



BETTER READ TOURS

CREATIVE WRITING

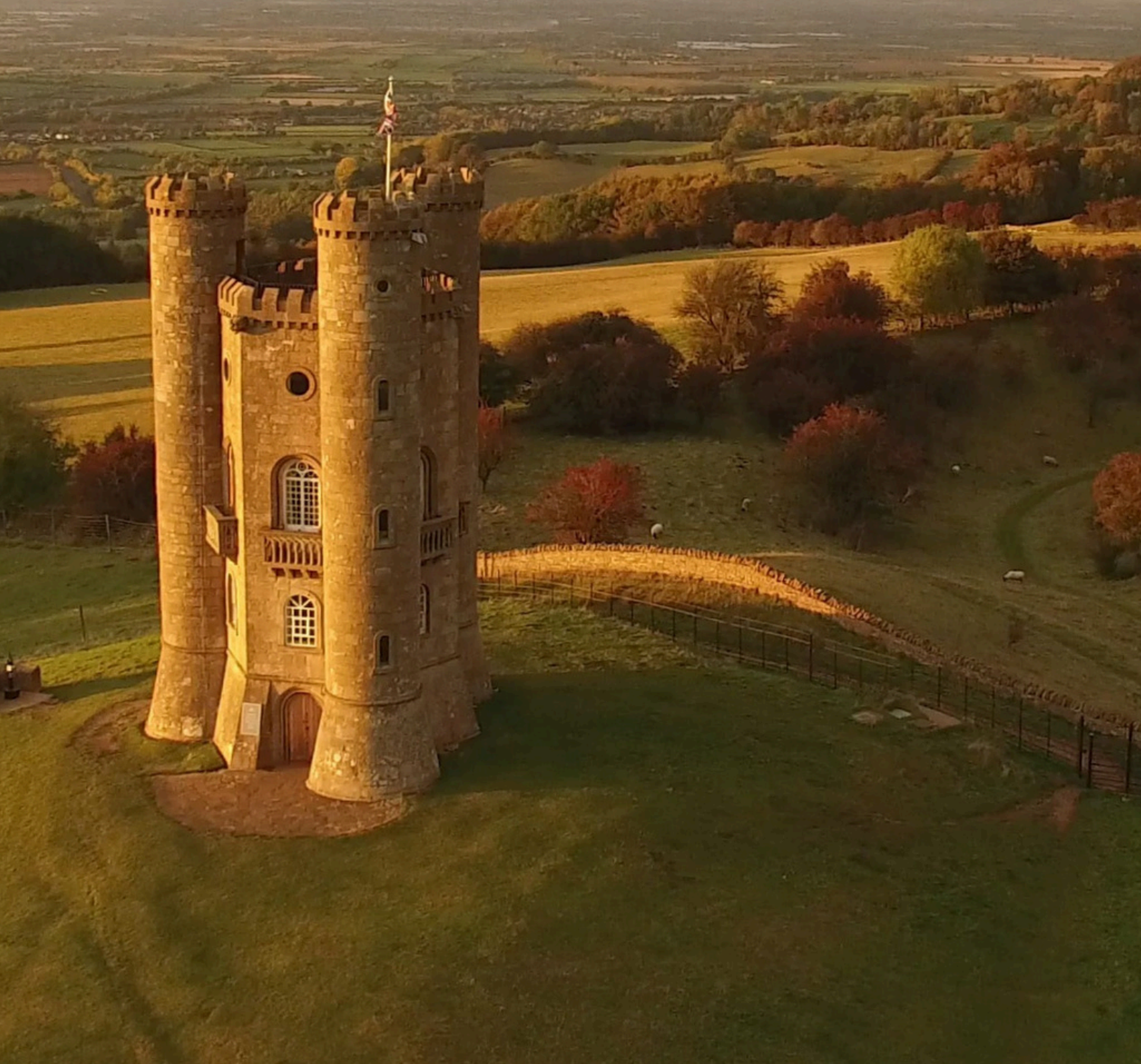
with

KATE FORSYTH

Literary Writing Retreat

Stratford-upon-Avon & the Cotswolds, England

25 Sept - 3 Oct 2026





“All I had to do was show up with an empty notebook and an open, willing heart... Kate’s transformative workshops filled me with inspiration, courage, and a sense of wonder.”

Holly Ringland

Internationally bestselling author of *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* & *The Seven Skins of Esther Wilding*.



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ABOUT Join internationally bestselling author and poet Kate Forsyth for a week in beautiful Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare, at a writing retreat designed to regenerate your creativity and help you build a sustainable writing practice. This retreat is for writers at any stage of their careers – from those who have always wanted to write but never found the time, to those already immersed in a creative project and want to find new inspiration to take it to the next level. Spend your mornings talking, listening, laughing and playing with words in writing workshops with Kate, and your afternoons exploring the best of the Cotswolds – glorious rolling countryside and villages that have inspired some of the world’s most beloved authors. Learn the craft of writing from one of Australia’s most acclaimed creative writers in one of the world’s most historic – and most magical – literary settings.



Discover Oxford, 'the city of dreaming spires', and learn all about where C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien first shared their enchanted worlds. Walk in Shakespeare's footsteps throughout Stratford-upon-Avon, sojourn in the historic inn where the Great Bard drank mead, and read the curse he cast on anyone who would dare to disturb his grave. Visit Stow-on-the-Wold (where the wind blows cold!) an ancient market town at the crossroads of several major roads dating back to Roman times. Wander through some of England's most enchanting gardens, and be inspired by romantic castles, mysterious stone circles, thatched cottages and haunted manor halls. On several afternoon tours, you will discover the most fascinating historical and literary sites that the region has to offer and on one evening you'll see a play at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, one of the world's most esteemed production houses. On the remaining afternoons and evenings you are free to write in your room or at a local bar or café, or join in an informal writing circle with the other participants. Or you may explore the many charming shops, museums, literary sites, manors and castles in the area. Let your imagination decide!



Dr Kate Forsyth is an award-winning author, poet, and storyteller. She wrote her first novel at the age of seven and has since become an internationally best-selling novelist and creative non-fiction writer.

Named 'one of the finest writers of this generation', Kate has written more than 50 books, for all age groups and across many genres, and has published in 20 countries. Kate's first published books, *The Witches of Eileanan*, were inspired by a dream she had when she was only sixteen. Ten years later she began to turn the dream into a story, which ended up as a series of nine books, still loved and quoted across the world today.

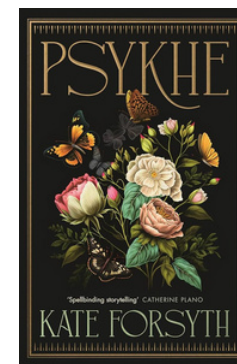
Kate's most recent book, *Psyche*, is a retelling of the ancient myth of Psyche as a life-affirming celebration of feminine desire, strength and disobedience. Other novels for adults include *The Crimson Thread*, set in Crete during the Nazi invasion; *Bitter Greens*, which won the 2015 American Library Award for Best Historical Fiction; and *The Wild Girl* which was named the Most Memorable Love Story of 2013.

Kate was awarded the Nancy Keesing Fellowship by the State Library of NSW to research and write a bibliomemoir inspired by her ancestor, Charlotte Waring Atkinson, the author of the first book for children published in Australia. *Searching for Charlotte: The Fascinating Story of Australia's First Children's Author* was written with her sister Belinda Murrell and longlisted for the 2021 Indie Book Awards. Other recent collaborative projects include *Alchemy*, a book of art and poetry created with the Archibald Prize winning artist Wendy Sharpe. Children's books include *Kate Forsyth's Long-Lost Fairy Tales*, *The Impossible Quest*, *The Puzzle Ring*, and Aurealis-award winning *The Gypsy Crown*.

Kate has a BA in literature, a MA in creative writing, and a Doctorate of Creative Arts in fairy tale studies. She is also an accredited master storyteller with the Australian Guild of Storytellers. Kate has taught writing retreats in Australia, Fiji, Greece, and the Cotswolds.

Connect with Kate:

WEB: kateforsyth.com.au
 INSTAGRAM: [@Kate_Forsyth_](https://www.instagram.com/Kate_Forsyth_)
 TWITTER: [@KateForsyth](https://twitter.com/KateForsyth)
 FACEBOOK: [@kateforsythauthor](https://www.facebook.com/kateforsythauthor)



Psyche, 2024
Kate Forsyth.



WRITING COURSE

All genres of fiction have their own conventions and characteristics, which can sometimes seem like unbreakable rules. By drawing together different elements of different genres, however, the writer can create ground-breaking novels of great freshness and originality.

For seven days, Kate will share with you all the secrets she has learned about writing stories which fire the imagination, touch the heart, and keep readers turning pages long into the night.

Whether you are working on a medieval supernatural thriller, a time travel romance, a children's fantasy adventure, a contemporary novel that draws on ancient myths, or a historical novel about the lives of forgotten women... you will discover your muse in this week-long inspirational retreat.

For seven days, from 9am to 12 noon, you will write, read, listen, learn and discuss all aspects of creative writing, from first discovering your story to finding a publisher.



WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- The key conventions of the world's most popular literary genres (including contemporary and historical fiction, dual timelines, crime and mystery, romance, horror, fantasy and magic realism).
- What rules to keep and what rules can be broken.
- Storytelling patterns and structures.
- What kind of research you need to do to bring your story to life.
- The importance of voice, and how to find it.
- Building characters that are vivid and vital.
- Creating a strong sense of time and place.
- Suspense and the art of surprise.
- How to connect to your creative flow, and consistently find the time and space to write the story you've always dreamed of bringing to life.



STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Stratford-upon-Avon: The birthplace of William Shakespeare, steeped in centuries of culture and history.

With more than 800 years of history, Stratford-upon-Avon is a quintessential medieval Cotswolds town with thatched cottages and quaint shopfronts, honey-coloured stone buildings and verges frothing with wildflowers. Yet it also has all the shops, pubs, restaurants and modern conveniences you could hope for, without losing any of its period charm.

While we have already curated for you some of the best experiences Stratford-upon-Avon has to offer, on your afternoons off there is much for you to explore. Visit the butterfly farm, or walk along the river for writing inspiration, watching the swans glide by. Pick up an enchanted talisman at the local magic shop, or potter through the town's wonderful antique, book and curios stores. See a play performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company, or even drift over the Cotswolds in a hot air balloon!

The writing retreat is held in the historic White Swan Hotel, which dates all the way back to 1450 (making it one of the oldest buildings in town) and features many incredible artefacts from that era. Imagine yourself enjoying a drink in the hotel's centuries-old bar after a day of writing – a pleasure Shakespeare himself very likely enjoyed at the White Swan too!

The hotel is a short stroll away from almost all the town's most famous sights, such as the Great Bard's birthplace, Anne Hathaway's house, Holy Trinity Church where Shakespeare's body rests, the Royal Shakespeare Company theatre, and the picturesque River Avon. You'll also find a wide range of pubs, shops, cafés, museums and restaurants within walking distance from the hotel.





B-R-D

DAY 2

A

DAY 1

SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER
DISCOVERING YOUR
STORY 9:30AM-12PM

After breakfast, we meet in our **workshop space** at The White Swan. Students introduce themselves and talk about their writing. You'll learn about how to discover your story, from the first flash of inspiration through to planning your story's narrative structure. We will also examine the key conventions of the world's most popular literary genres and how we can combine them in new ways to enliven our own writing.

FREE AFTERNOON

In the evening, meet Kate in the hotel restaurant for our **Welcome Dinner**, with a special night of **folk storytelling** to follow.

FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER
WALKING TOUR OF OXFORD

Meet Kate and your tour manager at **Oxford Railway Station at midday**, for a **walking tour** with local guide. Follow in the footsteps of Lewis Carroll, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Philip Pullman and Colin Dexter's famous detective Inspector Morse as you tour the City of Dreaming Spires. Enjoy **afternoon tea at the Ashmolean Museum** before traveling together by bus to **Stratford-upon-Avon**.

Settle into your accommodation at the **White Swan Hotel**, an atmospheric 15th century inn on Rother St, in Stratford-upon-Avon. Rest and recover, enjoy a drink in the hotel bar, or head out to explore the birthplace of the Bard.

MEAL KEYS:

Breakfast **B**
Lunch **L**
Afternoon Tea **A**
Refreshments **R**
Dinner **D**



B-R

DAY 4

B-R-L

DAY 3

SUNDAY 27 SEPTEMBER
DISCOVERING YOUR VOICE
9:30AM-12PM

In class we discuss the writer's voice and how literary techniques such as point of view, language, and sentence structure create the voice of the story. We also explore how to create characters that are vivid and vital, with their own individual voices as well.

TOUR: SECRETS OF THE
COTSWOLDS

Explore the dreamy villages of the Cotswolds, built in the famous golden stone that glows in the sun. We board the bus at 12:30pm with our packed lunch and head to the **Rollright Stones**, an ancient site of three Neolithic and Bronze Age

megalithic monuments near the village of Long Compton, on the borders of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. Next we'll stop in **Stow-on-the-Wold** (where the wind blows cold!) and then drive through some of the prettiest villages in the Cotswolds to learn about their illustrious literary residents, and head home via **Broadway Tower** and **Broadway Village** which has an interesting artistic heritage that includes many well-known artists, writers and performers.

FREE EVENING

MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER
THE IMPORTANCE OF
RESEARCH: 9:30AM-12PM

The more deeply you immerse yourself in the time and place of your novel, the more vividly you can bring it to life. But how do you go about it? We will be reading examples from authors who have used historical detail to bring their work alive.

FREE AFTERNOON

Stay in and catch up on your writing, or find some writing inspiration at an atmosphere pub or café in town.

FREE EVENING



B-R

DAY 6

**WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER
NARRATIVE BUILDING BLOCKS
9:30AM-12PM**

This workshop examines key narrative building blocks: openings and endings, scene structure and development, plots and sub-plots, conflict and resolution. We also cover literary devices such as unreliable narrators, foreshadowing, flashbacks, red herrings and cliffhangers, with reference to the books on the recommended reading list.

FREE AFTERNOON

B-R-L

DAY 5

**TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER
STORYTELLING
9:30AM-12PM**

What makes a good story? Why is storytelling so important in human society? What can we learn from the structures and archetypes of myths and fairy tales to make our own writing more powerful and meaningful?

**TOUR: WALKING TOUR OF
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON**

We'll walk first to the **Holy Trinity Church and Shakespeare's grave** and then we'll visit **Anne Hathaway's Cottage**, a quaint thatched farmhouse surrounded by stunning gardens.

Kate will share stories (and some legends!) about the history of Stratford-upon-Avon as we walk (please note, this is a 30min trip on foot each way from our hotel, so please inform us in advance if you will have mobility issues).

On the way back, we'll have an early **dinner** at the famous '**Dirty Duck**' pub, frequented by actors performing at the theatres as well as theatre critics.

FREE EVENING
A NIGHT AT THE THEATRE!

Meet in the hotel lobby to walk to the **Royal Shakespeare Company theatre**, where we'll see an evening performance which begins at **7:15pm sharp**. A quintessential Stratford-upon-Avon experience.

*Please note that our night at the theatre may be moved to another night, pending performance times and availability.



B-R-D

DAY 8

**FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER
THE WRITER'S LIFE
9:30AM-12PM**

Writing a novel is only part of a writer's life. Writers must also learn to rewrite and edit, to proofread, to work with editors and publishers and publicists, to promote, to teach, and to manage social media and marketing. At the same time, writers must try to find a balance between work, art and life. Writing can become an all-consuming obsession, ruinous to one's health and relationships. If managed well, however, it can become a source of enormous creative fulfilment and a lucrative career choice. How can you avoid the first and achieve the second? This session will also leave plenty of time for all your questions!

B-R

DAY 7

**THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER
DANGEROUS WRITING
9:30AM-12PM**

Good writing is dangerous writing. It is not afraid to surprise and shock, to unsettle and make uneasy, to seduce and subvert.

Yet many people find it hard to write scenes of sex and violence, or to kill off favourite characters, or to touch on matters that might upset or repulse. How far can you go in your own writing? Are there any topics that remain taboo? Should you be worried about what your friends and family may think? Is it forgivable to draw upon true life stories, whether your own or other people's? We discuss the dangers and pleasures of dangerous writing.

FREE AFTERNOON + EVENING
FREE AFTERNOON

Time to squeeze in those final 'must-do' activities in town!

In the evening we attend our **Farewell Dinner** at a magical, mystery location. Meet Kate in the lobby at 5:30pm to catch a taxi to dinner. Prepare to be spellbound!

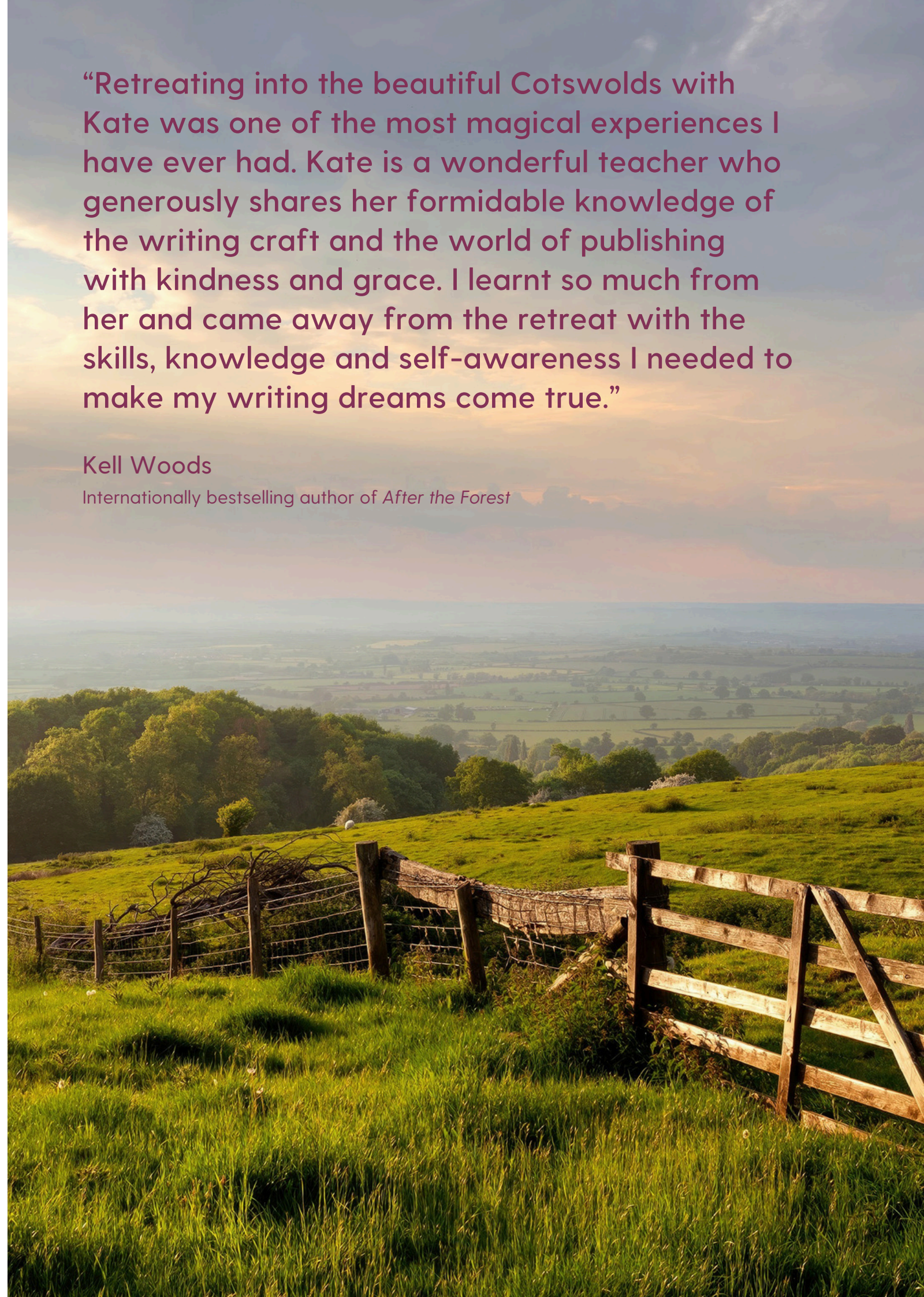
**B DAY 9****SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER
FAREWELL TO CREATIVE
WRITING IN THE
COTSWOLDS**

Enjoy your final breakfast and **check out** of the White Swan hotel in time for group **coach pickup, at 9:30am, to Oxford station**. As we say farewell to our writing retreat we leave with newfound friendships, inspiration and rekindled drive to pursue your writing dream.

“Retreating into the beautiful Cotswolds with Kate was one of the most magical experiences I have ever had. Kate is a wonderful teacher who generously shares her formidable knowledge of the writing craft and the world of publishing with kindness and grace. I learnt so much from her and came away from the retreat with the skills, knowledge and self-awareness I needed to make my writing dreams come true.”

Kell Woods

Internationally bestselling author of *After the Forest*



INCLUDED IN COST

- Seven writing workshops with award-winning author, Dr Kate Forsyth.
- Dedicated Tour Coordinator.
- Three literary afternoon tours based on local history, culture, literature and folk lore.
- Premium seat ticket to a performance at the Royal Shakespeare Company theatre.*
- All entrance fees on tours and experiences listed in itinerary
- Curated reading list by Kate and selected text excerpts to be discussed in workshops.
- Single occupancy 4-star accommodation at the historic White Swan Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon (8 nights).
- All meals listed in the itinerary including daily breakfast and exclusive dining experiences on our Welcome Dinner and Farewell Dinner.
- All transfers listed in the itinerary, including final transfer from Stratford-upon-Avon to Oxford Station.

*Subject to amendment, pending availability.

NOT INCLUDED IN COST

- Airfares to and from England.
- Any transfers not mentioned in the itinerary.
- Travel insurance (this is compulsory).
- Meals, services, drinks or gratuities not mentioned in the itinerary.
- Incidentals or expenditures of a personal nature.
- Medical expenses or medicines.

PRICING

Price is in \$AUD. To book, please email tours@betterread.com.au or submit an enquiry form on our website for more information. Please read the booking conditions on page 16 and note the following pay dates. Please note: twin share option is only available to those travelling together who are both doing the workshop.

	SINGLE ACCOM.	TWIN SHARE
FULL PRICE	\$9,650	\$8,480
Deposit to secure booking (30%)	\$2,895	\$2,544
Second Installment due by 30 April 2026 (40%) Final	\$3,860	\$3,392
Final payment due by 30 June 2026 (30%)	\$2,895	\$2,544

Full payment needs to be completed before 30 June 2026.

BETTER READ THAN DEAD, located in the heart of Newtown’s lively King Street, is one of Sydney’s most iconic independent bookshops – and Lonely Planet’s favourite bookshop in Sydney. We have been an active member of Sydney’s literary community for over two decades, renowned for our enthusiastic support of authors and our diverse literary events.

Better Read Tours launched in 2017 to combine Better Read Than Dead’s wealth of literary knowledge with the expertise of a trusted educational tour company. We provide our clients with a programme of thoughtfully curated, fully escorted tours and writing retreats to the world’s most fascinating literary destinations.

Our tour guides and writing mentors have been carefully chosen to provide insight into their selected destinations and give guidance on their craft. There is no one better suited to help you navigate these foreign shores and understand the historical, cultural and political events that have shaped the world’s greatest and most influential writers.

Our writing retreats merge our unique, local-infused itineraries with the opportunity to work closely with an experienced Australian writing mentor. Whether you’re seeking focus for your creativity, inspiration in stunning new environs, advice on

how to hone your writing practice or turn your focus on to a particular project, these immersive workshops offer the perfect retreat from the day-to-day. We are always working hard to create new and compelling travel opportunities. Be the first to learn of new tours by following us on social media and subscribing to our newsletter.



If you would like to secure your place, please complete the **booking enquiry form available through our website.**

Or

Complete the booking form on **page 19** and email to **tours@betterread.com.au** or post to Better Read Tours, c/o Better Read Bookshop, 265 King Street, Newtown NSW 2042.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SEND IN A BOOKING ENQUIRY FORM?

A representative of Better Read Tours will contact you via phone and email to discuss booking options. You will be offered a place and a tax invoice will be issued. To secure your place, a 30% deposit is required within 7 days of receiving your booking form. We will receipt your payment and issue a tax invoice showing your payment and any balance due. This deposit is non-refundable. However, in the unlikely event we do not get required numbers for the tour to go ahead, Better Read Tours will refund your deposit.

CANCELLATION

Your 30% deposit is non-refundable. If you cancel more than 90 days prior to the start of the tour, you will be eligible for a refund of 70% of the tour cost, depending on your payments already made. All requests for booking cancellations and refunds must be made in writing.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is compulsory for all participants taking this tour. We recommend you organise your travel insurance at the time of booking.

For more information:
 INSTAGRAM: **@betterreadtours**
 FACEBOOK: **@betterreadtours**
 TWITTER: **@betterreadtours**
 EMAIL: **tours@betterread.com.au**
 WEBSITE: **betterreadtours.com**
 TELEPHONE: **+61 475 761 717**

Please read the following terms and conditions carefully as they form part of all bookings except to the extent approved by variation in writing approved by a director of Better Read Tours Pty Ltd ABN 16 621 237 885 (BRT).

Prices: All prices are subject to availability and can be withdrawn or amended at any time without notice. Price and inclusions valid on tour dates only.

Amendment/Cancellation Fees: We reserve the right to charge you for any amendment or cancellation made by you (regardless of the reason). These charges can be up to 100% of the cost of the booking, regardless of whether travel has commenced. BRT reserves the right to charge cancellation fees over and above those charged by wholesalers, tour operators, airlines, cruise companies, etc. Fees may also apply where a booking is changed or tickets are reissued.

Deposit & Final Payment: To secure your reservation you will be required to pay a deposit of 30% of the total tour price, within 7 days of receiving your booking form. Your deposit forms the first part of three payment installations which must be received by us before documents are issued. The second instalment is required by 30th April 2026, and the final payment is required 30th June 2026. Subject to the Australian Consumer Law, the deposit is non-refundable.

Travel Documents: Travel documents are subject to certain conditions and/ or restrictions including restrictions on refunds, changes of dates and subject to cancellation and/or amendment fees. All travel documents are non transferable. All airline tickets must be issued in the identical name of the passport holder, as airlines are at liberty to deny carriage if the name varies and the booking may be cancelled. Any resulting fees will be at the traveller's own expense.

Passports & Visas: It is your responsibility to ensure that you have valid passports, visas and re-entry permits which meet the requirements of immigration and other government authorities. Any fines, penalties, payments or expenditures incurred as a result of such documents not meeting the requirements of those authorities will be your sole responsibility.

All travellers must have a valid passport for international travel and many countries require at least 6 months validity from the date of entry. It is your responsibility to obtain up-to-date information regarding visa and other travel document requirements for your trip relating to your personal circumstances. We recommend seeking advice from an external visa advisory service if you are unsure of what is required. We are unable to obtain visas on your behalf. We do not warrant the accuracy of information or assistance provided by us. Subject to the Australian Consumer Law, we accept no liability for any loss or damage, which you may suffer in reliance on information or assistance provided by us.

Health: It is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of any health requirements for your travel destinations, including those specific to Covid-19. Whilst we have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of our participants, we cannot enforce Covid-19 testing, mask-wearing or isolation. Should you come down with symptoms of Covid-19, please advise the Tour Leader and arrange a solution at the Tour Leader's discretion. All advice on Covid-19 is subject to the laws of the country you are in. You must carry all necessary vaccination and other medical documentation, and comply with any applicable health law, order or requirement reasonably necessary to protect the health or safety of any of our suppliers, fellow travellers or your-self. Better Read Tours expects that you have achieved a good level of fitness prior to departure that enables you to comfortably walk up stairs and to walk reasonable distances with vigour.

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is strongly recommended by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for all overseas travel and is compulsory to participate in a Better Read Tours tour. Please note that travel insurance may not cover all potential losses.

Fees & Charges: Credit card charges may apply.

Taxes: Certain taxes are mandatory in various countries. There may also be an additional local tax charged at some airports. All taxes are subject to change without notice.



It is recommended that you visit the website of the Department of Foreign Affairs for all up to date information. www.smarttraveller.org.au

Termination and Variation: We reserve the right to vary or cancel the itinerary where reasonably required as a consequence of matters outside of our control (including for public health, availability, civil unrest or other safety or economic reasons). In that event, we will provide a suitable similar experience or, if that is not possible, offer a credit or refund (at our election to the extent permitted by law). We also reserve the right to terminate your future participation in the itinerary where we have reasonable grounds for believing that your continuation provides a danger to our suppliers or other travellers. In this case (and subject to any law) we will only refund any amount that we can recover from suppliers for untaken parts of the tour.

Agency: BRT is a tour company and the travel supplier. We work to bring to you a unique travel experience. Better Read Tours will assist you in all possible areas should there be dissatisfaction with any service provided.

Liability: Subject to the Australian Consumer Law, we do not accept any liability of whatever nature for the acts, omissions or default, whether negligent or otherwise, of third-party providers over whom we have no direct control. Under circumstances where liability cannot be excluded, such liability is limited to the value of the purchased travel arrangements to the extent permissible. To the extent permitted by law, we do not accept any liability in contract, tort or otherwise for any injury, damage, loss (including consequential loss), delay, additional expenses or inconvenience caused directly or indirectly by any event or matter which is beyond our control or which is not preventable by reasonable diligence on our part.

Privacy Policy: Better Read Tours is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of personal information.

Bookings: Better Read Tours reserves the right to refuse any booking at our sole discretion. No reason needs to be given for such refusal.



BETTER READ TOURS

BOOKING ENQUIRY FORM

Thanks for booking with us. Better Read Tours will record your booking request and contact you via email or phone to confirm. A tax invoice will be sent via email with payment options and the amount due. Your booking is not confirmed until we acknowledge that a deposit has been received. If you have additional accommodation requirements, we are happy to advise you on who to enquire with but we do not make bookings outside of the dates for the selected travel experience. All bookings are subject to our terms and conditions. When filling in this form, please ensure spelling is correct and your name is written as it is on your passport. Type directly on to the form or print out, scan and complete. Please send the completed booking request via email to tours@betterread.com.au or post to Better Read Tours, c/o Better Read Bookshop, 265 King St Newtown NSW 2042. One form is to be completed per person. We look forward to assisting you.

DATE OF ENQUIRY:		REQUESTED EXPERIENCE	
TITLE	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	
ADDRESS			
S T A T E	POST CODE	COUNTRY	
BEST CONTACT NUMBER		SECONDARY NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS			
DOB	WOULD YOU LIKE TO KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH OUR NEWSLETTERS? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
COMMENTS			

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BETTERREADTOURS.COM, TOURS@BETTERREAD.COM.AU



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