

Happy October! September was an awesome month for All Souls Trilogy lovers! September is also the month notoriously known among fans of this series for the start of re-reads and read-alongs! It's a big part of why Autumn is such a magical time!

With the first annual [AllSoulsCon](#) behind us, we keep reflecting on all of the wonderful people we've had the honor of meeting, and great things we got to experience over the years. We figured we'd take the time to say goodbye to this past *epic* September in an epic way! In our own whirlwind AST adventures, we are very fortunate that we get to see Deb from time to time. In the past (bless her!), she's let us get away with asking her a lot of off-the-wall questions on the fly. We figured it was time to compile some questions and do a *proper* interview for a change. To commemorate our (*you are part of the 'our'!*) personal journeys with this series, we did just that. Here's how it went. . .

Daemons: *In the Trilogy it's easy to see that many places inspire you. We've read that you've visited Speke Hall as a child, and that the Bishop House was the duplicate for one an ancestor built. What other destinations and/or locations from your youth (prior to entering the world of academia) inspire you?*

Deb: **Great question! I went to lots of battlefields and castles as a child—my father was a history buff and my mother is British—and I think both made it into the story. I suppose Marcus's death at the Battle of Brandywine was a result of tromping around so many battlefields on summer vacation.**

Daemons: *We love to hear how characters come out of the blue to talk to you (examples: Hamish and Gallowglass). We are curious about actual historical figures. Does studying the historical version of the person directly influence their voices and interactions in your stories? Did you have a distinct sense of Henry, Kit, George, Walter, the Emperor Rudolf or Gerbert's — to name a few — personalities prior to writing them, or do their voices just show up as you go?*

Deb: **I suppose it's a bit of both. I usually have some sense of a character based on the texts they read or wrote. This makes me react strongly to the "pop culturing" of historical characters. Most treatments of these individuals either make them cuddly or monsters. Most were neither. They were just doing the best they could in a challenging world. That said, I don't usually work out full character sketches in advance. The fine details of their characters emerge as I put them in specific situations. So Henry Percy's mother and her goose came about because I started wondering what kind of Christmas the Earl of Northumberland would have enjoyed growing up, which led me to research his mother, who turned out to be quite a character!**

Daemons: *Rudolf II was a notorious collector known for his cabinet of curiosities. Do you have a collection of anything you can tell us about?*

Deb: **Books, of course—mostly academic, but I also have a staggering number of cookbooks for someone who doesn't run a restaurant. I collect cowboy boots. And I have way too many teapots, most of which I never use.**

Daemons: You are a very descriptive writer. Is there a descriptive passage from the trilogy that particularly resonates with you? What sense do you find most challenging to describe?

Deb: Thank you! I like the description of Sarah's stillroom from *The Book of Life*, in large part because I wrote that in a room overlooking a garden that felt very much like it could be Sarah's, with lavender hanging from the rafters and scarred counters. Whenever I read that passage I see the place where I wrote it. As for senses, I think taste is the hardest to describe. It's hard to make taste precise and evocative without making it sound ridiculous.

Daemons: To which time and place — excluding the 16th century and your area of expertise — would you like to time-walk?

Deb: I'm a huge Jane Austen fan so I would love to go to Regency Bath or London and go to the balls and sit in a drawing room writing letters. Perhaps I could even learn to play the piano!

Daemons: If Matthew were to accompany us while wine shopping, and was instructed to choose three wines (one for creatures on a budget, one for creatures who are looking for a good solid mid-range wine, and one for the creatures with a vampire's bank account — money is no object), which three wines would he recommend? What would he choose for his own cellar from the recent vintages (1980s forward — as that is recent for a vampire, after all)?

Deb: Wow. Tough question! Matthew is a red wine person, and on top of that he is a Syrah man. So he would steer you first to a Côte du Rhône, which are relatively inexpensive blends of red grapes from a region not too far from Sept-Tours. Mid-range, he would probably send you to a Châteauneuf-du-Pape or a good American Syrah or Australian Shiraz. In the upper range, we would be looking at Penfolds top-end Shiraz or Côte-Rôtie or Crozes-Hermitage. Being a vampire, Matthew probably put aside some 2012 Clos des Papes Châteauneuf-du-Pape, some 2012 Mollydooker Shiraz McLaren Vale Carnival of Love, and (though not generally a huge fan of Bordeaux) he does have a soft spot for Château Léoville-Las Cases so he might have bought some bottles of those recent vintages in case Baldwin drops by.

Daemons: What children's books do you imagine Diana and Matthew would stock in Rebecca and Philip's library?

Deb: *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare, Edward Eager's *Half Magic*, and *The Bobbsey Twins* by Laura Lee Hope. I imagine the *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling will be waiting on the shelves for them when they get a bit older.

Daemons: One last question! Which de Clermont would you date, and why?

Deb: I would never date a de Clermont. Too high maintenance!

A huge 'thank you' goes to [Deborah Harkness](#) for feeding all of our daemons, today! :)

Bring on October!

This Q/A was published 1 October, 2015 – it can be found online here:

<http://www.daemonsdomain.com/2015/10/the-daemons-ask-deb-deborah-harkness-q.html>