

THE DAEMON GUIDE TO 'A DISCOVERY OF WITCHES,' BOOK ONE OF OF THE ALL SOULS TRILOGY

1. The Characters

Before we get into it, there are some key concepts/institutions in this world to consider while reading the character biographies. We'll start with what the characters are.

Creatures: There are three *other* creatures, besides humans that populate this earth. We won't go into humans, because we all know what a "human" is.

Daemons - According to Diana: "...creative, artistic creatures who walk a tightrope between madness and genius. 'Rock stars and serial killers' was how my aunt described these strange, perplexing beings." —Keep in mind: Diana's Aunt Sarah is a witch. She's a bit biased! To explain further, daemons can be creative, brilliant, but often misunderstood. Think of someone who is high functioning, smart, creative, but occasionally, socially, they may seem quite... 'off'. They march to their own drummers. As it is explained later in ADOW, human families didn't understand what was happening with offspring who were born to them as daemons. Over history, the families of daemons tended to institutionalize the children who became violent due to lack of stimuli, became a danger to themselves and others, or simply couldn't conform to societal norms, for loss of better ways of handling and/or understanding them. Daemons in Greek mythology were described as angels, but somewhere along the line the universal understanding changed to be "evil", "sinister", "devil-like". The spelling over time also changed. You will recognize it when spelled "Demon" (pronounced the same). The word as it is today tends to direct your perception, depending on your belief system.

Witches - Witches in this series are depicted pretty much the same in lore as most. Witches are gifted with power. Some have more than others. Many of the rituals/ceremonies they discuss in the entire series are recognizable, especially if you are familiar with the following pagan/neopagan traditions; Wiccan (Dianic, Eclectic, Circle, etc.), Celtic, Norse, Essene, Gnosis, or Shamanism. You can go as far as paralleling some rituals to Voodoo, or the lesser known Obeah. This is a fantasy novel, so keep in mind that when we mention "powers," we mean power to fly, call the elements, read minds, predict the future, travel in time, move objects, etc. Witches in this series pack together, and are often are part of modern covens. The witches find safety in numbers because of historic religious persecution and the resulting witch hunts across Europe over the centuries. Eventually, the hunts famously plagued America in places like Salem, MA.

Vampires - We'll cite Diana's quote on this: "*Anyone who has read paperback bestsellers or even watched television knows that vampires are breathtaking, but nothing prepares you to actually see one. Their bone structures are so well honed that they seem chiseled by an expert sculptor. Then they move, or speak, and your mind can't begin to absorb what you're seeing. Every movement is graceful; every word is musical. And their eyes are arresting, which is precisely how they catch their prey. One long look, a few quiet words, a touch: once you're caught in a vampire's snare you don't stand a chance.*" It's a good summary, but as many of you know, each author assigns different abilities/limitations to vampires. In the AST universe, vampires do not have fangs, have a heartbeat (albeit a slow one), come out during the day, are long-lived, and don't age from the time they were changed. They can eat *some* solid food, and liquor and wine are favorites. Also, they tend to gravitate towards the field of science: "*If it went bang, involved blood, or promised to unlock the secrets of the universe, there was sure to be a vampire around.*"

A note on the creatures: The creatures consist of 10 percent of the population (1 in 10 people in this universe will be a creature). They are shown to be tribal (they stick to their own kind by tradition, and the covenant. More on the covenant, later.) We also witness cutting remarks

that creatures make when they describe the other types. It ironically parallels the real world (a real-world example would be when minorities fight for hierarchy amongst other minorities.) The self-imposed segregation is not steadfast—you can imagine that work/school situations will bring many of the different creatures together, as demonstrated by Matthew with Amira and Hamish (a witch and a daemon), or Diana with the different creatures she came in contact with throughout her academic career. There are underlying causes for the tribalism, and we imagine much of it is habit and eventual distrust of the other types because of the lack of communication and understanding—which in theory could exist if there was some creature mingling allowed! It turns out that Matthew's friendships with Hamish and Amira are actually anomalies in this world. The creatures became "the other" to one another, and it all stemmed from a rule set by the Congregation over a thousand years ago. The Congregation will be explained in the next section.

The Creature Institutions:

There are two of them that go with this underground world of creatures to keep on file (they'll feature throughout the series).

The Congregation - We'll cite Ysabeau's quote for a quick summary of what the Congregation is, and the reason it was established: *"A council of nine—three from each order of daemons, witches, and vampires. It was established during the Crusades to keep us from being exposed to the humans. We were careless and became too involved in their politics and other forms of insanity."* Too many creatures were using their power to influence politics and government for their own gain. Also, creature mixing was bringing human attention to them. As explained in ADOW, one of the main powers humans have is fear (another is the denial of the world of creatures). When they fear, they destroy. In the past, there were many more creatures in the creature/human ratio. We are assuming that human fear was a contributor to reducing those numbers to what they are now (the other contributing factor is what Matthew is studying in the lab. You'll learn more as you read.) To keep creatures safe from the humans, the Congregation was formed, and a covenant was drawn. The covenant states that creatures must abstain from interfering with human politics, religion, and that there will be no mixing of the different creatures, especially in terms of romantic relationships. When creatures break the covenant, it's the Congregation's responsibility to right the wrong.

The Knights of Lazarus - Think Knights of Templar (the Crusades!)....but slightly different. We won't go further, just keep this on the back burner, as you read.

Ok, now that that's out of the way, let's head on to the characters in ADOW themselves. All are listed in order of appearance in their category.

Main Characters:

Diana Bishop - ADOW is written mainly from her POV. She's a professor, a historian, a scholar. She loves this part of her life. She embraces her achievements and holds onto them like a security blanket. There is one part of herself she certainly doesn't boast about. She is a witch—a descendant of Bridget Bishop. She doesn't want to be. She wants to be "normal" so she tries to pass herself off as a human. In the beginning, it appears she doesn't want to use her powers, but is that really true? Later, it seems she has no real control of them. Her family—her Aunts Sarah & Emily—have been trying for years to get her to embrace the inner witch, but it'll take something strange to get her to start exploring that that aspect of her "personhood". Enter the manuscript, Ashmole 782. It'll also take someone special to make her face these obstacles when it comes to her magic in relation to Ashmole 782. Enter Matthew. Please note, in the beginning Diana does NOT do 'damsel in distress' very well, and she tends

to 'fight' off any sort of help. But she's got no choice. She has to reach out to someone. Looks like the "Elusive, reclusive Matthew Clairmont," is her best bet!

Matthew Clairmont - Where do we begin with Matthew Clairmont? He's French, but that's not immediately obvious to Diana; "...*he continued in an oddly accented voice. It was mostly Oxbridge but had a touch of softness that I couldn't place.*" He's a vampire. He's predatory, stalker-like in behavior, and very mysterious. Oh, we know...'Ha! Big surprise, there! He's a vampire!' Well, there's more to it than that. What makes Matthew tick? What motivates him? It takes a few chapters to start to truly get a glimpse of him and his "triggers". Matthew is a brilliant man, but it takes others who are smarter than him on matters of perspective, life and love to help him (and help US) get a grasp on his emotional state. Look for the enlightening to happen at around chapter 9. After he takes the leap by breaking the covenant to help Diana with her magic and Ashmole 782, the adventures begin, top-speed! We learn his origins, we meet his family (oh boy, do we!). He's no 'simple' vampire. In this book, we learn that in the past he was a carpenter, a mason, a warrior, a doctor, eventually winding up as a geneticist—this is when we meet him. After meeting Diana, his quiet, reclusive existence vanishes.

Character notes on these two: Diana is intelligent, independent and world savvy, but not when it comes to the world of creatures or being a witch. It proves hard for her to navigate her powers, especially when she knows witches much younger than her have already mastered their own. She's used to being in charge of herself, her situations, and her reactions to them, so you can imagine her sense of confusion and fear. All of a sudden the person she actually is isn't someone she really knows with powers she cannot control. It's an interesting journey to take with her. Matthew on the other hand, knows himself quite well, even though he doesn't see himself as others do. He finds himself thrust in a position of leadership on many occasions and it's a role he's very familiar and comfortable with, but we can see that it's not necessarily one he prefers. He's reactionary, moody, and when he cannot control a situation he loses control of himself. It's intriguing to watch how he handles things over the course of the series. Eventually, his patterns of behavior become evident. Diana figures out what makes him tick, and vice versa. The journey to familiarity with one another is fascinating, and a joy to watch! We like the way Deborah Harkness was realistic with their relationship throughout the series, even though it began in a whirlwind with this volume. This book covers a span of 40 days. Not a lot of time! As an aside, note the significance of the time span of forty days. Forty days and forty nights - Noah's Arc. Forty days are usually needed in alchemical operations. Moses spent forty days on the mount. Elijah was forty days fed by ravens. In Greek scientific tradition, it was believed to take forty days to ensoul a male fetus. According to the 16th century Jewish mystic, Rabbi Loew, Maharal of Prague, the number forty has the power to raise up something's spiritual state (spoiler! We'll meet Rabbi Loew in Book 2, Shadow of Night.) If you guessed the number forty was no accident, you'd be correct!

Secondary Characters:

Sarah Bishop - Witch. Diana's maternal aunt and primary guardian after her parents died. Sarah is a 'typical' witch in this series. She belongs to a coven, is considered a healer in her community, and successfully practices spell-work. She's also sharp-tongued, a bit sarcastic, but loves Diana in the only way she knows how.

Emily Mather - Witch. Sarah's life-partner, also a guardian figure to Diana. She runs the household, and not to assign gender roles, but she also happens to serve as the gentle, comforting voice in Diana's life. She has the powers of premonition. It is revealed she can fly, but only for short distances. Not in this book, but in book 3, we find out she is descended from Cotton Mather.

Peter Knox - Witch/Wizard. Poses as an 'occult consultant' to the human world. Later found to be a member of the congregation and a main antagonist.

Amira - Witch. One of Matthew's only witch friends. She leads the local creature-exclusive yoga classes, and has the power of empathy; meaning she feels others emotions and can alter them.

Hamish Osborne - Daemon. Matthew's best friend from his days at All Souls in Oxford. Hamish is extremely perceptive, especially when it comes to understanding Matthew. A whiz in finance—so good, that the British Parliament consults him on financial matters. Acts as a lawyer for the Knights of Lazarus.

Miriam Shephard - Vampire. Matthew's lab assistant at Oxford. Deep ties to the de Clermont family.

Agatha Wilson - Daemon. Agatha tells Diana a troubling tale about the book she seeks. It's Diana's first clue that the quest for Ashmole 782 is much bigger than her. It is later revealed that she is a member of the Congregation.

Marcus Whitmore - Vampire. Matthew's other lab assistant at Oxford. Like Miriam, he has deep ties to the de Clermont family. His are as deep as you can get!

Ysabeau de Clermont - Vampire. Matthew's vampire mother. His "maker", and maternal head of the de Clermont family. Widow of the former de Clermont head, Philippe. We'll go out on the spoiler limb and tell you that she initially gives the impression of the nightmare every potential bride has of their future mother-in-law. We are happy to report that the first impression is deceptive!

Marthe - Vampire. Ysabeau's housekeeper, and wise woman.

Domenico Michele - Vampire. An old friend of Matthew's; they used to hang out together in Venice. A new member of the Congregation. The dialogue makes it pretty evident that he falls squarely in the 'antagonist' box.

Satu Järvinen - Witch. Revealed to be a member of the Congregation. Strong powers! Can fly, move objects at a snap of her fingers, and uses her powers not necessarily for good, as revealed. Yes, definitely an antagonist.

Baldwin Montclair - Vampire. The current head of the de Clermont family. Matthew's brother and Ysabeau's stepson. He is described as being a man who adores war, women and wine. His current occupation has him tinkering with the financial markets in New York. He and Matthew don't quite get along (to say the least!). Matthew and Baldwin are absolute opposites in personality.

Gerbert of Aurillac - Vampire. The head of the other vampire family neighboring the de Clermont territory in France. He oversees the area of The Cantal. Appears to be an enemy of the de Clermont family, however it is indicated that he and Ysabeau were once thick as thieves. Member of the Congregation, and for our purposes, he is an antagonist.

Juliette Durand - Vampire. Works for Gerbert. It was revealed that she was rescued from a brothel and turned into a vampire to meet Gerbert's needs. She spies and kills for him. Antagonist.

Sophie Wilson - Daemon. Pregnant. Maybe in danger because of the 'state' of her unborn child.

Nathaniel Wilson - Daemon. Agatha's son, Sophie's husband and father of her child. Good with computers. Will take on a major responsibility late in the book.

Other players in this volume:

Sean - Human. Works at the call desk in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University.

Gillian Chamberlain - Witch and one of Diana's fellow professors. She has an MO that is not in line with Diana's. One to watch.

Fred - Human. The Porter at the New College housing unit where Diana stays for her duration at Oxford University. Fred doesn't have much dialogue, but there is an incident that hints that there are humans that are fully aware of the creature world.

Mr. Johnson - Human. The Bodleian Library's reading room supervisor.

Valerie - Human. Reading room attendant at the Bodleian. Works with Sean and Mr. Johnson.

Christopher Roberts - Human. A friend and colleague of Diana's at her home base, Yale University. He is a scientist, so she consults him to get a better read on Matthew.

Jordan - Human. Hamish's butler at his Scottish estate. Jordan is another example of a human who is aware of the existence of creatures.

'The Scary Sisters' - Vampires. Both appear in the Bodleian along with a myriad of other creatures once word had spread that Diana was the one who found "The Lost Book" (aka Ashmole 782).

Timothy - Daemon. - Described as a "the latte loving daemon." One to watch for the future.

Georges - Human. Stable hand at Sept-Tours (Matthew's familial home in France.)

Rebecca Bishop - Diana's mother. Witch, with great powers. Tales have been told to Diana about her powers, and Diana has witnessed a portion of it during her early childhood. She is a direct descendant of Bridget Bishop of Salem. She is dead, however she does have dialogue, so that's why we've included her.

Stephen Proctor - Diana's father. Witch/Wizard. Not much is said about him or his powers during this volume except that he had the ability to time-walk (travel in time)—we're given hints, but not the full extent. He is descendant of the Proctors of Salem. Stephen also has dialogue in this book, and is included for the same reason as Rebecca even though he is deceased.

Rob and Sam - Witches/Wizards. Two adolescent trick-or-treaters that show up at the Bishop doorstep on the evening of Halloween. This is at the end of the book, and they demonstrate to Diana exactly what she has missed (intentionally or not) by avoiding her gifts. They have no problems directing their powers, while Diana still has so much to learn about hers.

Characters in their own right:

Ashmole 782 - The book "sighs"...that should say something.

Tabitha - Sarah's head-strong cat. Takes a liking to Matthew.

The Bishop House - Emily and Sarah's home (also Diana's childhood home after her parents die) has quite the personality. It tends to act up around people it doesn't like. Raucous fun!

2. The Themes

As you read, you'll notice that themes are an integral part of the All Souls Trilogy. They are subtle in ADOW, but you can bet that the foundation for them is definitely being laid! While you are submerging yourself into the All Souls Trilogy universe, they are there — running in the background of the book like a computer program plugging away, performing critical tasks on your computer while you work. Motifs include self-acceptance, tolerance, empathy, and not least of all, love. On Deborah Harkness's website, she notes themes of "power and passion, family and caring, past deeds and their present consequences".

3. The Poetry

Poetry – including direct references, as well as allusions to it and various poets – is present throughout the All Souls Trilogy. Starting with ADOW, the story and text are laced with not only alchemical poetry and imagery but also with the likes of Giordano Bruno, George Ripley, William Blake, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, George Chapman and Shakespeare. It's just one more delicate layer added to an already rich story that will make for a immersive reading experience!

4. The Places

Oh the places you'll go in All Souls Trilogy! Despite it being a paranormal fantasy, the trilogy is rooted in real life locations and their histories. The first installment (ADOW), has three modern day settings which really bring our story to life - Oxford, England, the location of the oldest University of the English speaking world; the Auvergne, France, a small, historically rich region

in the center of France; and upstate New York, specifically, Madison. They're all homes of one sort or another to our main characters and we learn much about Matthew and Diana through the places that have a claim on their hearts.

Our Pinterest board: "Places in the All Souls Trilogy World" (link will be provided at the end) is full of lovely photos to help you envision the beautiful world Deborah Harkness has populated with the most intriguing witches, vampires and daemons in popular literature today.

The story opens in Oxford, specifically the gorgeous Selden end of the Bodleian Library. It makes sense since this story is about a witch and vampire and a very important book. It becomes very clear that academia as represented by Oxford is a refuge to Matthew and Diana — the place they feel most at home. But throw Ashmole 782 into the mix and home isn't such a comfortable place anymore. The idea of creatures hiding in plain sight — or maybe not — amidst the hustle and bustle of fall term will capture you from the beginning.

From Oxford we move to the Auvergne, specifically Sept-Tours, the castle that has been the home base of Matthew's family, in one iteration or another, for over a thousand years. Inspired by the real life Château Dauphin, the seven towers of Sept-Tours embodies all you would expect from a chic, well educated vampire family. The history of the Auvergne is the history of the deClermonts, but you'll find that out for yourself as the story unfolds. From Caesar's Gallic Wars to the French Resistance (and Vichy government of WWII) this small remote region of France, plays a huge part in making Matthew de Clermont the man he is.

The third setting is Madison New York, Diana's childhood home. A small, bucolic farming community — complete with its own coven — Madison is a town out of the guidebooks. Rural New York in the autumn is beautiful, whether you're in the first bloom of love or not. The Bishop homestead isn't a location as much as it is a character in its own right. Consider yourself warned!

We hope you will enjoy reading this book and series as much we did. Keep an open mind, and we have no doubt you will be as immersed as we are. Pinterest Places board: <https://www.pinterest.com/armitage4clairm/places-in-the-all-souls-trilogy-world/>

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