

Sample Questions for Felicity Green, author of THE WITCH CLUB: A SCOTTISH WITCHES MYSTERY

What inspired you to write THE WITCH CLUB?

Ten years ago, my husband and I spent our honeymoon in Scotland. We were hiking the long-distance trail West Highland Way. After a strenuous day, we arrived at Rowardennan Youth Hostel, only to find out that there were no rooms available. The next accommodation was miles away. But there was a water taxi that took us to the opposite shore of Loch Lomond. There were lots of B&Bs in the small village of Tarbet. Wherever we knocked, nobody had any vacancies, however. By then it was dark and it had started raining. We were pretty miserable. Finally, someone directed us to Mrs. McDonald's place. The B&B wasn't in the guidebook. We were soon to find out why. It only had two guest rooms, and we were to share the bathroom with the landlady. It was all very old-fashioned. And when Mrs. McDonald opened the door, I got a fright. She looked like a witch, with tangled black hair, lipstick on her teeth, lots of wrinkles and warts. I had a really bad feeling when she showed us the room, like I didn't want to stay in that house. But, of course, we had no choice.

That night, the plot for a new novel just came to me. I asked myself: What if a newly wed couple stays in a creepy inn in a remote Highland village owned by a witchy old lady... and the next day the groom has disappeared?

Did you know right away that your story would turn out to be a paranormal cozy mystery?

Pretty much. I just had to look around. Tarbet is this picturesque Highland village full of Scottish characters. A perfect setting for a cozy mystery. And the landscape of the Highlands is just suffused with the supernatural. You can feel it; there is such a special atmosphere. At every corner awaits a local legend or fairy tale. I'm very interested in folklore, so I researched Highland lore and based all paranormal aspects on that. Plus, there was the witchy landlady.

Presumably Mrs. McDonald wasn't really a witch ... How much of the novel is based on true events, then?

No, Mrs. McDonald turned out a friendly and generous host. The next morning my husband was still there! Mrs. MacDonald made us a lovely breakfast and recommended a fantastic restaurant, an old church. It features heavily in my series. She also told us that traditionally, newlyweds from Edinburgh come to Loch Lomond to put their marriage under a good star. That was a nice little story for my novel, because my protagonist, Dessie, experiences the exact opposite. Luckily it seemed to have worked out for my husband and I. We are still happily married ten years later.

So that ominous feeling you had, that was just all in your head? Nothing spooky happened in Tarbet?

Well ... there is something rather eery, but I only found that out later. After writing the novel, I looked up Mrs. McDonald and the B&B. I wanted to find out if it still existed. And I came across an article in The Herald. It was from the late 1990s and about a murder trial. I was shocked to read that Mrs. McDonald was the accused. Apparently, she had stabbed her husband to death in the very house I'd stayed in. It was self-defence, though. He had physically abused her. According to the article, Mrs. McDonald pled guilty to the reduced charge of culpable homicide. So yes, it depends on what you believe in, I guess. Obviously, the paranormal aspects of THE WITCH CLUB fall under the realm of fiction. But who knows, maybe something dark had clung to the walls of that house, something that inspired me to think of a murder mystery...

Is THE WITCH CLUB your first novel?

No, I have written over thirty novels in German and in English and make a full-time living with my writing. My children's book GHOSTLY was shortlisted for the The Times/ Chicken House Children's fiction competition. The German version of THE WITCH CLUB was published in 2016. I have since written another six books in the SCOTTISH WITCHES series, and many novellas and short stories. I have published other series, too. Some are YA urban fantasy, and I have another successful mystery series. But the SCOTTISH WITCHES were an instant hit, and the series is my most popular to date. It is a long-seller.

So why has it taken you so long to make it available in English?

It was my plan, from the beginning, to publish my books in English. But German readers wanted new books, so I just never found the time. I made an attempt to conquer the English market in 2016, but with the wrong book. Things were a little different back then and it was a bit overwhelming. It took me a while to try again.

Do you translate your own novels?

Yes, I am bilingual. I lived in England for a long time. I studied English Literature and Drama at University of Kent. I always wanted to be an actress and did a lot of fringe theatre. I toured the British Isles with theatre groups and fell in love with all those magical places I visited. I still love to go there on holiday and get inspired by landscape, people, and folklore.

My acting career ended when I got a bit fed up with auditioning. I started writing my own plays. I'd always loved reading, and I'd written short stories before. Writing sort of took over and I found my real calling. I did an MA in Creative Writing at University of Sussex ... and have been writing ever since.

So yes, it's important to me that I translate my own novels. I want them to be in my voice, too. I should mention that I have a great American editor, though. Cyndi Sanduski makes sure that my American readers aren't jarred by British spelling and turns of phrases. I couldn't do it without her.

Do you have plans to publish the other books in the SCOTTISH MYSTERY SERIES?

Yes, I already have book two, HERB WITCH FOR HIRE, and book 3, COOKING UP A WITCH, ready to publish. I aim to publish most of the series in 2024. As a paranormal cozy mystery fan, I know that readers of that genre love to binge read series and absolutely want to provide that experience for my new readers.

What is the best way for readers to connect with you?

The best thing would be to go to my website www.felicitygreenauthor.com and sign up for my newsletter. I get quite personal in my welcome sequence and talk about my travels and how they inspired my writing. Also, newsletter subscribers get the book NO REST FOR THE WICKED WITCH for free. That's a great way to sample my writing style and get to know my Scottish witches.

