

Debbie Howells Q & A



What is your book about?

The Bones of You is a psychological thriller, about the murder of a teenaged girl and the events that follow in the small village where she lived. As well as a crime to be solved, it's about family and relationships, secrets and lies, and looks at what makes people the way they are, all set against the scenic backdrop of English countryside.

Have you always wanted to write psychological thrillers?

The first books I wrote were women's commercial fiction. I self-published my first two under a pen name, then wrote my third, *Wildflowers*. At one point, I had six agents who were interested in *Wildflowers*, but not enough to take me on. So close to the dream – but not close enough... As all writers know, rejection is a harsh reality of trying to get published, and I took that interest as a positive. I self-published *Wildflowers*, but at that point I decided that if I wanted a chance of being traditionally published, I had to write something different. That turned out to be *The Bones of You*. I had no idea what would follow.

Where do you write?

In a small upstairs room, with a view that changes year round, of trees, fields, sky. To a soundtrack of the wind, cows, birdsong – and sometimes music. Often I'm joined by our

golden retriever, Bernard, who sleeps at my feet or by one of our cats, who are a little more demanding, loudly announcing their arrival then positioning themselves for maximum effect between me and my keyboard... Or across the manuscript I'm editing...



Any advice for aspiring writers?

Read. Then just write. Start getting the words down – editing can follow – and keep writing.

Sometimes the words flow, but when they don't, still write - something.

Rejection can be tough. That manuscript you've slaved over, that your friends and family love... When you submit to agents and get that brief email, or even no email at all, and you know that this time round, no-one wants it, keep writing.

Keep notebooks – in your bag, car, beside your bed, because those brilliant ideas that spring out of nowhere just as quickly disappear...

What inspired you to write *The Bones of You*?

An interest in the darker side of people. The many layers to them. What makes us the way we are. Then wanting to give the story beauty in some way, with an idyllic village setting and language... I'm also inspired by where I live, which is a beautiful corner of West Sussex, where I walk on the Downs every day.

