



**Joanne Black**, author of **Being Human: unofficial and unauthorised** discusses her new book on the cult BBC3 supernatural series and reveals whether she'd rather be a vampire, a werewolf, or a ghost...

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#### **Why did you want to write a book about Being Human?**

Honestly? Because I was lucky enough to be asked! I'm a big *Being Human* fan as well as a complete television addict and I really enjoy analysing programmes and sharing ideas and theories about them. There is so much to discuss and theorise about in *Being Human* and this is part of my ongoing campaign to force - sorry, persuade! - more people to watch it.

#### **Can you describe what a reader should expect?**

It is very much a fan's view of the show - there are reviews of all the episodes in the first two series, where the show came from, the supernatural mythology of the *Being Human* world, costume, locations and more. What I really hope is that my admiration and affection for the show comes across to the reader.

#### **How serious is the book?**

It certainly isn't an intense academic treatise. I wanted to try and mirror the feel of *Being Human* - that combination of humour and depth that Toby Whithouse does so much better than I could ever do! I hope it will make people laugh - I have a tendency to the sarcastic (putting it mildly) - and make people think. If someone sees something new in the show because of the book that's fantastic and if someone goes back to watch again simply because they disagree with me - well that's fine too.

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#### **Did you enjoy the writing process?**

Yes I did - I found it incredibly satisfying and once I got into a rhythm seeing the book come together was amazing. I love poking about in the minutia of a show and I do have a very good if slightly weird memory which was a great help.

**"The big problem for me is discipline - I never sit still for long, even at work, so the application of bum to chair was probably the hardest part"**

#### **Was it easy to write?**

Both easier and harder than I thought it would be. Once I got started it did come together well and flowed nicely but I had the inevitable crises of confidence and moments when I could find anything to do rather than sit down at the keyboard! The big problem for me is discipline - I never sit still for long, even at work, so application of bum to chair was the probably the hardest part. Of course, writing about something I enjoy so much helped enormously.

#### **Ghost, werewolf or vampire - which would you rather be?**

Being a ghost sounds terribly lonely - invisible, no one to talk to, an eternal existence that you can't even punctuate with sleeping or eating, and the horror of wearing the same shoes for eternity! As for werewolves - I can't see any upside to that at all. If I had the choice then I'd be a vampire - at least you'd have company - and hopefully rather closer to Daisy than Nanna!





### What do you enjoy most about Being Human?

I think it's the mixture of the supernatural world with the very real world that we all recognise – all the issues that arise from sharing a house, getting on with people, dating/not dating and just generally getting on with stuff. Added onto that are these supernatural beings – vampires, werewolves and ghosts - who face all of those problems and more. It just feels very real – in fact I do now believe that vampires and werewolves actually work in the NHS and drink in my local! It's a great twist on the legends and mythology and so much more than just another flat share comedy. Of course it helps that the writing and characterisations are spot on, the music well chosen and the settings work perfectly!

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The dark humour is right up my street and there are a number of lines that just might have made it into my own repertoire of cutting remarks, so thanks for that! I'm just waiting for the chance to use Nina's perfect put down of George from episode two of series one. One day...

### Do you have a favourite character?

From the leads it has to be Mitchell – an incredibly complex, contradictory being, a mass murderer who we really care about. Of course he's rather easy on the eye as well which helps! Who else? Herrick – the best villain ever, Ivan and Clare Higgins's Josie. And two beautiful quick glimpses – the nurse in the very first episode: “what – 'im with the face?” and the policeman in Series 1 Episode 5: “We're going to need a different form.”

### And a favourite episode?

What – only one?! That is really hard to narrow down – I love Gilbert and the 80s soundtrack in Series 1 Ep 3, the rollercoaster ride of Series 1 Ep 5, the 60s flashbacks and mirroring of Josie and Lucy in Series 2 Ep 5 and the choices, good and bad, in Series 2 Ep 7. If it does have to be just one then... my current favourite episode is the first one of series three – I can't wait!

**“...it's only when you try and pick it apart that you realise just how many layers, themes and ideas there are”**

### Did writing the book make you see the series in a different way?

It left me in awe of the writing – it's only when you try and pick it apart that you realise just how many layers, themes and ideas there are. Watching it over and over to write the book did mean I focused in on the detail more and that certainly gave me a new appreciation of the design and the attention to detail in all the sets. The 60s scenes in series two were done beautifully and it was interesting to really watch how the house changed. It also gave me a chance to look more carefully at the guest characters and at how even people with just a line or two feel very real. The depth to Gilbert, Tully and Sykes for example is incredible for characters that only feature in a single episode. Very clever writing – and the acting isn't bad either! The most amazing thing after being totally immersed in Being Human for months on end is that I could still watch it all over again!

### Have you got any other books 'in' you?

I really hope so. I have lots of ideas for all kinds of things from other TV shows to children's books and plays so who knows what the next big project might be?

**BEING HUMAN: Unofficial and unauthorised** by Joanne Black is now published.

The book is available at a discount price of £12.99

A PDF previewing a section of the book is also available from the Classic TV Press website.

