


Questions & Answers about:

DEIDRE DALTON



THE
BLOODLINE
TRILOGY

By Deidre Dalton

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ABOUT THE BLOODLINE TRILOGY

The *Bloodline Trilogy* by Deidre Dalton follows the uniquely magical yet ominous journey of three women through time.

Books in the trilogy include:

- **Book #1: Bloodfrost**
- **Book #2: Bloodlust**
- **Book #3: Blood & Soul**

The trilogy begins with *Bloodfrost*, where Noel Gatsby's dreams take her away from the misery of her pain-wracked, disease-riddled body. The dreams become real when she awakens one morning to find herself completely healed, with the power of mind-reading and a newly-acquired sense of sight. However, she soon learns her miraculous cure comes at a price.

Noel's daughter Kate Grady learns she has unusual powers in *Bloodlust*, where she is able to bend people to her will. At first she uses her gift wisely, but then goes astray after falling in love with the diabolical Kirk Lester, whom she follows down an ugly path of debauchery and evil.

Meet Emma Beckett in *Blood & Soul*, final book of the *Bloodline Trilogy*. Emma is adopted into a loving home as an infant, never knowing the true circumstances of her birth. As a child, she discovers she has unique powers of healing. She eventually realizes her abilities could be an instrument of evil, begotten by a bloodthirsty monster.



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The following is a general "Question & Answer" session about *Bloodfrost*, *Bloodlust* and *Blood & Soul* (*Bloodline Trilogy* by Deidre Dalton).

SPOILER ALERT: CONTENT CONTAINS STORYLINE REVEALS.

Where did you get the idea for the "Bloodfrost"?

I had my own weird set of medical problems many years ago, which were deemed "unfixable" by doctors and various insurance companies because of my financial situation at the time. The medical issues have since been completely addressed, but at the time I used to go to bed every night in so much pain. Finally, I learned how to close my eyes and take my mind to another place. After awhile, my dreams were the same every night. Of course they never came true - however, that's the great thing about being a fiction writer. You can *make* the dreams come true, even if they just appear on paper. In writing, you can lose yourself in the storyline and characters, forgetting about whatever mental or physical misery might be haunting you. It was a saving grace for me for a long time.

You dreamt about going to a place of healing?

Sort of. My dreams were more tied-up in past reflections and offbeat memories. For instance, Noel's ascent into the "healing place" was triggered by one of my favorite television shows as a child, *Bewitched*. The TV characters Samantha and her mother Endora used to light on a cloud – sitting on cushy billows in their witchy robes - when they wanted to discuss something privately, away from the mortal world. It's what inspired my fictional character Noel to float above her body and bed and into the clouds to her dreamy place of healing, but that's where the similarity ends.

In "Bloodfrost," Noel questions the existence of God prior to her healing, and then afterward wonders if it is God or the Devil responsible for her miracle cure. Did you ever wonder about the same issues, or is the speculation purely fictional?

Noel's mind-set is mostly fictional. However, part of her musing has to do with a situation that was close to me for a time. My former husband, who has since passed away, was one of the kindest and most decent people I ever knew. He did the responsible thing his entire life, whether it was treating his fellow humans with compassion or dealing with his own stressful issues, and in the end he died unfulfilled with his life in general. In a nutshell, he never realized his basic dreams – which by any measure were very attainable - no matter how hard he worked toward them. I took that bit and gave it to my fictional character Noel, who went even further by asking: "What's the point of doing the right thing when in the end it seems to get you nowhere?"

Noel scoffs at the notion that "God only gives you as much as you can handle." In her mind she's endured more than her fair share of pain and suffering, so her belief in God is shaky at best.

Noel's primary "healer" is an Asian character named Shoji, who appears quite by accident in her waking dream. It's never clear whether he is an apparition, flesh

and blood, or if he is a messenger of God or the Devil. Did you write him that way on purpose, and will he make an appearance in the two sequels, "Bloodlust" and "Blood & Soul"?

I can't give away too much about Shoji at this point. He feels responsible for Noel and her subsequent family, mainly because he's the one who cured her. I delved more into his background and how he came to be in *Bloodlust*. And, never fear, he will also appear in the final book, *Blood & Soul*.



You gave Noel a romantic interest in her landlord Pim Grady.

Before her cure, Noel realizes Pim has no interest in her as a woman. He sees her as some poor, pathetic cripple living with her mother in a squalid flat. Her ongoing medical issues age her considerably, so he feels more sympathy for her than anything else. However, after Noel is cured of her ailments Pim sees her in a new light - perhaps because he also experienced the healing place or because Noel now looks vibrant and alive. When they start to become involved, she points out the difference in his behavior and he apologizes profusely.

The romantic angle is all well and good, but I wanted to give Noel someone to commiserate with, someone who understands her healing experience and the absolute wonder of it. Later, they also begin to question the consequences of their newfound health. They realize it certainly comes at a steep price, perhaps at the expense of someone close to them.

In addition, Noel and Pim are the catalysts for characters in the two sequels, *Bloodlust* and *Blood & Soul*.

How did you come up with the title for "Bloodfrost"?

It harkens back to my own medical issues many years ago. Infection thrives on heat. It's why hospitals and operating rooms are so cold; it lessens the risks of infection. As I began writing *Bloodfrost*, before I created the healers Shoji and Hoshi, I decided to use *frost* in the process of Noel's miraculous recovery. As she's being healed, she feels a coolness running through her veins, as if the blood being replaced in her body is ice

cold. Her skin is normally warm, but she can sense the frost coursing through her veins as Shoji heals her.

Is the premise in the Bloodline Trilogy more about obtaining the fountain of youth than anything else?

Not necessarily. It's about returning people to the state of normal health for someone of their specific age. The characters do not become immortal. They live out their expected life spans with good health rather than bad, a few of them enjoying beneficial side effects.

I'm not interested in the fictional fountain of youth for the sake of physical appearances but rather the inner health it restores to my characters despite the domino consequences, and in the way it changes their daily lives. Their long years of painful suffering naturally etched more years onto their faces, more than normal, so part of the mythical healing process is aesthetic but it wasn't my primary focus.

Not to give too much away, the healing process comes with certain conditions. Shoji tells Noel that her ills could be transferred to someone else down the line. It's only later that Noel learns the same thing could happen to any children she might have.

It's similar to how all of us inherit certain genes and characteristics from our parents or other far-flung ancestors. It could be a genetic disease, or a self-inflicted but continuous disorder such as alcoholism, drug addiction or various forms of other preventable abuse. The worst traits in people seem to go on in the next generation, whether we like it or not. Sometimes people can overcome their own histories, but it's rare. In the case of Noel and Pim, any children they might have could also receive bits and pieces from the past, both good and bad. This includes tainted leftovers from their specific cures.

What led you to develop Kate Grady's character on the edges of evil in "Bloodlust"?

Her character was basically a continuation of her unfolding persona in *Bloodfrost*. Kate isn't necessarily evil per se, but by staying with her husband (*Kirk Lester*), it's as if she somehow condones the evilness taking place around her.

Kate gives up everything to be with Kirk Lester, including their baby.

Exactly. The force of the connection between Kate and Kirk is unbreakable. It cannot be torn asunder, even by their own flesh and blood, the child of their own making. Kate chooses to be with Kirk no matter the cost, which will come back to haunt her in *Blood & Soul*.

Yet there are a few occasions in "Bloodlust" when Kirk treats Kate with brutal disregard - raping her in a bathroom stall in the men's room of the Red Lion Club, and then joining his father Ken to assault her just before they flee Boston. How can Kate stay with Kirk after those specific incidents take place?

Kate's love for Kirk Lester is unconditional, although she does not readily forgive him for his transgressions. She demands answers, using her will-bending skills to get the

truth out of him. She comes to understand that traumatic events in his childhood caused him to behave in a certain way in various circumstances, all of which stem from his father, Ken Lester. In the end, Kate realizes she cannot live without Kirk. It is unthinkable to her.

Where did you get the idea for Kirk Lester's character?

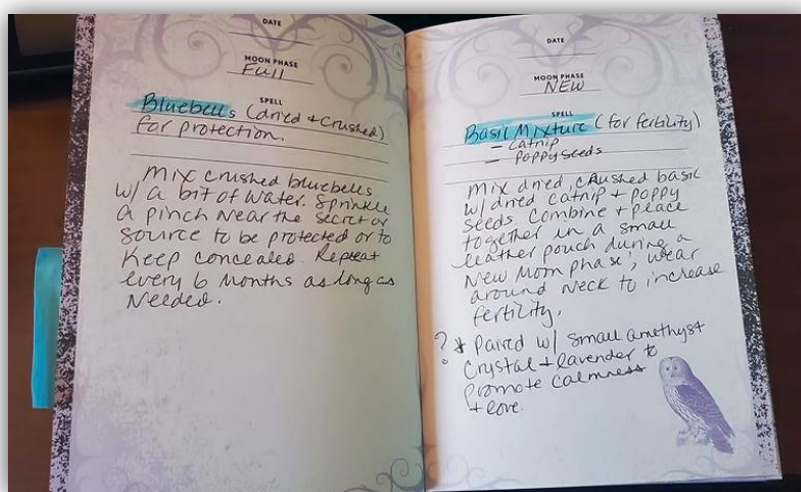
Kirk's persona had to be loathsome to a certain degree because of his niche in the storyline, but he also had to derive sympathy in order to remain in Kate's life. Several unspeakable incidents from his childhood are revealed in *Bloodlust*, which explains his confused and somewhat brainwashed demeanor. To put it simply, Kirk is the way he is because of his father, Ken Lester. I put my imagination into overdrive as I developed the father-son relationship, resulting in their fictional characters.

Maura McInerney is an endearing character, who makes her first appearance in "Bloodlust."

Maura is a grandmotherly type who is also very wise to the ways of the world. She knows what Ken and Kirk Lester are all about, yet she never gives them up because they are her blood kin, much to her shame. There is a lot of dichotomy in Maura's character make-up. She knows all about the unspeakable things Ken Lester did in the past, but because he is her sister's son, she cannot be disloyal to him. At least, not at first. Her conscious wins out in the end.

Herbology is introduced in "Bloodlust." Kate becomes obsessed with it for medicinal and mood control purposes.

Kate is made aware of herbology by Maura McInerney when she and Kirk live with her at her cottage in Chester, England. Kate is fascinated by Maura's wisdom in using a selection of herb mixes to achieve various mood states.



For instance, dried and crushed bluebells - which also signify a form of symbolism in the storyline - are used for protection. Crushed bluebells scattered in a specific place

will protect it from discovery, as in the case of the missing women buried in Ken Lester's garden. A mix of basil, catnip and poppy seeds promotes fertility (*aiding in Kate's desire to become pregnant*). Dried ginger mixed with chamomile, lavender and orange rind can calm the nerves, while feverfew tea can clear the mind. Those are just examples of what I put together for the story.

I'm not an expert on herbology by any means, but I had a blast creating concoctions for storyline purposes. In addition, constructing the cubbyhole storage array in Maura's kitchen was also quite enjoyable.

The character Qwendolyn Baskerville is introduced in "Blood & Soul."

The name says it all, doesn't it? Qwendolyn (also known as Gwen) figures prominently in the life of Emma Beckett, Kate and Kirk's daughter. Gwen's son, Shawn, plays an even larger role in Emma's life. They've known each other since they were babies, and Shawn is fully aware that Emma has a special gift. He witnesses her healing injured animals with the touch of her hand, and was even a recipient of her power to heal after she accidentally drops a glass soda bottle on his head.

Because Shawn has seen her heal animals so many times during their childhoods, he accepts her for who she is and is rarely surprised by what she can do.

Speaking of Emma, she meets her birth parents in "Blood & Soul."

Emma is the focal point in *Blood & Soul*, third and final part of the *Bloodline Trilogy*.

Emma doesn't find out she was adopted by Cabral and Darcy Beckett until she's seventeen years old, when she requests a cop of her birth certificate for a school trip to Paris. She is shocked, then horrified, when she learns who her birth parents are, and that she is the granddaughter of the Bluebell Killer (Ken Lester).

She *has* to seek out her real parents, doesn't she? It's an understandably dramatic undertaking, but Emma is level-headed. She just wants to get to the truth. She is further horrified to discover she was born in Ken Lester's house, which was the place where so many brutal murders took place.

Emma takes to Noel and Kate almost at once, but her relationship with Kirk is a bit tenuous. He has issues with his past that impact his ability to interact with her at first. It's unbearable for him to re-live the horrors of his own childhood, but he can't get away from it. His father makes sure of it by sending deriding letters from prison, reminding his son of his past deeds.

Emma also meets her infamous grandfather, visiting him in prison with Shawn ever-present at her side, of course.

Why did you include a scene about Emma meeting Ken Lester in "Blood & Soul"?

She wants to make sure she possesses none of his traits, just to satisfy herself that she is nothing like him. She believes it will ease her mind, and erase any lingering uncertainty she might have about her genetic origins.

Ken is nasty to her, of course, as he is unable to be any other way. He asks her: "Why did you come here? I care as much about you as I do my worthless son. I can see you are cut from the same cloth." However, she is quick to respond: "I wanted to reassure myself that I'm nothing like you, and you answered my question the minute you opened your mouth."

There are scattered bits of symbolism throughout the books in the Bloodline Trilogy. How far in advance did you plot out the symbols and their subsequent meanings?

Believe it or not, the various symbols came to me on the spur of the moment. I was sitting home one night, about a month after I started writing *Bloodfrost*, when a terrifying windstorm knocked the power out for three days. At one point, the winds roared through at ninety miles per-hour. It was quite scary. I read and wrote by candlelight for the duration, also freezing because it was December and we were without heat as well.

Most of my candles are those large, heavy glass affairs with various scents. I think it was the second day in when I was lying in bed, staring at the flickering candles. I could have sworn I saw little symbols etched on the candle glass. They looked like a small bell and a tiny crescent moon. I kept staring and *staring*, but the symbols just seemed to become more pronounced. Later, after the power came back on, I took the candles and examined them in the light of day. The symbols were there, yet I knew there was a reasonable explanation for them. The glass was old, having seen many cross-country moves and just as many lightings, so I'm sure the symbols were nothing more than scuff marks or stray drops of wax hardened with time. However, they gave me the inspiration for placing symbolism within *Bloodfrost*.

The bells and half-moons both Noel and Pim see etched in candle glass do have specific connotations, which are revealed later in the book. The symbols are actually hints into the future. Of course, neither Noel nor Pim know it at the time. It's only when the hints come to fruition that they link them to the symbols. More symbols are planted near the end of *Bloodfrost*. They do spill over into the second book in the trilogy, *Bloodlust*, where their meanings are made increasingly evident as the story moves on.

Bluebells also figure in the storyline as symbols, beginning with *Bloodlust*. During the train ride from London to Chester, Kate meets a sadly demented woman who demands of her: "Do you like bluebells, my dear?" And then warns her: "Don't forget to look for the bluebells. If you find them, remember my words. Death and evil lurk where bluebells grow."

Each book in the Bloodline Trilogy features strong female lead characters. The women are also related: first Noel, then her daughter Kate and lastly, Kate's daughter, Emma. Was it your intention to attach more symbolism to their bloodline?

Not in the beginning. However, as the storyline progressed with each book, I fancied the three women as far-fetched depictions of the Triple Goddess. My characters are not witches or goddesses, but their relation to one another reminded me of the Triple Goddess Wiccan deity, also known as *Maiden, Mother & Crone*. Each woman symbolizes a different moon phase and stage of life. In pagan lore, they also rule different realms such as earth and the waxing moon (*Emma*), the underworld and full moon (*Kate*), and the heavens and waning moon (*Noel*).



None of the books in the *Bloodline Trilogy* are about witchcraft or pagan lore, but the representation of *Maiden, Mother & Crone* reminded me of the rather intricate and uniquely magical blood ties between my three female characters.

Did you intentionally make the time-frame vague in "Bloodfrost"? For instance, Noel's daughter is born on August 13th with no mention of the year. Throughout "Bloodfrost" there is also no mention of which decade the characters are living in, although it's obviously modern because of the story mechanics.

I didn't want to hedge myself in because the story spans from Noel to her daughter and then to her granddaughter. All three women are adults in their respective books, which realistically places their storylines in a forty-plus-year frame. I didn't want to go as far back as the 1960s or 1970s, so rather than mention a specific year in each book I just left it to the reader's imagination. Let's just say the timeframes are distinctly modern.

Is there a reason you placed the storyline in Boston?

Not particularly. I wanted the story to unfold on the east coast for sure, but I already went the Maine route with the *Collective Obsessions Saga* and didn't want to do that again.

How did you arrive at an ending for the Bloodline Trilogy?

Ultimately, I wanted the three main female characters - Noel, Kate and Emma - to be reunited in one setting. I wanted it to happen when all was well, when they have managed to get through several tragedies and have finally come to terms with their lots in life, i.e. their special "gifts" or lack thereof.

Noel with the power to read minds, Kate with her will-bending, and Emma with the ability to heal any living thing she touches. The end brings it all full-circle, with a surprise tweak.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deidre Dalton is author of the *Bloodline Trilogy*, which follows the uniquely magical journey of three women through time. Books in the trilogy include *Bloodfrost*, *Bloodlust* and *Blood & Soul*.



She is also author of the *Collective Obsessions Saga*, which chronicles the extraordinary loves and intricate obsessions between two families sweeping a span of more than one hundred years, all set against the backdrop of a Gothic seaside mansion in Maine. Titles in the eight-part family saga include *The Advent*, *Quixotic Crossings*, *The Twain Shall Meet*, *Enthrallment*, *The Keeper's Journal*, *Hearts Desires*, *The Twilight* and *Megan's Legacy*. All eight books were released by Club Lighthouse Publishing.

Deidre is author and editor of the *Larkin Community Cookbook*, which is a compilation of recipes mentioned or prepared by characters in the *Collective Obsessions Saga*, and the electronic versions of *About Larkin* (companion guide to the *Collective Obsessions Saga*), and *The Private Journal of Colm Sullivan*.

Writing under the her real name of Deborah O'Toole, Deidre is also author of the fiction titles *Celtic Remnants*, *Glinhaven*, *Mind Sweeper*, *The Crypt Artist*, the *Short Tales Collection* (juvenile fiction), and a book of poetry known as *Torn Bits & Pieces*.

For more, visit <https://deborahotoole.com/>.

Using the pseudonym Shenanchie O'Toole, she also writes for the cooking/recipe website Food Fare. She is writer and co-editor of twelve cookbooks, along with more than forty titles in the *Food Fare Culinary Collection*.

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