



# Narrelle M Harris: Writing Talks and Workshops

Melbourne author, Narrelle M Harris, shares her love of reading, writing and Sherlock Holmes.

## Writer, reader, speaker: Narrelle M Harris

Award-winning author and experienced public speaker, Narrelle M Harris, can enliven and enrich your writers workshops, festival events and readers activities with a selection of talks and workshops.

She covers topics as diverse as how growing up reading influenced her life, how writers get their ideas, the symbolism of vampires in fiction, and the enduring popularity of Sherlock Holmes.

Narrelle has a background in teaching, theatre and public speaking. She also speaks about reading and writing regularly at libraries, conferences, festivals, on radio, and at writers' groups.

## Talks and Workshops

Narrelle currently has five available one hour **talks**, and a selection of two-hour or one-day **workshops**. She can also adapt these, or prepare new presentations to fit the theme of your event.

## Zoom Events

All talks and workshops can be delivered via Zoom.

## About Narrelle

**Narrelle M Harris** writes crime, horror, fantasy, romance and erotica. Her 30+ novels and short stories have been published in Australia, US and UK.

Award nominations include *Fly By Night* (nominated for a Ned Kelly Award), *Witch Honour* and *Witch Faith* (both short-listed for the George Turner Prize), *Walking Shadows* (Chronos Awards; Davitt Awards). In 2017, her ghost/crime story *Jane* won the Athenaeum Library's Body in the Library prize at the Scarlet Stiletto Awards.

Her work includes vampire novels, erotic spy adventures, queer romance, traditional Holmesian mysteries, and the Holmes/Watson romances *The Adventure of the Colonial Boy* and *A Dream to Build a Kiss On*.

Narrelle was also the commissioning editor of *The Only One in the World*, an anthology reimagining Sherlock Holmes and John Watson in new cultural contexts written by authors with particular cultural and historical expertise. Settings include Ancient Egypt, Poland, India, Australia, and South Africa – and yet remain quintessentially Conan Doyle's creation.

Among other projects, Narrelle is working with music producer Josh King of Golden Hour Studios to turn lyrics from her *Kitty and Cadaver* rock and roll fantasy and her 5-novella Duo Ex Machina crime/romance series into fully produced songs. *Hymn/Him* and *High* are already available on Spotify and other channels.



## Talks

### 1. Sherlock Holmes: However Improbable

Narrelle talks about the enduring popularity of the great detective Sherlock Holmes and his biographer, Dr John Watson.

She also explores the elements of a quintessential Holmes story within the context of modern interpretations: whether he's depicted as a Victorian gentleman, a 21st Century detective, a cartoon mouse, a Japanese woman, or in a loving relationship with his best friend, John Watson.

Narrelle also discusses *The Only One in the World* – an anthology of Sherlock Holmes stories where Holmes and Watson are reimaged through different cultural lenses.

### 2. Growing up reading

Narrelle discusses growing up in a house full of books, and what reading meant to her as a child and as an adult.

She shares the books she remembers most from her childhood and the life lessons she learned from some of her favourites, as well as new works such as *The Hunger Games*, *F2M*, and even the 16th century Sir Thomas Moore book *Utopia*.

Narrelle also invites attendees to share their own experiences of books in their lives.

### 3. Where do you get your ideas?

Writers joke about getting asked that question and have a range of flippant replies. However, I've noticed in my library talks and in general discussion with budding writers, that there is a genuine curiosity about how this part of writing works.

Narrelle actually addresses this tricky question frequently asked of writers, sharing examples of where real life inspiration has appeared in her novels and stories.

### 4. Building believable fantasy worlds

Believability in stories is about two things – believing that the characters are real, so that we care what happens to them, and having them exist in a world that is as complex and textured as our own.

What techniques do writers use to create worlds and characters that the reader can believe in, no matter how fantastical?

### 5. From Stoker to Stackhouse: The vampire as metaphor

Throughout its literary life, the vampire has been a metaphor for many different things. That keeps changing, depending on the writer's approach and the times they live in.

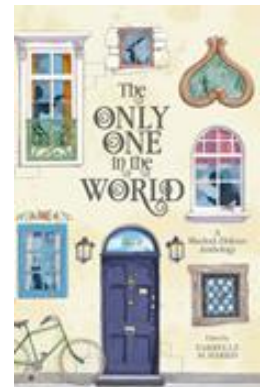
Narrelle discusses the history of the vampire novel and the different metaphors vampires represent in fiction: including fear of foreigners, anxieties about sex and death, the impact of the HIV crisis of the 1980s, and more recent commentary on overconsumption.

### Leanda Elliott, Wimmera Regional Library

Narrelle M Harris visited the Wimmera Regional Library during Library Week 2015 to give her "Growing up reading" talk at a number of branches and to conduct a writing workshop "Killer opening sentences".

At all sessions her enthusiasm, professionalism and enjoyment of her subject matter were apparent to all who attended. She easily involved her audience and kept everyone engaged.

Comments from attendees included: "Fascinating – touched on many points that I can strongly relate to – very informative, very funny and entertaining" and "She was excellent – could listen to her again on any topic!"



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Narrelle's rate for each talk is **\$407** (inc. GST) per group, which covers a 45-minute talk and an extended Q&A period afterwards.

## Workshops

“Terrific! Narrelle was really great at explaining essential elements in our own writing, and gave us lots of personal examples! Please ask her again.” ★★★★★  
★

“Fantastic session with Narrelle. Range and quality of material covered excellent.” ★★★★★.

~ Attendees at the *Finding Your Voice* Writing the Rainbow Festival workshop, Realm Library,

### 1. **NEW: Find Your Voice (2 hours)**

New writers are often told to ‘find their voice’, but at the same time that they worry they have nothing new to say. In this discussion and workshop, Narrelle works with attendees to understand what is meant by ‘voice’, explores the idea of the 7 basic plots, and suggests ways of developing – and believing in – their own voice.

### 2. **NEW: Creating Character Voices (2 hours)**

What are the techniques for writing dialogue that sounds like real people? How do you make sure your characters don’t all sound exactly the same on the page? How do you suggest accents or historical settings without writing awkward or stereotypical language? Learn how to convey changes in tension, status and plot through giving your characters distinct personalities, expressed through prose, sentence structure, tone and vocabulary

Participants can bring their own work to discuss and workshop with the group.

### 3. **Fantasy Writing Building Blocks (2 hours or 1 day)**

This workshop leads new writers through the elements of creating a fantasy novel. Topics covered include the different sub-genres of fantasy fiction, brainstorming the sparks that can inspire writing, the elements of building a believable fantasy world and how to grab the reader from the first line or paragraph

Attendees will apply some of the principles discussed to the opening paragraphs for their works in progress

### 4. **Writing Killer Opening Sentences (2 hours)**

How do you grab the reader from the first line? What are the different approaches to opening paragraphs?

Participants should bring their own works in progress to workshop the opening of their story. If they don't have a current WiP, keywords will be given to spark ideas for writing something new.

#### **Marian Chivers, Secretary, Ballarat Writers Inc.**

Narrelle Harris conducted a lively and engaging one-day *Fantasy Writing Building Blocks* workshop at Ballarat. Narrelle showed us how our created worlds should have consistency, internal logic and credibility. She emphasised that our worlds need texture and depth through using all the senses.

A writing exercise after lunch considered the opening paragraph as we all worked on a new one or shared an existing piece.

Narrelle handled this session positively and with great encouragement. A great day that saw us all leaving inspired to continue our writing.

Narrelle M Harris

### Hayley Barry-Smith, Alternate Worlds, Melbourne

We were very privileged to have Narrelle visit our Sci-Fi/Fantasy writing group and share her expertise with a *Sex and Intimacy* workshop. The theme is something that we, as writers, have all stumbled across quite often and we recognised a definite need to make sure we get it right.

Narrelle was fantastic. The workshop was fun, full of conversation and we were also able to analyse and share our thoughts on some of her work within this genre, learning all the way.

Narrelle's enthusiasm and humour shone through and she shared invaluable tips and ideas for navigating different levels of intimacy between characters, as well as writing effective sex and erotica scenes.

Altogether, the workshop was excellent and we all left feeling more confident and inspired in our ability to tackle these scenes. Very highly recommended, thank you Narrelle.

## 5. Writing about Sex and Intimacy: Avoiding the Bad Sex Award (2 hours or 1 day)

*NOTE: Due to the nature of this workshop, participants should be 18 years or older.*

Scenes about sex and intimacy are an important tool for writers, but difficult to do well. There's even an award for writers who get it horribly wrong – Literary Review magazine's Bad Sex Award. How can writers know when to include scenes of sex and intimacy, and how can they strike the right balance? This workshop explores the following ideas frankly.

- What is the difference between sex and intimacy?
- Why can it be difficult to write these scenes well (especially if they are explicit)?
- What are the elements of a good (or bad) sex scene?
- How necessary are scenes of sex and intimacy to your story?

The one day version of this workshop contains more detail, the analysis of extracts, and writing sessions for attendees to apply some of the things they've learned to a new scene or a work in progress.

## 6. Workshops created to fit your event

Do you need a festival- or event-specific talk or workshop? With sufficient lead-time, Narrelle can create a workshop or talk to fit with your needs. (This is how the 'Find Your Voice' workshop was created.)

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*Each two hour workshop is **\$572** (inc. GST) per group.*

*The one day workshop is **\$1500** (inc. GST) per group, for six hours (including breaks).*

*3x two hour workshops can be combined to for a one-day workshop.*

**To engage Narrelle to run a workshop for your group, contact  
0421 024 474 or [narrelle@iwriter.com.au](mailto:narrelle@iwriter.com.au)**

### Contact Narrelle M Harris

Ph: 0421 024474  
Email: [narrelle@iwriter.com.au](mailto:narrelle@iwriter.com.au)  
Website: [www.narrellemharris.com](http://www.narrellemharris.com)  
Blog: [www.mortalwords.com.au](http://www.mortalwords.com.au)  
Patreon: [www.patreon.com/NarrelleMHarris](http://www.patreon.com/NarrelleMHarris)  
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Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/narrellemharris/>