

# NEW WRITING NORTH

Press release, for immediate release

## **Write Your Novel: acclaimed authors reveal the secrets of their craft in podcast series for aspiring writers**

*David Nicholls, Pat Barker, Alex Wheatle, Sarah Moss, Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi among guests on Yvonne Battle-Felton podcast*

Ever wanted to write a novel but struggling to begin? Already working on your draft but lacking structure and a community?

WRITE YOUR NOVEL is a new 8-part podcast series aimed at helping you, the writer, develop your novel draft.

Launching this September, award-winning author Yvonne Battle-Felton invites aspiring novelists everywhere to dust off their pencil cases, flex their creative muscles and give themselves a serious run at writing a novel.

In each episode of the series, Yvonne engages acclaimed novelists in a conversation around an element of craft. Each episode ends with a writing exercise focusing on the technique the writer discussed. The exercises encourage you to write, re-write, and read.

Pat Barker talks about how complex characters help to engage readers and provide moments of empathy. Alex Wheatle discusses the use of tension, explaining the decisions he makes to guide readers through the narrative and maintain the feeling of suspense and shock. Sarah Moss talks about setting, and its role, not just in driving the narrative, but in developing character.

Alongside the podcast, a Discord server provides the space for people to build a community around their writing. Users will be invited to take part in exercises, share how their writing is going, what they've learned and their own writing practice.

Write Your Novel is devised and presented by Yvonne Battle-Felton and produced by Candace Wilson for Sonderbug Productions. It is supported by New Writing North with funding from Arts Council England.

Yvonne Battle-Felton is an American writer living in the UK. A writer of fiction and creative nonfiction, her work has been published in literary journals and anthologies. Her debut novel, *Remembered*, (Dialogue Books) was longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction (2019), the Not the Booker (2019), and shortlisted for the Jhalak

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Prize (2020). *Remembered* was published in the US in 2020 (Blackstone Publishing). Yvonne won a Northern Writers' Award in 2017.

**Yvonne Battle-Felton said:** "This series is about making creative writing accessible to writers at any stage of their craft."

**Claire Malcom, Chief Executive of New Writing North, said:** "Listening to writers talk about the craft of writing and how they write is always enlightening and can often be transformative in terms of learning new techniques and approaches. This excellent new series brings a stunning line-up of novelists into the studio for Yvonne to pick their brains and hear first-hand how they write their amazing books. In Yvonne's hands aspiring writers will be able to get to grips with form and technique to help them develop and write their novels and join a community of fellow writers online to share their progress."

Write Your Novel launches on 9 September. Find it in your favourite Podcast app. Register now for free access to the Discord server to join the writing community around Write Your Novel. Visit <https://newwritingnorth.com/projects/write-your-novel/> to sign up.

## Ends

**For all media enquiries, please contact Laura Fraine at New Writing North [laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com](mailto:laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com) 07411 164 837**

## Notes to Editor

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New Writing North is the writing development agency for the North of England. We support writing and reading in the North of England. We commission new work, create development opportunities, nurture talent and make connections.

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Based in York, Sonderbug Productions makes bespoke audio content for a wide range of platforms and clients. It is committed to bringing greater regional diversity to the UK audio landscape and to making audio that's relevant and engaged.

## Episode Guides

### **EPISODE 1 (released 9 September)**

#### **Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi: Structure**

How to structure a novel is explored by Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi with her book *The First Woman*. She tells Yvonne the decisions she made in creating a foundation for her story and structuring the Ugandan historical background, set across many decades.

### **EPISODE 2 (released 17 September)**

#### **Pat Barker: Developing Character**

Pat Barker CBE is in conversation with Yvonne to explore how she developed the characters in her novel *The Silence of the Girls*. Complex characters help to engage readers, drive the narrative, and provide moments of empathy for a reader. Barker explains what decisions she made in creating her protagonist Briseis.

### **EPISODE 3 (released 23 September)**

#### **Sarah Moss: Setting**

Sarah Moss joins Yvonne to talk about setting within her novel *Summerwater*. The setting of a novel plays an important role not just in driving the narrative but also in developing the characters. Moss explains how the setting of *Summerwater* in a Scottish highland holiday park helped to form the basis for the novel.

### **EPISODE 4 (released 30 September)**

#### **Irenosen Okojie: Description**

*Nudibranch* is the latest short story collection from Irenosen Okojie and she joins Yvonne to examine her use of description in this work. Irenosen explains how she used description within the different stories and styles in the book to explore character and develop the spaces for the narrative to play out.

### **EPISODE 5 (released 7 October)**

#### **Alex Wheatle: Tension**

Alex Wheatle MBE joins Yvonne to discuss the device of tension in his book *Cane Warriors*. Tension can drive a story, develop character and help to grip the reader's attention - something that Wheatle drew on in telling the story of enslaved boy Noa in the novel. Wheatle explains the decisions he made to guide readers through the narrative and maintain the feeling of suspense and shock.

### **EPISODE 6 (released 14 October)**

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## **David Nicholls: Dialogue**

David Nicholls joins Yvonne to delve into how he used the device of dialogue throughout his novel *Sweet Sorrow*. Nicholls reveals his thought processes on deciding what he wanted his characters to say, what he didn't want them to say and how that can influence character and setting.

## **EPISODE 7 (released 21 October)**

### **Carmen Marcus: Rhythm and Language**

Carmen Marcus joins Yvonne to explore how she used the technique of rhythm and language in her novel *How Saints Die*. The story is seen through the eyes of ten year old Ellie and Marcus - both a novelist and a poet - explains how the use of particular words, sounds and silences helps to create a relationship between the reader and character.

## **EPISODE 8 (released 28 October)**

### **Paul Mendez: Point of View**

Paul Mendez joins Yvonne Battle Felton in conversation to examine his semi-autobiographical novel *Rainbow Milk* and the significance of the point of view of the main characters with this work. Point of view includes who the narrator is and how (and when) the story will be told. Mendez explains the decisions he felt he had to make when developing the main characters of Norman and Jesse.