

## Q&A At Reddit, 9 Jun 2015

I'm Deborah Harkness, and from 1pm-3pm ET I'll be answering your questions on writing, history, and all things All Souls! I'm the author of A Discovery of Witches, Shadow of Night, and The Book of Life, out now in paperback from Penguin. I'm also a professor of the history of science at the University of Southern California. There are all kinds of spoilers on here, so reader beware!

You can also follow me on Twitter at @DebHarkness and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/AuthorDeborahHarkness](http://www.facebook.com/AuthorDeborahHarkness). For complete information on the trilogy, my calendar, and more visit my website at [deborahharkness.com](http://deborahharkness.com).

162 commentsshare

all 162 comments  
sorted by: q&a (suggested)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 37 minutes ago

thanks everybody for a great AMA and for all your thoughtful questions! See you soon...

[permalink](#)

[–]jickymicky\_design 4 points 3 hours ago

I love your strong well-developed female characters.

Who are your influences?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 4 points 2 hours ago

what a great question. My influences are my female students, as well as all the women I've learned about in my study of the past. My students are so brilliant: talented, generous, strong, smart. Often, though, they are afraid of their own power and try to be invisible. We all do that. Owning your own power is a scary thing. When I see them grow and change over the course of their education, it is absolutely inspiring. That's what I tried to capture in my books.

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[–]rph36 1 point 56 minutes ago

Is it okay to comment on this thread? (I hope so.) What a great question and fabulous answer! "Owning your own power is a scary thing." That's the best line I've read in awhile. You absolutely capture that in your books.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 39 minutes ago

That's really what the books are all about. We all have power. But most of us frightened to use it and own it. Find yours. It's there. And it won't look like anyone else's power. It's all--and only--for you!

[permalinkparent](#)

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[–]Xeust 4 points 2 hours ago\*

Hi Deb,

I recently got to meet you and hear you speak at Nicola's. Thank you so much for stopping by. I was too nervous to ask questions then, so now's my chance!

Was there any point in writing the trilogy where you looked back and thought of something you might have added or changed?

You mentioned how you liked to let the characters guide you when writing instead of you forcing them into certain paths. Which of the characters surprised you the most as you wrote down their stories?

Do you know yet if you will be involved in writing the show that BBC is looking to make? I know you're probably not allowed to say much, but I thought I would ask.

I just wanted to say thanks so much for the tour you did. I'm sorry to hear about your father. I know it had its ups and downs, but from a reader who attended, I can assure you it was a blast and I found your talk and your answers to questions to be very interesting. It added a lot to my love for the books!

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

Hello there! Thanks for your kind words.

I wished no one had to die, but I couldn't figure out a way that felt realistic for that to be the case.

The character who surprised me most was probably Sophie in that I expected her to step up to the plate more but she didn't. Sometimes characters just don't want to do the things we want them to do!

As for the BBC you are right: I really can't talk about it in detail. But they are definitely involving me in the project and when I can talk more about exactly how I will.

Thanks for coming out to see me--and working up the courage to ask me questions!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DaedalusMinionMagician's Land[M] 1 point an hour ago

Your image link is broken. :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 40 minutes ago

???

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[–]KAWhittlesey 2 points 3 hours ago

It feels, over the series, like a lot of Philippe's story got left on the cutting room floor. It was implied in DOW that we would be hearing more about Philippe's connection to the goddess Diana - the phone call after Diana saves Matthew when Ysabeau says "The goddess has a sense of humor as well as justice." But that story was never told.

I also hoped to actually read the scene when Diana managed to keep Philippe company at the end of his life, instead of "Well, Diana, you must have managed it somehow!"

And we never really learn where and when Philippe, Ysabeau and Marthe are originally from, other than strong implication that they're all quite ancient.

Were there original plans to delve into their histories, and Philippe's in particular? Might that be explored at some point?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 3 points 2 hours ago

Nothing at all was left on the cutting room floor. There are a lot of characters in my books, and this was the story of Diana, Matthew, and Ashmole 782. So, just as in real life, you don't always get every person's complete back story when you meet them.

I'm glad you liked the characters enough to want more. But the stories of Philippe, Ysabeau, and Marthe would be a whole other thing. I know what they are-- somewhat--but we will have to wait and see if they get told and how they get told.

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[–]KimoEsq 4 points 3 hours ago

Hi there! I believe I read in a previous interview that you said Matthew and Diana's story is done at this point, but is there any possibility of other characters getting their own story? (nudge nudge) Gallowglass :D

Thank you so much for sharing your amazing talent with us! I love your characters so much, and the stories are real-life magic!

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

Sure! there's always a chance. Right now I think we're all taking a little break from each other. But I'm sure that they have lots more tales to tell.

And you are very welcome. It's been my pleasure.

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[–]AngelaHut 4 points 2 hours ago

Througout the trilogy, certain animals are specifically white - owl, stag, hart. Is there a significance?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

often, spirit guides are white. Today a white peacock woke me up and squawked at me until I put on my bathrobe and went outside. Then he spread his tail and quieted down. I'm not sure what the significance is but I am sure that peacock had something he wanted to tell me!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]michelejonesreese1 3 points 3 hours ago

Hi, Deb! Hope you made it out of O'Hare. My question is-will we ever know who is going to turn Phoebe into a vampire?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 4 points 2 hours ago

I did make it out of O'Hare and am writing to you from Albuquerque. Thanks for asking!

I know who will turn Phoebe into a vampire, which increases your chances of finding out! But I will have to wait until all the parties involved are ready to talk! :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]epicado 2 points 2 hours ago

Squeee... I can't wait! \_^ By the way, I have to say I loved the scene when Marcus meets Phoebe. I think those two could write their own story.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 3 points 2 hours ago

oh, absolutely. there is a good tale there for sure...

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[–]HRM\_Monster 2 points 3 hours ago

Hi, have you considered touring Australia or speaking as a guest lecturer in history at any of our universities?

I can't think of any more questions at this point as I am a bit starstruck! Thank you so much for your wonderful books. I am a history fiend and deeply appreciated the depth of research and subsequent detail found in your books. I have gotten several people hooked on this series and my my partner adores it. He is going through some

medical things and using my kindle to cheer himself up. Your books are topping the list for him and I love that he can get lost in them despite everything going on. Thank you from Australia.

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[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 3 points 2 hours ago

For book tour, the publisher pays for my trip so I go where I'm asked to go--and so far the Australian publishers haven't asked. As for giving guest lectures, again the host university has to pay and it's an expensive thing to bring someone from the US for a visit.

I would love to see Australia and meet readers there, so fingers crossed.

Wishing your partner good health. Thanks for sharing my books with him. X

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[–]CaslynSaintDenis 3 points 3 hours ago

Is there any news on the possible BBC making the All Souls Trilogy into a mini-series? (Please say yes.)

I work part-time in a large bookstore and I'm quite happy to say I've successfully recommended your books to many people who say things like, "Oh, I don't like magic and witches." My response (to paraphrase you) is, "What is magic if not desire made real?" Works every time!

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

Hello! Thanks for asking the first question today in the AMA.

The BBC optioned the trilogy in January so we are still in very early stages of development--which is code for long, productive discussions about how the series should look, what we want the feel of it to be, nailing down characters and plot so we can hire writers, etc. I've been quite involved in this process and am just thrilled with how seriously BBC is taking the material. We are still a long way from knowing things like casting or broadcast dates, however.

And thank you to recommending my books to your skeptical readers!

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[–]KimoEsq 3 points 3 hours ago

In some of the pictures you have shared of Oxford, The Bodleian/Duke Humphrey's, I can totally picture a tall, dark Vampire walking around! What inspired you to write this series? Was it something you saw during research, an image that came to you, or something completely different?

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[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

I was inspired by a wall of books in a Mexican airport that was full of what I now know are called "paranormal" books. I was amazed that people today would be so interested in such being that a whole wall could be devoted to them. My research subjects (who lived c. 1550) were fascinated by them, but we think we are very different, modern people. I just couldn't let go of wondering what these creatures would really be like if they were all around us in the modern world. So the books began with a question (just like Diana's magic!)

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[–]AngelaHut 3 points 3 hours ago\*

Two questions - one from Shadow of Night and one from The Book of Life

Has Philippe ever told you from which Plantagenet (or during whose reign or even from what task) he received the chain that he gave to Diana in Shadow of Night? If yes, can you share some of that detail?

In The Book of Life, when the "Duchess" disappeared, Matthew said "His father had shrugged and muttered something about Napoleon and the English that had made no sense at all." Can you give us a hint to what that refers? Inquiring minds want to know/figure out the backstory.

Thank you for creating Philippe. He is one of my all time favorite literary characters...even though I tend to think he is you and you are him. :)

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[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

Yes. No. Given you all the hints I am going to give you. And Philippe is my favorite character, too. :)

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[load more comments \(1 reply\)](#)

[\[-\]vancemaier 2 points 2 hours ago](#)

I started reading your trilogy after hearing you interviewed by NPR recently. I am about 2/3 done with Shadow of Night and cannot wait to read The Book of Life. I love that you write from a historical perspective and provide the reader with so many details about the story. I am curious, is there a historical figure that you have enjoyed bringing to life in your books?

Thank you so much for bringing all these wonderful creatures to life!

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[\[-\]DeborahHarkness\[S\] 2 points an hour ago](#)

I loved bringing both Elizabeth I and Marlowe to life--largely because I feel that they have become rather cartoon-like in modern popular culture. So I wanted to see if I could share my Marlowe, in all his brilliant sharpness, and Elizabeth with her peevish shrewdness. It was a blast.

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[\[-\]crdplayer 2 points an hour ago](#)

Hello Deb, Thank you again for sharing your talents and bringing the Bishops & de Clairmonts into our lives. As a reader & lover of the trilogy I know there was a mourning period for me knowing it was done. As Philippe said "where there is an ending, there is a new beginning". I am curious if you had this mourning that the readers had when you were done writing?

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[\[-\]DeborahHarkness\[S\] 2 points an hour ago](#)

oh my goodness yes. When I wrote the last line I sat at my computer in disbelief and then burst into tears. Happily, my mother chose just that moment to call me and we got to talk about it. I think, though, that my mourning is one of the reason that I didn't just dive right straight back into writing. I needed a little bit of time to regroup!



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[–]crdplayer 1 point 51 minutes ago

I so know the feeling, the paperback of TBOL came out just days prior to my birthday - so I will be taking a weekend soon to re-read the trilogy. To visit my favorite families. When you start writing again, please know that I will be one of a very large group waiting to buy your newest book! :-)

permalinkparent

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 42 minutes ago

thank you. I can't wait to see what comes next!

permalinkparent

[–]smileslnd 3 points 3 hours ago

What was your favorite part of ADoW, SoN or TBoL to write? Any particular scene that jumped out at you when you were writing and you thought...that was fun to write about? I loved reading about all of your characters and look forward to any new fiction you may write.

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[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 3 points 2 hours ago

/spoiler

oh, what a good question. I loved writing the bundling scene in ADOW. That was a lot of fun. The scene where Diana met Philippe was fun to write. And I could see the scene where Diana and Jack were reunited for years before I finally got it down on paper. That was the best of all.

permalinkparent

[–]smileslnd 2 points 2 hours ago

Outside of the Diana and Matthew interactions, my favorites were Diana's interactions with Philippe and Ysabeau. I am listening to the audiobooks now. The voices that Jennifer Ikeda created through her narration is quite brilliant.

permalinkparent

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

she does an amazing job. The minute I heard her audition tape I knew Jennifer Ikeda was the one!

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[–]smileslnd 1 point an hour ago

Currently listening to SoN and just a random side note...whenever they talk about Baldwin I keep picturing Mark Gatiss (from Sherlock). It makes me smile a bit. Just wanted to share that.

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[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

Duly noted! :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]smileslnd 1 point an hour ago

Ohhhhhh! (Clearly while listening I am coming up with questions I may not have thought of...) The whole heart vein piece in SoN. I love that. Is it scientific or something that you thought up?

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[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

I was in a hotel, writing, as I often have to do to finish a book and not drive my family bonkers. At about 2 in the morning I went down to the hotel library (I was lucky this hotel had such a thing!) and they had a copy of Grey's Anatomy. So I started looking at it closely to figure out where Matthew might bite Diana that was not the stereotypical neck bite. That led me to two options. And the vein on the breast seemed more romantic than, er, the veins in the groin. :)

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[–]smileslnd 1 point an hour ago

Hahaha, yes definitely the more romantic of the two options! A hotel with a library....now that is definitely interesting. Writing in a hotel sounds like a better idea than what I do: shutting myself off from the world to do NaNoWriMo. :) Thanks for answering my questions!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 57 minutes ago

well, it's really the same thing. Except I find it really disruptive to normal life to try to do it at home so I try to be kind to my family and go elsewhere so I'm not banging around making something to eat at 3 am.

[permalinkparent](#)

[continue this thread](#)

[–]LenKerkhof 3 points 3 hours ago

Hi Deb, I was wondering, was it because Philippe knew about Matthew's future tasks that he didn't make Matthew head of the family? Hugs from Len.

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

Hi, Len! Actually, he couldn't have made Matthew head of the family. That job goes to the eldest male. Vampires are traditional. They are working within a system of male inheritance. Technically, Gallowglass could have fought Baldwin for the position, as he is Hugh's child and Hugh was older than Baldwin. But I don't think Gallowglass was interested!

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[–]leann1234 2 points 3 hours ago

Why is chris not suprised to learn that diana is a witch and that there are other creatures in the world? (Witches vampires and deamons)

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 3 points 2 hours ago

Instinctively, I just felt that a scientist would be the most likely to believe such a thing was possible. I had people question me on this--but every scientist I talked to said that they would be thrilled to find this out and just very curious rather than surprised. Great question!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]jenneal562 1 point 2 hours ago

I have another...

Throughout the trilogy the term "prince" is used a few times. I was wondering if there is an underlying reason for it. For example, the Nine Worthies were sometimes referred to as "Princes".

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points an hour ago

nope! no reason whatsoever except it was a common title for elite, powerful men and occasionally women in the past.

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[–]testarossasmom 2 points 3 hours ago

Hi Deb! In Thomas More we have an example of a historical figure Philippe found annoying. Could you give us an example or two of historical figures who Philippe respected and enjoyed spending time with?

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[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

he liked Eleanor of Aquitaine. And before you start a new question, Ysabeau liked Eleanor, too. No hanky-panky there!

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[–]testarossasmom 1 point an hour ago

I love that he has a long standing respect for strong and clever women - not to mention that he can have them as platonic friends :-)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

I think he finds smart, powerful women a challenge. Also he finds other powerful men rather predictable. The women are more surprising!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]thebookavore 2 points 3 hours ago

The All Souls Trilogy is my favorite! Any chance of getting any more information on other characters? I am fascinated by Gallowglass, Phillippe, Ysabeau, Marthe...heck, the entire de Clermont clan!

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

As I told another reader, there is always a chance! The so-called "minor" characters are some of my favorites, too.

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[–]AngeCW 2 points 2 hours ago

Hi Deb!

If you could be a witch, daemon or vampire for just one day, which would you choose, and how would you spend the all important day?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points an hour ago

oh. my. I would like to be a daemon and in one day learn to play the cello. that would be amazing.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]AngeCW 1 point an hour ago

Awesome! I was thinking daemon too-I would take advantage of that creative burst of energy! :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

I immediately felt bad that I picked something so selfish rather than using my magic to end poverty or find a cure for disease but then I realized magic doesn't really work that way...

We humans have to sort out those problems ourselves!

permalinkparent

[–]AngeCW 1 point 45 minutes ago

Indeed, but I know what you mean, I feel bad for immediately thinking of myself first! Still, take care of yourself so you can also take care of others, that's what they say, isn't it? Thanks for a great Q & A Deb! How's that cello coming?? ;o)

permalinkparent

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 38 minutes ago

will keep you posted on the cello front!

permalinkparent

[–]rr3374 2 points 2 hours ago

Hi Deb, So great seeing you here! Two questions: 1) So often readers share stories about things that they have learned from reading the series. I'm curious if you might share with us some of the things that writing the series (and/or interacting with all of your readers) has taught you. 2) In looking back, are there any characters (fictional or historical) or locations that have bubbled to the surface in daydreams, brainstorm, etc. that made you think, "hmm...now he/she/it would have been an interesting addition."

permalink

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

what a terrific question. I think I've learned a lot about writing itself--knowledge I can use to help my own students to write better. I have also had something confirmed for me that my undergraduate advisor said to me when I was going to grad school. He told me never to be an intellectual snob and to remember that there are smart people everywhere, in all walks of life, with all kinds of educational backgrounds. I have experienced this on a daily basis, but never more so than with this trilogy where I have such a diverse bunch of wonderful readers who are so generous in taking time to meet me and tell me their stories. It has truly been an honor and a privilege--as well as a reminder that we are all smart, powerful, and talented in our own ways.

As for the second question, of course--though you may well meet them one day...

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[–]SunflowerSutra 2 points 3 hours ago

Hello Deborah! I am a big fan of your All Souls trilogy, and I work at a bookstore. With the trend of "paranormal romance" I often describing your books to customers as the intelligent/literary girl's version of that archetype. Of course, it has so much more than just the romance, but I really feel that your writing fills a need in the market that, to my knowledge, hasn't really been addressed recently (there are only a couple others I know, such as Anne Rice). I try to read other books you may classify in the same genre, and I am often dissappointed by the way female characters are handled (always too harsh or too weak). My question is, are there any other authors or books you could recommend for me and my customers that give us all the fun and escapism of the paranormal romance, but also provide good writing and intellectualism?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

Hello there! Thanks for the kind words. I think one of the things to note first is that I wasn't trying to write "paranormal romance" or any other kind of genre. So my books don't follow the "rules." And I don't read "paranormal romance," so I'm not the best person to ask. My readers tell me that they like Magnus Flyte, and I loved V. E. Schwab's A DARKER SHADE OF MAGIC. Not sure the latter qualifies either but it was an amazing book.

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[–]Anna3046 2 points 2 hours ago

Hi Deb, Can you tell us a little about your own writing process i.e.: research, planning, writing? Did you know when you began the first book that the narrative would need to be told over the course of three books? The historical detail brought the narrative to life for me, how much research did you need to do before beginning? Absolutely love your books!

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

Hi, Anna. My writing process was strange because it stemmed from a question ("if there really were witches and vampires what would they do for a living") rather than a decision ("I'm going to write a vampire book") followed by research. I have done lots of research since 1982 when I first went off to college, so I have piles of things sitting around and banging around in my head to draw on. So no research at all was done in advance. If I found myself needing to know something (like how far a horse could travel on 16th-century roads in November) I used my historical training to get me started on finding an answer.

As for the structure, I always knew this was a story in three parts. In my inexperience, I believed it would fit in one book. It didn't!

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[–]jenneal562 2 points an hour ago

Deb,

When it comes to the relationship between a vampire and his/her maker are they all like a parent/child relationship? The reason I ask is that I am curious about the relationship between Marthe and Alaine (not sure if I spelled that right). If I remember correctly Marthe made Alaine a vampire for Philippe. Does Alaine look at Marthe as if she were his mother?

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[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

Not all, no. Some vampires make other vampires to be mates. But I think that causes a weird dynamic, and I don't think Philippe would approve so that's not how the de Clermonts handle the matter. In the de Clermonts, vampires not only have to be made--they have to be raised and socialized properly. It's one reason they are such a formidable family. So yes, Alain looks upon Marthe as a motherly figure. She taught him the ropes of how to be a vampire, which is not an easy transition to make and can be dangerous. He is loyal to her, like a son, and looks out for her. So these are not traditional parent-child human relationships, but they have elements of those traditional bonds. Does that make sense?

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]jenneal562 1 point an hour ago

Yes it does, thank you.

I always kind of wonder about Alaine because he was kind of part of the family in a sense before he was turned in that he was Philippe right hand man so to speak.

Would you say that his education as a vampire may have been easier then someone who was not as close to a vampire family as he was?

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago



I think he knew what he was getting into, but I don't think you could really be prepared for the changes in you--your sight would be different, your hearing, your taste. You would have urges to hunt and stalk prey. That would be difficult--and hard to anticipate or prepare for in advance. That's why you need a good parent!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]jenneal562 1 point 58 minutes ago

I totally agree. That being said, I can't wait to here about who will change Phoebe. :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 41 minutes ago

I can't wait to tell you! :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]enkeriw 3 points 2 hours ago

OMG! Deborah! Hiiii! Love your books so much! My question, what happened to the vampires Diana met in the 1500s? Francoise, Victoire, etc? Did they stop working for the De Clermonts? There's no mention of them in BoL.

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[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 1 hour ago

well Victoire is married to Alain. They are both in TBOL. We don't see Pierre or Francoise but that's a tale for another time...

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]MDgirlforlife 2 points 1 hour ago

Hi Deb - I enjoyed the series and look forward to seeing what BBC does with the characters/plotlines.

When writing about historical figures in a fictional setting, what rules do you adhere to? Do you appease the inner historian by being true to what's known about the person, as in the case of Marlowe?

I'm also curious to hear if you're a fan of shows such as "Sleepy Hollow" and "Grimm" for their fantastical, paranormal elements and re-imagining historical figures.

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

Great question! I always stick to what is known about the characters, and then try to fill in the blanks with fiction. Sometimes it's inconvenient or seems silly. After all, most of my readers don't know what the real Matthew Roydon was doing in April 1591. Because I do however, I can't deviate from the known facts without a lot of soul-searching and usually I decide against it.

I haven't watched much tv since 2008 as I've been too busy writing books so I have only seen one episode of SH and none at all from Grimm. Maybe one day...

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]morrowtc69 2 points 2 hours ago

Hi Deb, So happy that you have been able to continue your tour. I was blessed with meeting you in Amsterdam and Dallas and have finally thought of how to phrase my question!!

Other than science, alchemy, and history is there specific academics that you would like to explore that you haven't had the time or privileged to explore?

And with the exception to fiction and the All Soul's Trilogy are you planning to write more academic books?

Teresa

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

Hi, Teresa! I love art history, too. I was almost an art history major, but decided to focus on history instead. I always wish I had learned more languages, but I was terrible at them and got terrible grades so i stopped taking them for fear of ruining my GPA. Whenever I get a chance I pick up a set of foreign language CDs and stick them in the car!

I really am trying not to make any writing plans at the moment but instead let my creativity decide what to do next on its own (though that sounds a bit weird now that I write it...)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]testarossasmom 2 points an hour ago

Fernando is such a dashing fellow. Did Hugh "introduce" you or did he come to you on his own? I love that your couples represent all permutations. I think Hugh and Fernando may have the most romantic tale to tell . . .

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

They were always a package deal in my mind, in part because Hugh was the golden boy of the de Clermonts and his choice of life partner posed a challenge for Philippe. Philippe has absolutely nothing against homosexuality, let me be clear. I think he very likely had relations with men before he met Ysabeau. But I think Philippe was inclined because of his own beliefs to think that same sex relationships were destined to be fleeting because you needed to marry and settle down and have children. Even though vampires don't biologically need opposite sex partners, Philippe was a tad traditional in this respect.

As for the romance, yes. Hugh was deeply romantic. And Fernando was the object and inspiration for it. Lucky Fernando! :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[load more comments \(1 reply\)](#)

[–]rph36 2 points 2 hours ago

My question(s) are more about you than the books. (I hope that's okay.) I don't know that I would've thought a professor of the history of science would write about witches but after I read the books, it made sense. Your stories are so detailed and intricately woven with magic and science. (Diana Gabaldon is another "Don't judge a book by its cover" kind of woman) What sparked your interest in writing? Are you a "write as it comes to me" or a "must have it meticulously planned out first" person?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 2 hours ago

I write as it comes. I'm not a big planner--except when it comes to my own life. And usually those plans, well...

As for me being a historian of science my specialty is the history of the "occult sciences" as they are called in the Renaissance: magic, alchemy, astrology, cabala. So that might explain the witches a bit better.

permalinkparent

[–]rph36 1 point an hour ago

Man I would really love to take one of your classes! The Renaissance era is one of my favorites. I have a BA of Art and MA of English and both were greatly steered by the Renaissance. Didn't really get into/understand alchemy until I read DOW. Your ability to blend science and magic is brilliant!! Really hoping (fingers crossed) you have more for us down the road.

permalinkparent

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

me too! Fingers tightly crossed!!

permalinkparent

[–]jenneal562 1 point 3 hours ago

Hi Deb,

I have two questions that might give away any future book details so I'm not sure if you will answer them but here goes. :)

Was Philippe rescued or released? It says in TBOL that he was "found".

In TBOL, when the deClermonts are watching Benjamin's feed of Mathew being tortured, Ysabeau see's Philippe's number on the wall of Mathews cell. Did Benjamin put that number there as a clue so that the deClermonts would recognize it, in a effort to lure Diana in? Also, Knox jacket was in the room which I think was also a clue.

permalink

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 2 hours ago

/spoiler

found and rescued.

no, it was not a clue. it was a horrible tally of past victims. Knox's jacket was not a clue, it was a careless mistake on his part to leave it there.

permalinkparent

[–]jenneal562 1 point 2 hours ago

Was Philippe's number put there by the Nazi's? I thought when they turned him over to Benjamin he was not in a concentration camp.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

no. Benjamin put it there.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]jenneal562 1 point 1 hour ago

Is there a reason Benjamin put it there? Other than that he is a sick sadistic pig that is.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 1 hour ago

just keeping track...

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]jenneal562 1 point 45 minutes ago

So the Nazi's gave (tattoo'd it on) Philippe the number when they had him and Benjamin put it on the wall? Did he have more then one prisoner?

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 37 minutes ago

what do you think, based on the evidence?

[permalinkparent](#)

[load more comments \(1 reply\)](#)

[–]testarossasmom 1 point 55 minutes ago

Did he pick up the habit from.the Nazis? They were meticulous about record keeping.

[permalinkparent](#)

[\[-\]DeborahHarkness\[S\]](#) 1 point 40 minutes ago

maybe the Nazis picked it up from him...

[permalinkparent](#)

[\[-\]PAt789](#) 2 points 3 hours ago

Hi Deborah! When you finished writing the first novel of the series, what was your revision process like? Did you have a critique partner(s) or did you revise on your own before sending to your agent?

[permalink](#)

[\[-\]DeborahHarkness\[S\]](#) 1 point 2 hours ago

Great question about process. I had a few beta readers who were family and close friends that I trust. I have never been part of a formal critique process for my fictional work but my talented friends (3 historians, a lawyer, a librarian, my best friend, and my mom) all pitched in. They came from many different walks of life and interests, and I was so fortunate. My agent read along while I was writing after I 'fessed up and told him I was writing fiction. By then I was about 11 chapters in to ADOW.

[permalinkparent](#)

[\[-\]starlight\\_2901](#) 2 points 2 hours ago

How did you get the idea for this book to begin with? What was your inspiration for writing a book about witches, vampires and deamons? I would love to write a book and cannot quite get started, and I absolutely love this series, I have read it about 3 times now and will probably do so again several times. My sister even went to a signing for me to get a book autographed, you haven't yet made it to Las Vegas , ;) So I was just curious on what made you decide to write this particular kind of series?

[permalink](#)

[\[-\]DeborahHarkness\[S\]](#) 1 point an hour ago

I didn't really decide to write a "type" of book. I wrote about three characters. One happened to be a witch. One a vampire. The third was a book. After that the story told itself.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DanceWithMeMrP 2 points 3 hours ago

Hi Deborah! I love the way you describe the taste of different wines, and how particular Diana is about her tea! Do you love tea and toast and wine as much as your characters do?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 2 points 2 hours ago

I do!! Toast is my desert island food--the one thing I'm not sure I could live without. Every day starts with tea (though I love coffee in the late morning, which reminds me...). and the wine--I just love exploring new wines. I'm one of those people who hardly ever buys the same wine twice. Rather than sticking with a favorite I'm always looking for new ones to explore.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]meowasaurus\_rex 2 points an hour ago

Your series was amazing! Where did the idea come from to blend the elements of science and fantasy the way you did? It was so refreshing and interesting :)

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

I'm a historian of science so that's what I do for a living! :) Seriously, as a historian of alchemy and magic, I study the way that science and magic are related and how they differ so it was fun to blend them together for a change.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]meowasaurus\_rex 1 point 58 minutes ago

That's so neat! I think there is so much unexplored territory in mixing genres and styles. Do you have plans to write any more books, either in the same storyline or totally different?

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 41 minutes ago

I will definitely write more, but I don't really have a plan. I had no plan to write ADOW and look how that turned out! ;)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]juliacgulia 2 points 3 hours ago

Love, love, LOVE All Souls! Any progress on casting the BBC series? I'm anxious to see who will play Matthew and Diana!

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 2 hours ago

we are a long way away from casting--but I'm eager to see who they will pick, too. They won't cast it until it is green lit for production (i.e. they commit financial resources to the project)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]testarossasmom 2 points 2 hours ago\*

What qualities prompted Philippe to turn Baldwin? Was Baldwin friend or foe when Philippe made the decision? I'm so curious about how one "makes the cut" in Philippe's mind.

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 2 hours ago

he just liked the guy. Baldwin was a good soldier. They drank together. :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]testarossasmom 1 point 1 hour ago

I get the whole "like the guy" thing. I do too. ;-)

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 1 hour ago

I should add: Baldwin wasn't made into a vampire because he was in extremis or mortally wounded. He signed up. Full knowledge. In full health. Because he thought this would be a grand adventure--which it has been.



[permalinkparent](#)

[–]AngeCW 1 point an hour ago

Is this why Baldwin adores Phoebe? Because she has chosen the same path, and he sees something of himself in her?

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 59 minutes ago

hadn't thought about it that way, but I think it's part of it for sure! He also likes Phoebe because she is charming, kind, and (let's face it) good for his bottom line financially!

[permalinkparent](#)

[load more comments \(1 reply\)](#)

[–]testarossasmom 1 point an hour ago

Squeeeee. So much fodder for the imagination. Thank you!!!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

welcome. have to keep the Team Baldwin ladies happy. :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[load more comments \(2 replies\)](#)

[–]daisycalloway 2 points 2 hours ago

Hi Deborah, Do you plan on writing books for Matthew and Diana's children or Gallowglass? Or you're closing any doors?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

I'm not a bit planner when it comes to my fiction, so no plans. That said, I have no plans not to write about them either!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]rph36 2 points 2 hours ago

You write of vampires, witches, demons (oh my!) and more. Do you believe in anything unbelievable/unexplained?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

of course. I can't imagine what it would be like to go through life thinking everything had a rational explanation. How dull!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]Stellaj33 2 points 3 hours ago

Hi Deborah! Was wondering what your future plans for non-fiction writing is - ie. any new novels in the works?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

I haven't made a plan as such. I know I want to write more fiction but I'm afraid I don't know what it will be quite yet!

[permalinkparent](#)

[load more comments \(1 reply\)](#)

[–]rlr031004 1 point an hour ago

Hi Deb. Perhaps this is a bit of a silly question, but what does an average day look like for you? You teach, write, tour, travel, get stuck in airports, facebook, tweet, instagram - not to mention all that you must do for family, friends, students, readers, etc., etc., etc. Do you sleep??? I get exhausted just looking at your facebook events tab.

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 43 minutes ago

An average day for me is a full day. I get up early, I make breakfast, I write, I try to get to the barn to ride my horse (my #1 form of relaxation and therapy). I teach a few days a week, and have lots of reading and thinking to do for that. I do sleep--

about 6-7 hours a night! And I love to cook and garden so they are forms of relaxation. Lately I've started meditating and that helps a lot with stress. It's tiring sometimes, and there are good days and bad days, just like everybody has. But I wouldn't change anything--except, of course for the getting stuck in airports part!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]Graciemlj 2 points 59 minutes ago\*

Hi Deb, I love the way you interact with your fans. You truly seem to care and in turn we care about you. I'm sure it's very challenging to write, tour and just have a life. Everyone needs a little help now and then. What do you do for and how do you handle life's little setbacks? Is there more we as your fans can do?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 45 minutes ago

what a kind question! I do care about you--and I feel your concern all the time. The most important things for me are rest and fresh air. So being in hotels all the time is hard, but my wonderful publisher looks for places where the windows open. Today I am at a farm outside Albuquerque, for example! My friends and family are so supportive, which makes all the difference. I get plenty of exercise, which I think helps all of us cope better. As for what more you can do--you are already doing it. Thank you. X

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]leann1234 2 points an hour ago

I would love to know what happened to hancock? Or is he not ur tale to tell?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

not my tale to tell--yet!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]PhotoDiva 2 points 2 hours ago

Hello! I am huge fan the the Trilogy...I am currently re-reading it for the 4th time! I was curious to know if you thought of doing individual books of the other characters... I would love to know more about Ysabeau and Marthe.

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

I would love to know more about them too! Let's keep our fingers crossed that one day they want to sit down and tell me their stories.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]EclaDragonOryx and Crake 1 point 50 minutes ago

Hi.

I started reading the trilogy back when A Discovery of Witches came into paperback and earlier this year I finished The Book of Life. I loved all of them.

I want to get into writing. Are there any tips that you can give me to get started?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 37 minutes ago

Every book ever written was written one word at a time. Write down one word. Then another. Then, you're started! :)

[permalinkparent](#)

[load more comments \(1 reply\)](#)

[–]slmaier 2 points 2 hours ago

Have you considered releasing short stories to explain some of the characters backgrounds in a little more depth (Phillippe especially!)

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point an hour ago

no, not really. I don't really write short stories. :) Also, Philippe had a very long life. I don't think it would lend itself to a quick retelling.

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]jenneal562 1 point 51 minutes ago

When you write do you kind of enter the world you are writing about in your mind? Like a kind of third party observer. That is what happens to me when I read.

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 47 minutes ago

that is absolutely how I write. It's as if I'm watching a movie in my head.

[permalinkparent](#)

[load more comments \(1 reply\)](#)

[–]currypotnoodle 1 point 50 minutes ago

Thank you for writing such fun characters. I loved the series and wish there were more!

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 47 minutes ago

thank you!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]jenneal562 1 point 57 minutes ago

One more. Have you ever thought of writing the AST from Mathews perspective?

[permalink](#)

[–]DeborahHarkness[S] 1 point 47 minutes ago

nope!

[permalinkparent](#)

[–]voodoochick05 1 point 36 minutes ago

I think the all souls trilogy might be one of my most favorite series. It combines my two favorite things! Magic and History. That being said, which book was your favorite to write? Did any of the characters prove difficult for you to write? Do you have plans for another series? (not necessarily those characters)

[permalink](#)

[–]Xeust 1 point 32 minutes ago

What's the last book you read that just absolutely captivated you?

I'd imagine it's interesting being a professor and an author of books that are so beloved. Do you get a lot of students that are fans and ask you about the books?

permalink

[–]carly\_san [score hidden] 12 minutes ago

Good afternoon! I had the pleasure of meeting you the other day in New Orleans. My daughter Rowan was able to ask you a question. I think I was so excited for her that my mind went blank and didn't think of mine until on the way home. I know the vampires and witches seem to be everyone's favorite, including mine, but the daemons hold a special place in my heart. I'm a photorealism artist and I usually work in a manic state when I draw lol My question is how much of yourself identifies with the daemon personality?

Link to Q&A:

[http://www.reddit.com/r/books/comments/396671/im\\_deborah\\_harkness\\_author\\_of\\_the\\_1\\_bestselling/](http://www.reddit.com/r/books/comments/396671/im_deborah_harkness_author_of_the_1_bestselling/)