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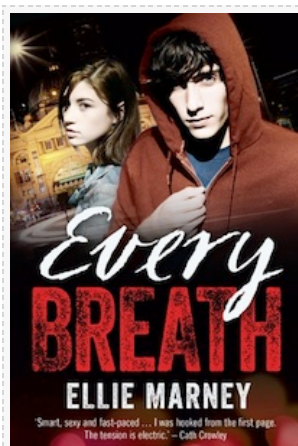


Book review: 'Every Breath' updates 'Sherlock Holmes' in a modern day adventure

By Marama Whyte (@maramawhyte) at 5:00 pm, August 22, 2013 | Reviewed by Karen Rought



Ellie Marney's *Every Breath* offers a new twist on *Sherlock Holmes*, this time transporting the tale to modern day Australia in this witty self-aware adventure.



What if Sherlock Holmes was the boy new door?

Except James Mycroft isn't Sherlock, not really. Sure, he's a bored teenage genius with an interest in forensics, and he has found his own Watson in his new neighbour Rachel Watts.

But Mycroft can be irresponsible and reckless, and no matter how well Watts knows him, she never really knows what is going on in his head. But she trusts him, and maybe she would like to be a little more than his partner-in-crime...

When they find the body of a friend of theirs, Mycroft's obsession with solving the case leaves them stumbling dangerously close to the truth. After all, they are only teenagers, and the police don't like them interfering. Not to mention there's a killer on the loose.

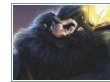
Maybe they are closer to Sherlock and Watson than they would like to believe. And could this be the last adventure Mycroft and Watts take together?

Review: 'Every Breath'

Every Breath by Ellie Marney offers a refreshing adaptation of a story that has, in the spirit of the story, been done to death. There is no shortage of storytellers dragging Holmes and Watson into the modern day, so what makes Marney's version so appealing?

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The joy is in the self-awareness of the writing. Mycroft and Watts exist in this universe, a universe where Conan Doyle has written Sherlock Holmes. They are completely aware of the parallels in their names and their friendship – they even joke about moving to Baker Street.

Unlike other modern *Sherlock Holmes* adaptations, Marney doesn't twist herself into knots to find modern parallels for every different character and plot point in Conan Doyle's stories. By using *Sherlock Holmes* as inspiration, rather than instruction, Marney demonstrates just how an adaptation should be done.

Of course, *Every Breath* isn't hyper-realistic – it would be disappointing if it was. This is a *Sherlock Holmes* story, after all. Just how realistic was Conan Doyle's writing?

This adventure isn't about the kinds of activities normal Australian teenagers get up to. What it is about is a fantastically complicated friendship between two characters who at first glance seem to be Sherlock and Watson cutouts, but who upon further exploration solidify into something much more interesting.

We already know the story of Sherlock and Watson. But *Every Breath* makes us want to know about Mycroft and Watts – not because of their inspiration and namesakes, but because they are funny, intelligent, often wrong, and really rather sexy.

You want to know Mycroft and Watts, but more importantly, you want to know *about* them. The characters are the shining star of this novel, and Marney gives us some gorgeous supporting characters in addition to the leads.

The plot itself isn't earth shattering, but is well executed in its writing. Marney's skill is in character creation, and in her description of place. If you haven't visited Melbourne, you will still get sucked into her skilful construction of the environment. But when you are familiar with the streets she is describing, it feels just like home.

Every Breath runs on adrenaline. Emotionally and narratively, it rarely slows for breath – and while you are reading it, you won't either. Ellie Marney is currently at work on the sequel, and we can't wait.

***Every Breath* by Ellie Marney was released 21 August, 2013, in Australia. The book can be purchased through different retailers via [Allen and Unwin](#).**



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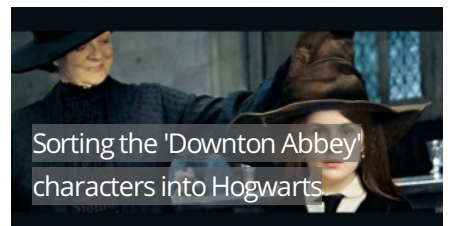
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