

"4 Quick Q's: Book Talk With Enfys" Transcript
Deborah Blake - recorded April 26, 2023

Deborah Blake: Literally, this was the best podcast I have ever been on. It's so much fun. I believe all podcasters must be required to use dice.

Opening jingle: Take a playful look with Enfys Book as they roll for crit hits with pagan wordsmiths.

Enfys J. Book: Hello, and welcome to 4 Quick Q's: Book Talk with Enfys. I'm Enfys J. Book, and on this show, I ask Pagan authors four quick questions chosen by roll of the dice.

Today, I'm super excited to introduce our guest, Deborah Blake, who is the author of over a dozen books on modern witchcraft, including the Eclectic Witch's Book of Shadows, the Little Book of Cat Magic, and the Everyday Witch's Coven, as well as the acclaimed Everyday Witch Tarot and Oracle Decks.

She's also written three paranormal romance and urban fantasy series for Berkeley, and as well as a cozy mystery series about a rundown pet rescue.

Deborah lives in 130-year-old farmhouse in upstate New York with numerous cats and who supervise all her activities, both magical and mundane.

Deborah, it is such a pleasure to have you on the show. How are you doing today?

Deborah Blake: I'm great, thank you for having me.

Enfys: Oh, I'm ecstatic. We were talking before we began recording that we have many Venn diagram intersections in our lives, but have not as yet met. So this is particularly exciting interview for me to do.

So have you ever been interviewed by a dice before?

Deborah Blake: I have not. This is a new experience for me.

Enfys: Fantastic.

Deborah Blake: I can put it on my list.

Enfys J. Book: I love it.

So our tradition on the show is I ask the guests to name the die.

This is a, you can't see it on the podcast, but this is a lovely sort of clear magenta die.

What would you like to name it for the purposes of this interview?

Deborah Blake: Purple Myrtle.

Enfys J. Book: Purple Myrtle, love it.

All right, well, let's get going and see what Purple Myrtle has in store for us.

First question is, how would you describe your current spiritual path in a sentence?

Deborah Blake: Oh dear.

Enfys J. Book: Coming out swinging with the tough questions.

Deborah Blake: Yeah, thanks for making this one simple for me.

"A work in progress." That sums it up.

It's a really short sentence.

Enfys J. Book: Very short sentence.

Perfect, love it. No notes.

All right, Purple Myrtle, next question.

We're gonna ask, what drew you toward, I'm gonna say your most recent book, *The Everyday Witch's Coven*.

What made you want to write this for folks?

Deborah Blake: Oh, well, that's a much longer answer.

So the first book that I put out with Llewellyn was *Circle, Coven, and Grove*. I wrote it in 2005. It came out in 2007, and it was inspired by the first year of my practice as high priestess with my group, *Blue Moon Circle*.

I had been looking for a book that would tell me basically, as a newbie, you know, coven leader, you know, okay, here's a year's worth of, you know, full moons, new moons, sabbats. Here's some things to do. Here's some things not to do, that kind of stuff. And I couldn't find it, so I wrote it.

And I had been thinking about updating that book. And when I thought about, you know, everything that I had covered, I realized that in fact, I didn't want to update it. I wanted to completely redo it because it's, I mean, my group started in 2004. It is now 2023. Believe it or not, we are still together. I mean, it's changed. Things have come and gone. People have come and gone. But my practice as a individual witch has changed. My approach to witchcraft has changed. My approach to being a coven leader has changed. Really, I'm not so much the leader anymore as like the woman who writes the rituals because nobody else wants to and organizes things. But we're all equals. There is no high priestess. There's just a bunch of women who show up and do their thing.

So I thought, okay, I really need to do a book that addresses the changes in group practice that are now in our community, which are many.

Enfys J. Book: Yeah, and the book does a fantastic job of that. I was reading it this week. And one of the things I appreciate is as you talk, it's kind of got a "coven in a box" sort of feel to it. Like if you just want to start a coven and need some rituals, boom, this like sets you up right away. But it also gets into those nuances of like how to handle difficult situations and covens and stuff like that, which as clergy, as a coven leader myself, I really appreciate.

Deborah Blake: 20 years of experience, I know a lot more now than I did when I started out. Let's put it that way. I mean, I knew some things when I started because I'd been a member of another coven for five and a half, six years and been a guest at other people's covens. So I had seen some of the things that happened and how people dealt with them or didn't deal with them. But I've never seen a book that spelled all that stuff out. And said, hey, if you have personality conflicts, maybe consider this. And hey, let's communicate from pre-day one.

When you think about having a coven, maybe you should all discuss X, Y, Z, and Q. And so, yeah, it was, although in some ways it is a companion book to Circle, Coven, and Grove in that you can use them both together, it is very much a more modern version.

I mean, I have things for a group of two because one of my best friends has a group of two who has practiced together for years. Would you call that a coven? Not traditionally. For me, you've got somebody you practice with for a long time, that's a coven. It's just a teeny tiny coven.

Enfys J. Book: Absolutely. Yeah, and I really appreciate that there's a lot of different options in there. Like if your group is two people,

here's some stuff you can do. If it's three or more, here are some other things you can do. And yeah, it's just put together really beautifully.

Deborah Blake: So I'm excited about this book and I hope a lot of people will buy it and use it.

Enfys J. Book: I know I am going to use it.

So let's move on to question number three, Purple Myrtle. What you got for us?

We got number six.

Do you have a cheerleader in your life who keeps you motivated to write, to teach, et cetera?

Deborah Blake: Does my agent count?

Because she's like, where's the next book? Where's the next book?

And my editor, actually, my Llewellyn editor, Elysia, who is wonderful. We've been working together for so long. We are now actually friends, which doesn't always happen. Yeah, but we, in fact, I just got a birthday present from her. She sent me a whale for my new porch, which has an ocean theme. It's a planter. It's so cool. It's so neat. And a magnet that said something along the lines of, "fuck that shit, I have witchy things to do." I mean, this is my girl. I love her so much. But yeah, I mean, she keeps me motivated by saying, where's the next book?

As far as who motivates me in my personal life, honestly, the people who motivate me are my readers. I don't have one person. I mean, the women in my coven are very supportive, but they're sort of supportive of everything I do. And they like the books, but that's not their big thing. Every time somebody says to me, "what's the next book?" "What are you going to write next?"

"Oh, I wish you would do this." "Hey, could you do another Oracle deck, but something a little bit different?" Those are my cheerleaders, are my readers. And I just, I cannot even tell you how much I love and appreciate these people. I mean, I know you're supposed to say that as an author because they buy your books or whatever, but it's true. If my readers were not constantly saying, "we love your books, please give us more," I would probably be doing something else.

Enfys J. Book: Too true, too true.

It's always nice to get that kind of feedback, especially because writing is often such a solitary act that you put it out in the world, just kind of like, "I hope people like this." And then when they do, it's so good.

Deborah Blake: The coven book is really tricky because not everybody is into a coven book. I mean, there are a lot of solitaires and I've read a lot of books for them, it's okay. And I know with Circle, Coven and Grove, I had a whole lot of people when it first came out and since then who've told me, oh, I know that the rituals were written for covens, but I'm a solitary and I use them anyway, which is great. But doing a coven book was a little risky because you don't know if there are gonna be enough people who want it and I just hope they do. We'll find out.

Enfys J. Book: Absolutely, great.

Well, now we get to the most exciting question, which is the random encounter question.

Jingle: Random encounter question!

Enfys J. Book: So I'm going to pair Purple Myrtle with another kind of magenta die. I think it's from the same set, because they match. That will give us which of 80 possible questions. What are we going to ask for this very final one?

All right, a 1 and a 14.

What are you proud of today?

Deborah Blake: What am I proud of today?

Honestly, I said I got some writing done because I'm recovering from COVID and I have the post COVID fatigue, which they are not kidding about. And I don't wanna do anything. I do really just wanna sit on the couch and pet cats. So I mean, I'm basically, <coughs> excuse me, I apparently can't drink water. It's a thing. I have a drinking problem. Tell everyone.

Because I also have chronic physical issues, I have fibromyalgia and probably long COVID from having COVID back in the early days.

Every day that I get up and just do the things that I need to do, I'm proud of myself because it's not always easy and it's not always fun but people are waiting for the next book.

And so I have to get up and write it.

I'm also proud of myself for getting on the coolest podcast ever.

Enfys J. Book: I am so pleased to have you here. You have been on my shortlist for some time. So I'm so excited we were able to make our schedules work for this because this is absolutely delightful.

Deborah Blake: And I'm so glad you felt like to doing it today.

I like the dice rolling thing.

I wanna do this every week.

I wanna just answer random questions.

Awesome.

Enfys J. Book: Well, we'll see if we can get you back next season for sure. Maybe by then we'll have another book of yours available.

Speaking of which, this is your time to take the floor, tell folks whatever you would like to make folks aware of that you're excited about right now.

Whether it's the current book, new book, whatever you got going on.

Deborah Blake: Okay.

Well, obviously the Everyday Witch's Coven is out now. I hope that people go out, buy it, love it. If you can't buy it, tell your library to get it. I mean, it's okay with me if you don't spend money on my books as long as you read them. Chip in with three of your friends.

The next book out will be in September. That's another Llewellyn book. And that is Llewellyn's Little Book of Witchcraft. They have this great series of little hardcover books. I have a bunch of them. They're really cute. Like there's the Little Book of Moon Magic, stuff like that. And when I talked to my editor, surprisingly they had not had somebody write the Little Book of Witchcraft yet.

And I went, ooh, me, me, me, me, can I do it?

Or I'm gonna pretend it was more dignified than that. It really wasn't. It was really pretty much about that dignified.

And so that's gonna be out in September.

And I am currently working on the Little Book of Spellcraft, which is gonna be sometime next year, probably like the September after.

In between, because I've been a busy little bee, I think March of next year, I actually have a companion book for the Eclectic Witch's Book of Shadows, which was the last book that came out, which bless some people are loving that book. It was my first hardcover. So talk about things you're proud of! It's cool to have a hardcover.

And we specifically did it as a book of shadows so that there'd be all this information people could use and then blank pages and with places you could write the stuff you do. And everybody said, "oh no, it's beautiful. It's a hardcover. We can't write in it." And I was like, "no, no, we made it so you could write it." And they wouldn't do it.

And everybody said, "can't you just put out like some sort of workbook or something to go with it?" So we're doing that. That'll be, I think, March of next year. There will be a companion book that you can actually write in and which will have more information, more cool stuff.

So yeah, I think that's pretty much what I'm up to except for herding cats, trying to get the garden in, the usual stuff, trying to survive pollen season in upstate New York.

Enfys J. Book: The struggle is real down here in Maryland too.

Deborah Blake: Oh yeah, it's so real. Yeah, the trees are out there screwing and they just are getting up our noses. It's just lovely.

Enfys J. Book: Oh yeah.

On that happy note, where can people find more of your diatribes about allergies and such online?

Deborah Blake: Well, I am sort of everywhere. I mean, the best place to find links to everything is my website, which is deborahblakeauthor.com. I'm not very subtle. It's like everywhere, like Twitter, I'm Deborah Blake. Instagram, I'm Deborah Blake Author. Facebook, I'm Deborah Blake. That's Deborah spelled the long biblical way, D-E-B-O-R-A-H. Yeah, if you just do it the other way, it doesn't work. And I'm gonna try TikTok. I haven't really figured it out yet. I need to post a video. I'm a little afraid there'll be the laughing and the pointing and the things.

So, but yeah, for the moment, I'm pretty much, I also have an Etsy shop where I sell signed books and magical kits and the occasional piece of jewelry, because I've been a jewelry maker for years.

And I have a Patreon, but you can find the links to all the above at deborahblakeauthor.com.

Enfys J. Book: Fantastic, I'll be sure to include that in the show notes for folks so they can find your website.

Well, Deborah, this has been a delight. Thank you so much for being here.

And thanks to all your listeners out there for listening to my weird, nerdy, little dice-based interview show.

If you enjoyed this episode of 4 Quick Q's: Book Talk with Enfys, be sure to like, subscribe, and leave a review on your podcast app of choice.

You can check out more from me on majorarqueerna.com.

That's M-A-J-O-R-A-R-Q-U-E-E-R-N-A.com.

Whatever time it is where you are, have a fantastic day, and may the dice of fate roll well for you.

Jingle: Thanks for listening to 4 Quick Qs.

Enfys J. Book: This is Enfys J Book again.

Tune in next time where you'll hear author Deborah Lip say:

Deborah Lipp: I did read once, somebody said that "writing is easy: you just stare at the page until blood comes out of your forehead."