

DEBORAH O'TOOLE

Winter Newsletter, 2019

TOPICS

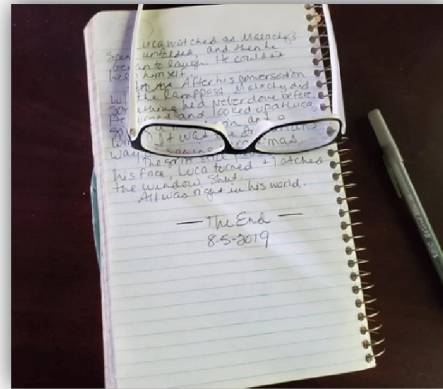
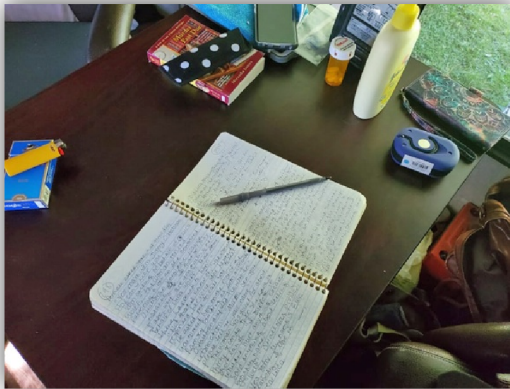
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Hello dear readers,

Another year has almost come to an end, and I find myself contemplating what has been accomplished. The old adage of "how time flies" is certainly true, and makes one realize how precious each moment of every day really is. However, I have to admit the past twelve months have been very productive for me.

[Celtic Remnants](#) was released in paperback in July, followed by an amazing [book review and video](#). I was also fortunate enough to receive publishing contracts from [Club Lighthouse Publishing](#) for three more books: [Mind Sweeper](#), [The Crypt Artist](#) and [Bloodfrost](#) (*the latter of which is by me writing as Deidre Dalton*). The year 2019 was not only fruitful in the business-end publishing sense, but was also a whirlwind of creativity.

In addition, the summer and autumn of 2019 were busy with "outdoor" activities, which is unlike me. Yet I have to admit it was an enjoyable change of pace. My typical summer routine usually consists of hibernating indoors surrounded by central air conditioning, where I tend to my writing and try to catch-up on my stack of [books to read](#). This year was much different, though. We made several camping trips, riding ATVs on long trails, and passing through several scenically beautiful landscapes located in Utah. While "camping" is a relative term (cooking, eating and sleeping in a fully-equipped toy hauler trailer can hardly be called roughing it), days spent in the wilderness and sitting by the fire at night did wonders for recharging my internal batteries. I even managed to get some writing done, actually finishing [The Crypt Artist](#) in the great outdoors. For more about my summer adventures, [read my blog entry at Irish Eyes](#).



Now that winter has arrived, outdoor activities have come to a standstill. However, I'm looking forward to spending the season writing, celebrating the holidays with loved ones, as well as tackling my stack of books to read. My current pile includes *Anne Boleyn: A King's Obsession* by Alison Weir, *Of Irish Blood* by Mary Pat Kelly, *Doctor Sleep* by Stephen King, *Love's Legacy* by T.L. Davison and *Penny Dreadfuls: Sensation Tales of Terror*, the latter of which is a collection of classic horror stories from Barnes & Noble.

~ CRYPT NOTES ~

Speaking of The Crypt Artist, the book was signed with Club Lighthouse Publishing in October 2019. The novel will be released in both electronic and print editions in early 2020. The book now has an official website, which delves deeper into its main characters, including the ghosts.



There are also three people I'd like to thank before everything else gets lost in the shuffle. [The Crypt Artist](#) would have never come to fruition without their suggestions, encouragement and friendship. For that, I am deeply grateful.

First, thanks goes to my longtime friend **Tracy Jon Powell**. Some of his ideas brought forth my inspiration for [The Crypt Artist](#) storyline. While I did all of the writing, he also deserves credit for giving me initial brainwaves in the first place.

Special thanks also goes to my friend **Brendan Gallagher** from Birr, County Offaly, Ireland. He gave me several quirks for the character Malachy O'Leary (*including the basis for his drunken lamppost scene*). Brendan's humorous "ideas" came from incidents he witnessed with real characters in his hometown of Birr, making them all the more hilariously funny. His re-telling of them put me in stitches.



And last, but not least, thanks to **Jerry Dalton** for being patient with me during the time spent writing, and for guessing female ghosts are subtly more viscous than their male counterparts. Jerry also gave me the idea for Malachy O'Leary's ghostly feline Hissy (*pictured above*), who happens to be real and very much alive.

~ BLOODFROST ~

Bloodfrost, first book in the Bloodline Trilogy (*written by me as Deidre Dalton*), is due for release by Club Lighthouse Publishing in late December, or early January 2020. The book begins the rather odd family trio of novels, which I've partially described as thus:

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 cured. However, she soon learns her miraculous recovery comes at a price.

Old before her time and afflicted with a myriad of medical problems, Noel Gatsby retreats into her "wishful-thinking" dreams every night. Desperate to escape the circumstances of her life, she imagines a world where all of her pain and suffering stops, to be replaced by the vigorous health of her youth. Yet each morning she awakens to the misery of her real existence, consumed by pain and depression.

Then one night her dreams come true. Noel is transported to another world, where healing hands work their magic on her tired body. She awakens without pain, filled with an exuberance and joy she never thought to experience again.

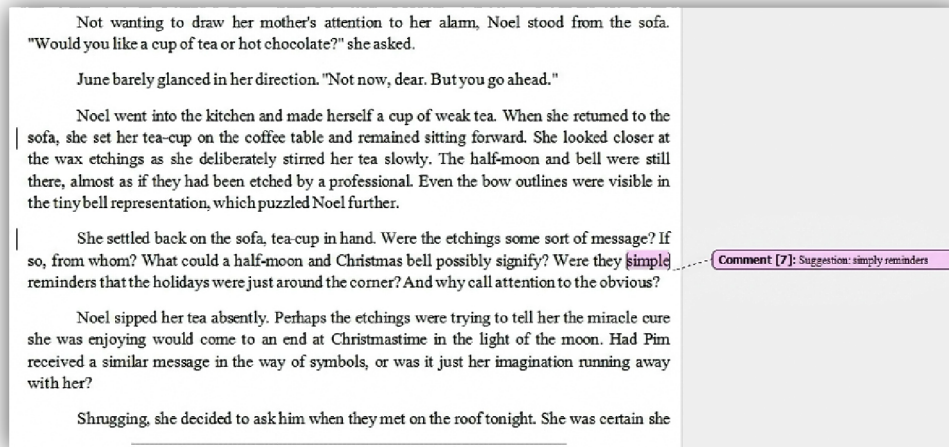
Her unique affinity with the handsome Pim Grady gives her hope for the future, although their blossoming love is tempered by knowledge of their shared and secretive dreams.



Back in October, an edited copy of Bloodfrost was returned to me by an editor at Club Lighthouse Publishing. It was my job to go through all the suggested corrections and agree or disagree. Thankfully, I agreed with 99.9% of the suggestions. I always

love having a pair of fresh eyes on my work, as being in "edit mode" can often take away objectivity over time.

As a peek into the process, the following is a screenshot of the marked-up Microsoft Word document I perused to bring Bloodfrost to the finish line.



Much thanks goes to Terrie Balmer, Palvi Sharma and James Wasson at Club Lighthouse Publishing for their time and patience. They make an author's job a lot easier during all stages of writing a book, and my gratitude to them is boundless.

~ IN PROGRESS ~

Now that The Crypt Artist has been to bed, so to speak, I've moved on to other projects.

Not one to rest on my laurels, I'm back to work on Glinhaven. The novel is nearly written, only set aside so I could complete The Crypt Artist. I'm hoping to finish Glinhaven early into the new year. I know the end story for the book, it's just a matter of writing it and then undergoing the editing process yet again.

I recently added some new "elements" to Glinhaven, which include Moggy Malone Mochrie and Sith Mochrie (*see photo below*). The two Scottish Fold felines now have a place in the storyline, their prime domain being "The Thistle" curio shop in Glinhaven Village, Massachusetts. For story purposes, Moggy Malone is elegant and dignified, while poor Sith is clumsy and goofy.



I named them using researched Scottish lingo: *Moggy* is slang for "cat," while *Sith* is the word for "fairy cat" in Scots Gaelic mythology.

According to [Wikipedia](#):

The Cat Sìth (Scottish Gaelic) or Cat Sidhe (Irish), Cat Sí (in new orthography) is a fairy creature from Celtic mythology, said to resemble a large black cat with a white spot on its chest. Legend has it that the spectral cat haunts the Scottish Highlands. The legends surrounding this creature are more common in Scottish folklore, but a few occur in Irish. Some common folklore suggested that the Cat Sìth was not a fairy, but a witch that could transform into a cat nine times.

The Cat Sìth may have been inspired by the Scottish wildcat itself. It is possible that the legends of the Cat Sìth were inspired by Kellas cats, which are a distinctive hybrid between Scottish wildcats and domestic cats only found in Scotland (the Scottish wildcat is a subspecies of the European wildcat, which is absent from elsewhere in the British Isles).

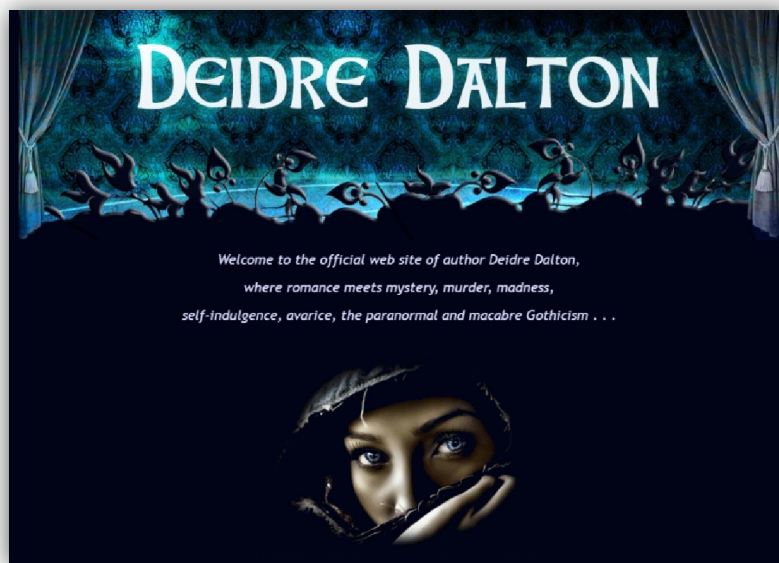
The people of the Scottish Highlands did not trust the Cat Sìth. They believed that it could steal a person's soul, before it was claimed by the gods, by passing over a corpse before burial; therefore watches called the Feill Fadalach (Late Wake) were performed night and day to keep the Cat Sìth away from a corpse before burial. Methods of "distraction" such as games of leaping and wrestling, catnip, riddles, and music would be employed to keep the Cat Sìth away from the room in which the

corpse lay. In addition, there were no fires where the body lay, as it was said that the Cat Sith was attracted to the warmth.

As I've discovered over time, the inclusion of animals can often enhance certain scenes, and can inject humor into the mix as well.

Glinhaven is not meant to be long and complicated, but rather my appreciative nod to the gothic fiction genre of novels I avidly read during my teens and 20s. The books gave me many hours of reading enjoyment, especially those written by Dorothy Daniels, Marilyn Harris and Marilyn Ross (aka Dan Curtis, creator of the TV series *Dark Shadows*). Glinhaven is basically my attempt at the same, and I must admit I'm relishing every moment of the process.

After Glinhaven is complete, I plan to move on to Bloodlust, which is not quite halfway written at this point. Since its predecessor Bloodfrost is scheduled for release shortly, I need to get myself in gear and finish the second part in the Bloodline Trilogy. Writing as myself, and then switching to my literary pseudonym Deidre Dalton, entails a complete change in mindset as well. While most of my books are generally descriptive, those written under the "Deidre" hat tend to swim in much darker waters. This isn't to say I possess split personalities, but the creative direction requires a definite swing in focus.



The books I've written under the "Deidre" moniker go deeper into the dark side of various personalities, and some of the actions undertaken thereof require a balance

between good taste and blatant sexuality and/or violence. If I were to psychoanalyze myself, I'd have to say this all began in my teen years when I wrote murky verses and followed my morbid train of youthful thought, as evidenced in my book of poems known as Torn Bits & Pieces.

The fictional result of my shadowy ventures has become the Collective Obsessions Saga, to be followed closely by the Bloodline Trilogy. When the trilogy is complete sometime next year, I'm not sure where I'll head wearing my "Deidre" hat. Anyone's guess is as good as mine, but rest assured Deidre Dalton will make a reappearance, in one way or another.

I've also had a few other projects on the backburner over the past year, which I hope to complete in 2020. These include Blood & Soul (part three in the Bloodline Trilogy), a historical essay about Lizzie Borden, the Luscious Leftovers Cookbook, and Native American Cuisine. There is also talks with my publisher about writing a ninth part to the Collective Obsessions Saga, and penning a sequel to Celtic Remnants. In addition, I would like to continue work on In the Shadow of the King. I began the book many years ago, and would dearly love to see it come to fruition.

Revision dates are as follows, as of this writing:

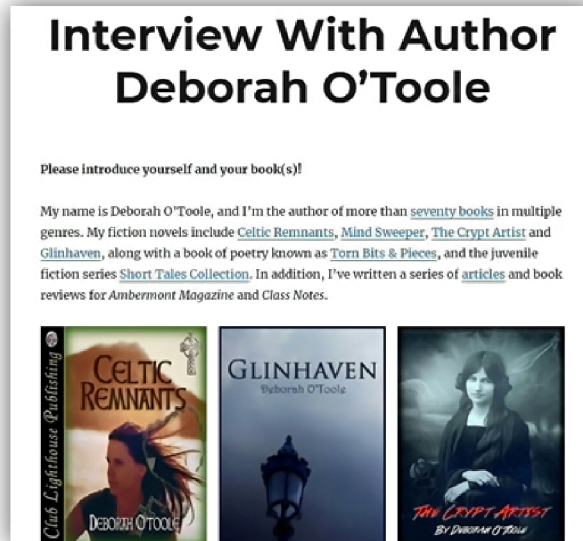
- ❖ Bloodlust (2020)
- ❖ Blood & Soul (2021)
- ❖ Glinhaven (2020)
- ❖ In the Shadow of the King (2022)

I'm just hoping to find time for it all, along with living my personal life. It can be difficult to find the perfect equilibrium between writing and a happy home, but I'm doing my best. Writing often wins out, although I've tried to temper it somewhat over the past year in order to achieve a fair and equal balance for those who are near and dear to me.

As per my usual notation, storylines, estimated release dates and book cover designs may be subject to change (yet again).

~ NEW INTERVIEW ~

A new interview with yours truly appeared at NF Reads in the middle of October.



<https://www.nfreads.com/interview-with-author-deborah-otoole/>

For the interview, I discussed my books, writing inspiration, dealing with creative block, reviews, and advice to other writers, among other topics. Read more >

~ "CELTIC REMNANTS" REVIEW & VIDEO ~

A new book review of Celtic Remnants was posted on Good Reads in November 2019.

Some highlights of the review, written by Barbara Cerda, include:

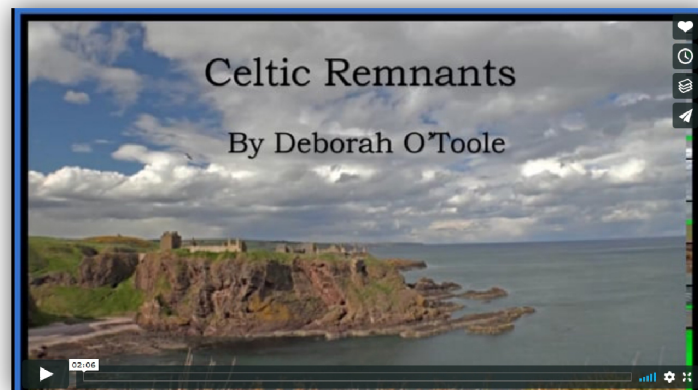
- ❖ *"This novel is a masterful weaving of a love story that nestles nicely within remnants of Upstairs Downstairs, Poldark, and finally Downtown Abby."*
- ❖ *"The emotional force conveyed when the author seamlessly transitions from love scenes to heartbreaking moments is surprisingly memorable. It is because of this author's incredible skill and grace in storytelling that it serves well in telling of Celtic culture and its brutal struggles to achieve autonomy under British rule."*

- ❖ *"This author weaves a tale of how bigotry and complacency created a world of violence and tragedy. Yet within the dreadful throes of violent civil unrest, loves springs real and lasting."*



<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/2975827985>

In addition, Barbara created a two-minute video highlighting the book.



<https://vimeo.com/370144342>

Being the author of Celtic Remnants, I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Barbara Cerda, and much love and gratitude also goes to Terrie Balmer at Club Lighthouse Publishing for all of her efforts on my behalf.

~ PERSONAL NOTE ~

I rarely make mention of my personal life, and over the years have kept reference to it at a bare minimum. However, most people know I've been married three times as I am not ashamed of it, not do I attempt to hide it. The marriages were all lengthy, and all ended for a variety of reasons.

While my personal life journey has never taken an easy or normal route, events occurring in 2018 were bizarre even for the likes of me. Yet they resulted in a happy set of circumstances. To make a long story short, my first husband, Jerry Dalton, contacted me via Facebook on October 20, 2018, sending me a friend request. We had not seen or spoken to each other in more than twenty years. In the interim, we had both remarried and carried on with our lives.

Meeting again for the first time after two decades was quite amazing in itself, but what followed was even more remarkable. We again developed a relationship rather quickly, and within six months had moved in together. We've been cohabitating ever since, and to that end I definitely consider Jerry to be my "significant other."

We recently went to dinner with some old friends, Ben Opfermann and his wife, Sharon. Ben was there when Jerry and I met for the first time, many years ago. The three of us worked together, and Ben was privy to our first courtship and subsequent marriage. He was kind enough to take a picture of us at the recent dinner. I took the photo and placed it in a frame with a picture of us all those years ago.



Jerry was there in the beginning, when I first began writing the Collective Obsessions Saga. By the time we divorced in the late 1980s, I had nearly completed "Larkin" (which later became The Twain Shall Meet).

Life can turn on a dime, and then come full circle. I'm living proof of it, happily.

And if anyone ever wondered about my use of the writing pseudonym Deidre Dalton, the truth is now finally revealed. ;)

~ UNTIL NEXT TIME ~

Another newsletter will be coming your way in late spring/early summer 2020, so keep your eyes peeled.

Meanwhile, visit my website, Facebook and Twitter pages for updates, or go to my blog Irish Eyes to view recent posts.

Happy Holidays to all . . . And until next time, *happy reading* . . .

Deborah O'Toole 🍀

Sunday, 1st December 2019

