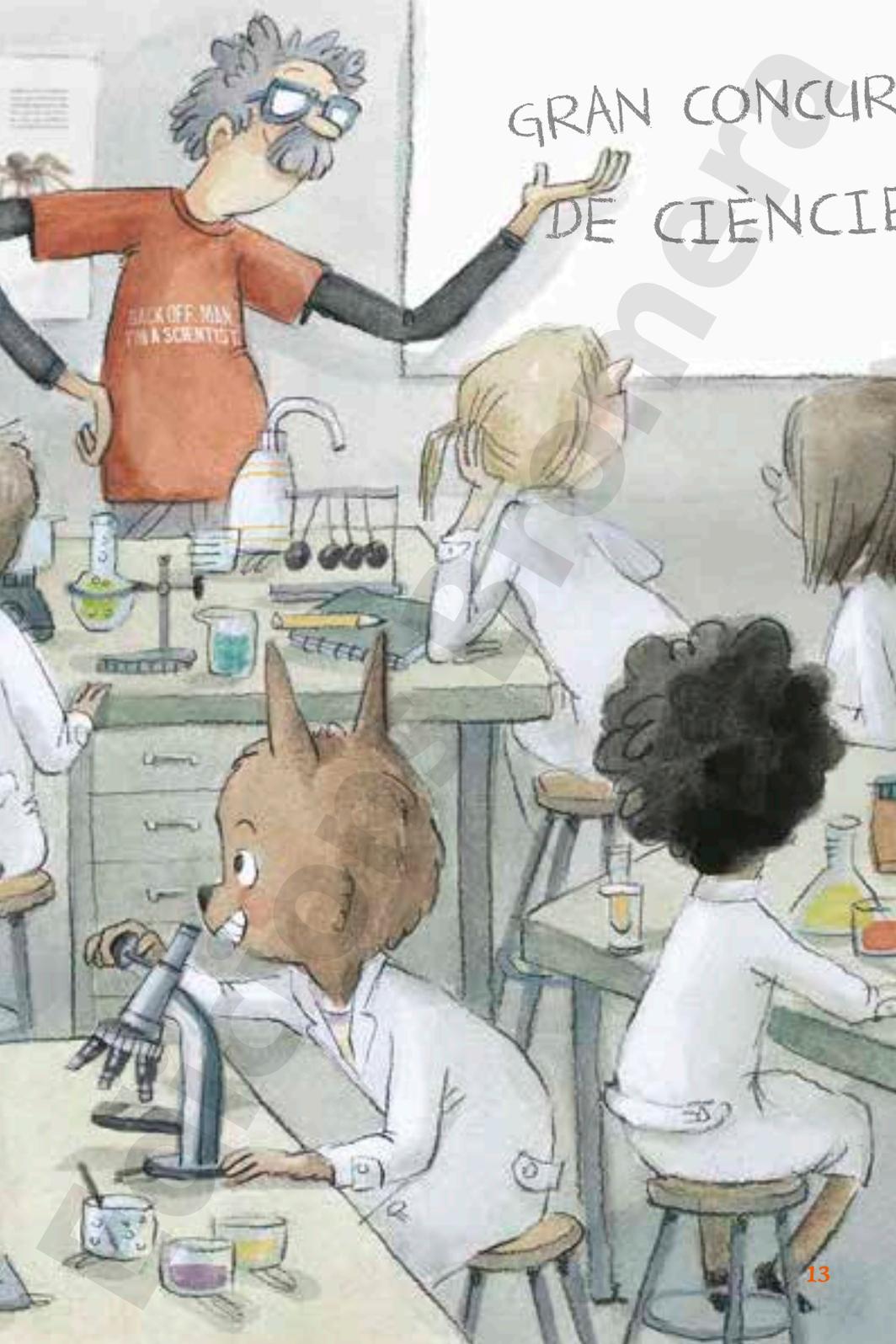
teacher is called Emiliano and he's a very peculiar guy, with scruffy hair and a t-shirt that reads: *Back off, man. I'm a scientist*, which make

him seem like a mad genius. Maybe the guy is excessively motivated, but his enthusiasm certainly is contagious. Besides, that week we were all more rowdy than normal. Señor Emiliano had written on the board in huge letters: *THE GRAND SCIENCE FAIR* and he gave us one of his challenges: we had to invent and build a machine which would work and cause reactions, based on the scientific principles we had discussed in class. We only had two weeks and we had to work in groups. There was no time to lose.

My group was obvious: Greta, Federico and I had become inseparable. To be honest, my new school



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wasn't bad. At least there was no one who made those stupid jokes about me, which only seemed funny to those making them, like in my old school. Now I know that wasn't even a little bit normal. Don't get me wrong, it's not like everyone is my friend, but no one picks on anyone.

Except that day, as we came out of class, when a rather tall boy who had just arrived started on Federico.

'Hey, look how hairy you are!' he said, laughing.

Federico, who, let's not forget, is a wolf-boy, replied without even looking at him.

'Mate, tell me something I don't know.'



The tall boy, seeing that his mocking didn't get the desired reaction, carried on.

'You're...you're...like, really hairy!'

Federico sighed. rolled his eyes and set him straight.

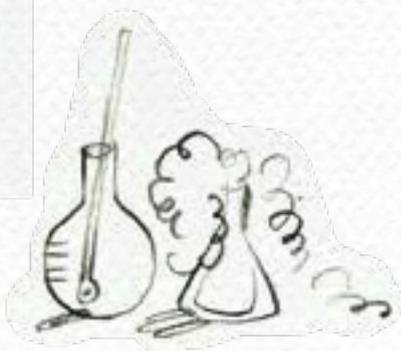
'Bro, let me tell you that if you're saying that nonsense to appear cleverer, you're actually sounding stupider. So, don't even bother. I know you just got here and don't know anyone. You can do the project with us if you want.'

'Okay. My name's Amadeo.'

And so, just like that, the conflict was over.

I love Federico.





3

THE GAME BEGINS!

It was obvious that the most urgent thing to do was decide what our project was going to be. It had to be ingenious, but above all original, something that no other group could come up with.

At the end of the school day, Federico had to go to work. Two afternoons a week, he babysat Mrs Mäh's daughters, which earned him a few euros so he could buy stuff, mainly sweets.

Amadeo had to go home because of something to do with his little sister, who was Lita's age and was probably just as unbearable.

So that just left Greta and I.



Whenever we had to think, we would go up the hill together and sit on some grey stones behind my house, at the end of the garden. There, side by side, with our feet dangling over the edge, we could spend







hours without anything or anyone interrupting us.

Greta narrowed her eyes and focused her gaze somewhere on the horizon, in a state of absolute concentration, as if waiting for something. It was then when I took the chance to look at her from close up, without her realising. Then, when I was completely absorbed, counting the freckles on her nose, she broke the silence suddenly. *I've got it!* she exclaimed and I awoke from my trance, scared to death.

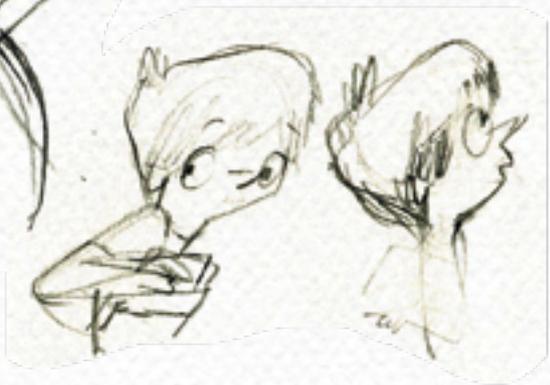
However, although that afternoon we turned it over two million, three hundred thousand and four hundred times, we didn't come up with any great ideas. Honestly, not even any

regular ones, never mind great ones.
Not even Greta did.

While she put on her rucksack to go to volleyball practice, we agreed that I would go down to the local library. There I could ask Anselmo the librarian to recommend me some books that could serve as inspiration.

That would be our starting point!





4 THE LIBRARY

Although there were usually lots of people there, that day the library was deserted, likely because it was almost closing time.

I went straight to the counter, but Anselmo wasn't at his station.

I looked everywhere for him but found no trace, none at all.

I thought that maybe he'd gone to the bathroom, so, to kill some time, I went over to the science section. I was



taking a look at the shelf on the environment. It was a topic that Greta loved and I thought it might have potential. After leafing through quite a few books, I took a couple down and went back to the borrowing counter.

Anselmo still hadn't turned up, so I just stood there, waiting, like a statue. The only sound was the ticking of the giant clock hung on the wall. They say time passes quickly, but sometimes I think it moves like a tortoise.

Then suddenly...

'Hello.'

Had I heard a voice? I looked around me, but I didn't see anyone at all. I must have imagined it.

'Hello?'

This time I was sure I'd heard it. But...where was the voice coming from? There wasn't a soul around.



And again:

'Hellooo!' the voice became gruffer and more impatient.

I gave a start. I looked all around me, confused, while my heart raced.



That was when I noticed that something was moving behind the table.

A chill ran up my spine and back down again, making a double trip.



'An...sel...mo?' I stuttered.

I couldn't take my eyes off the table, as if hypnotised. I heard by own breath, getting louder, as I stretched my neck to look over the counter and then...I saw him back there!



'Anselmo...won't be back,' he said, his round, glassy eyes gleaming as they met mine.

The hairs on the back of my neck stood up. My books flew up in the air and I ran out of there faster than the Roadrunner escaping from Coyote.

Terrified, I ran all the way home. I went all the way up the hill to the mansion without stopping or looking back, not even once. I was so breathless I almost died.

'What's wrong with you? You look like you've seen a ghost!' Lita said when she saw me enter the kitchen and lean, gasping, on the wall.

Lita had invited a friend from school round. Her name was Rita Thumb and her family were new to the neighbourhood.





Okay, I know you're laughing. To begin with: *Rita and Lita*, it rhymes. You couldn't make it up. It sounds like the name of an artistic duo, like Pin & Pon or Pixie & Dixie. And then: what kind of surname was that, bearing in mind that Rita was the tiniest person I had seen in in my life? It was like some kind of joke.

'I know, it shocks everyone at first,' Rita explained, unbothered. 'Actually, my middle name is Tom, after my great grandad: Tom Thumb. But I just go by Rita, because that's easier. I never met my great-grandad, but he was very famous in the neighbourhood because he talked a lot and very loudly, so people wouldn't step on him. And



everyone in the family has turned out like that: loud. Well, except my parents, who were very hippy and didn't want to follow in the family tradition; but in the end that was worse because a cow stood on them while they were meditating under a cabbage. But that was a long time ago. My brother and I

were raised by our grandmother. And we've just moved to this neighbourhood.'

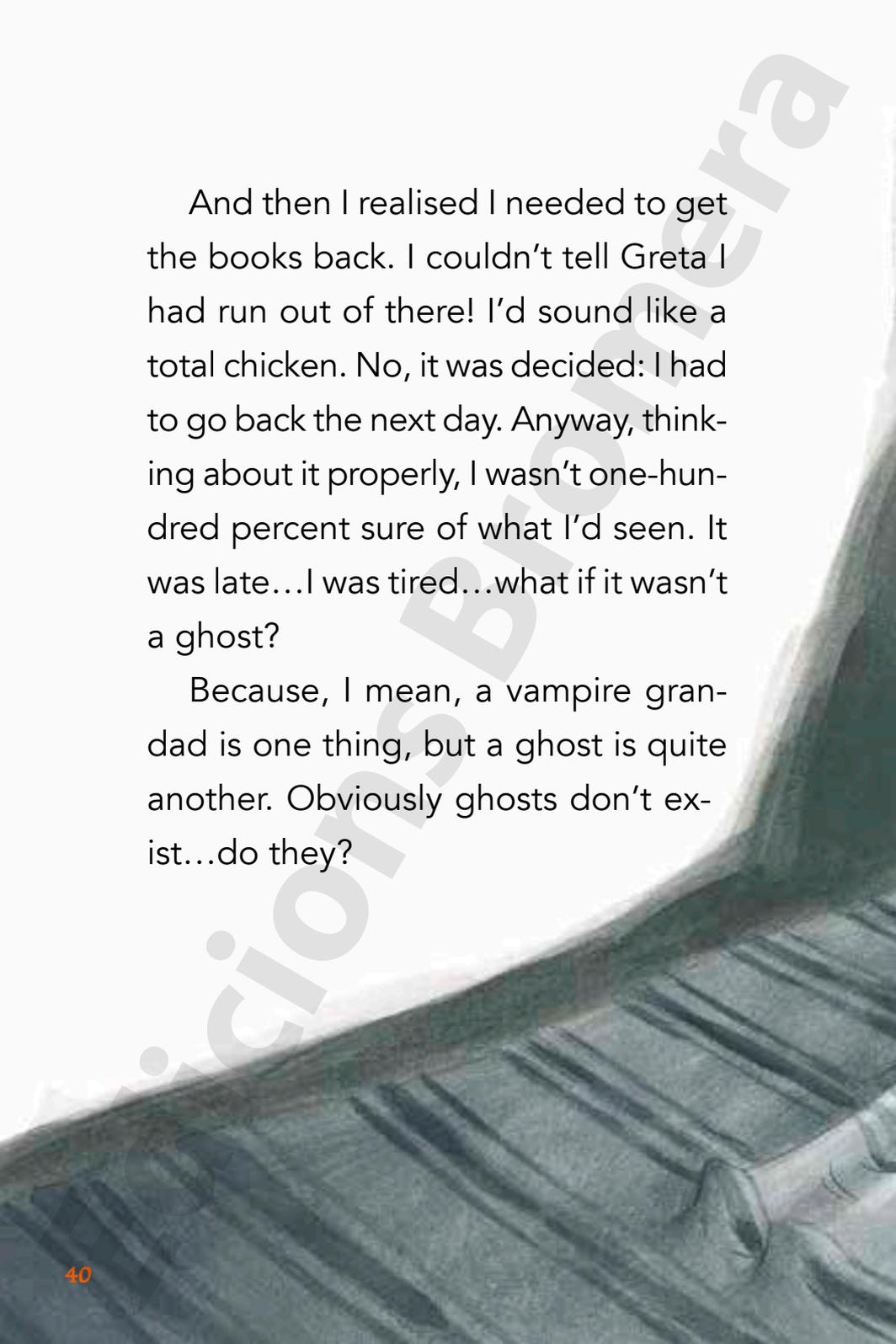
'They've moved into the house next door to Rapunzel family,' said Lita.



'Yes, and I've already met Violeta. She says she's a good friend of yours!' added Rita.

The girls carried on talking incessantly, but I was barely listening to them. I couldn't get that terrifying image from the library out of my head.





And then I realised I needed to get the books back. I couldn't tell Greta I had run out of there! I'd sound like a total chicken. No, it was decided: I had to go back the next day. Anyway, thinking about it properly, I wasn't one-hundred percent sure of what I'd seen. It was late...I was tired...what if it wasn't a ghost?

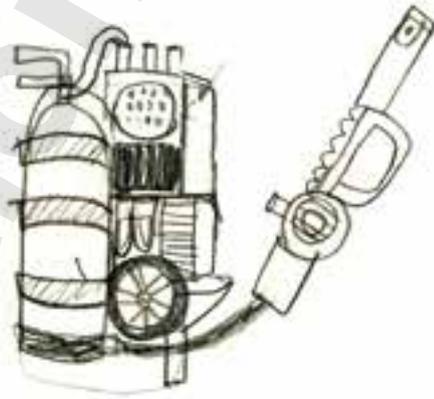
Because, I mean, a vampire granddad is one thing, but a ghost is quite another. Obviously ghosts don't exist...do they?



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Rocio Bonilla was born in Badalona with a pencil in her hand and has never stopped drawing. She studied Fine Arts at the University of Barcelona and then had many different jobs before discovering that children's literature was her true calling.

Her Minimoni character in **What colour is a kiss?** (Algar, 2015) capitulated her onto the international publishing scene. Since then, she has published more than fifty picture books with characters who combine kindness with mischievousness.

Her stories are full of humour as well as little birds, cakes and laser swords.

She loves cooking. She has survived the adolescence of three children. Her cat is called Maia.

Lucas Kent & Greta Rouge is her first venture into the world of children's novels.

And she's showing no sign of stopping...





Greta, Federico and I had to invent something for school science fair. I went to the library in search of a great idea, but what I found wasn't exactly inspiration. You won't believe what happened! I had to scarper out of there. If I told my friends that, I'd sound like a chicken; but, come on, let's be real...

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do they?**

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