

# DEBORAH O'TOOLE

Spring Newsletter, 2021

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## TOPICS

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Hello dear readers,

Another spring, and another year in which to write . . . most of the time.

After finishing [Bloodlust](#) last October, I took a break from writing for a few months during the winter season. I caught-up on some long overdue reading, made plans for summer camping trips, and generally spent more quality time with my significant other. Our Christmas and New Years Eve celebrations were quiet occasions for the most part, as we kept ourselves in semi-isolation during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, we were able to receive our vaccines in March, none the worse for wear.

However, enforced isolation over the past year was not such a hardship for me. Writing lends itself to solitary stretches of creativity and is, in fact, often preferred. Quiet time alone in which to think about and construct storylines, not to mention writing them, is conducive to the process.

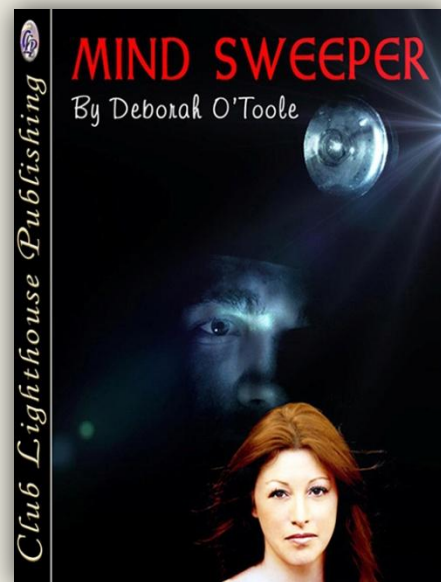
I never felt an all-consuming frustration with isolation, never felt constrained or ready to bolt out the door at any given moment. In truth, I was at ease with the entire situation, including communicating with friends, family, readers and business contacts via text, telephone calls and video meetings. It soon became the status quo, and I don't see it changing any time soon, regardless of what happens with the pandemic.

In other words, it has become my new normal, and I'm quite comfortable with it.

## ~ MIND SWEEPER ~

Mind Sweeper was released by Club Lighthouse Publishing on January 7, 2021. The novel is available in multiple e-book formats from Club Lighthouse, paperback and Nook editions at Barnes & Noble, and in paperback and Kindle editions from Amazon.

*Newly-widowed Beth Mills accepts an outpouring of sympathy from her community after a freak mining accident takes the life of her husband, Aaron. Unbeknownst to anyone, she is secretly delighted that her cruel husband is lost to her, but never expects his vicious ghost to return and haunt her in more ways than one.*



I initially formed the storyline for Mind Sweeper in August 2007. I was watching MSNBC News on television in my house in Spokane when there was a break in regular coverage to report the Crandall Mines disaster in Utah. While the accident was tragic, within minutes the idea for Mind Sweeper began formulating in my head. I don't typically get inspiration from bad news on the tube, but this time it was different. I think I had the complete outline for my story within an hour, all jotted down on paper. Later that day, I began writing in earnest.

An early review of Mind Sweeper:

*"Mind Sweeper gets right down to business. A mining accident leaves the protagonist, Beth, a widow, relieved at having lost her wife-beating husband. The back-story brings up the physical abuse she had to endure in his hands, and tags him as a first-class sadist getting his comeuppance. The author writes vivid scenes with many introspective asides, and the dialogue is true to character. A very intriguing read!"* - Reviewed by Kenneth Edward Lim, author of *The North Korean*.

I'm tickled with the front and back cover designs for Mind Sweeper. Much thanks to James Wason for his talent, and for his patience in working with me to finalize the creations.



There is now an [official website](#) for [Mind Sweeper](#), where news about the book will be posted regularly.



There is one person I'd like to thank posthumously, for without him [Mind Sweeper](#) would never have come to fruition.

- ❖ *My late father (Bernard "Barney" O'Toole) was a Geophysicist, and his life's work revolved around various types of mining in all parts of the world. I learned much from*

*him about the industry. Of all my books, dedicating Mind Sweeper to him seemed the most apropos.*

Thanks, Dad. :)

## ~ BLOODLUST ~

Bloodlust (by yours truly writing as Deidre Dalton) was released by Club Lighthouse Publishing on February 26, 2021. The novel is Book #2 in the Bloodline Trilogy, and is available in multiple formats from Club Lighthouse, and in paperback and Kindle editions from Amazon.



Bloodlust was finalized a few months prior to its publication, thanks to my editor, Palvi Sharma. I've never had children, but finishing the final draft of a book is probably the closest I'll ever come to the experience of letting go of a "child" who has reached adulthood and is ready to see the world for itself.

Upon returning the final draft for Bloodlust, my editor sent me the following note:

*“Hi Deborah,  
I absolutely loved this story. I felt it was bold, entertaining and very well written. I can see the amount of research you have put in so that the story flows smoothly.  
I found myself captivated by all the characters in the book which is actually quite rare with me. Usually, I find myself wanting to read about one character or another and barely pay attention to the secondary characters. But you have done justice to all the characters in your book by giving them significant roles.  
Please find my edits and comments in the attached document. I have used track changes again and if you need any assistance with the edits, please let me know.  
I did so enjoy the story and I am honored to have been given the chance to edit it. I do hope I get to edit the third part mainly because as a reader I can't wait to find out what happens next.  
Take care and warm regards,  
Palvi*

And CEO Terrie Balmer of Club Lighthouse Publishing made the following remark on my Facebook page after I added the new cover for the book, thanking her for the spectacular rendition:

*You're welcome. Not for the faint of heart is so spot on Deb. While I was proof-reading Bloodlust, I just got into the story and couldn't let go! That's one of the reasons I was a little late in getting it up . . sorry. Now I can hardly wait for Book #3 (Blood & Soul).*

Kendrick Lester (aka the Bluebell Killer in Bloodlust) is probably the most loathsome character I've ever created. He is a sociopathic murderer, rapist, and all-out sadist. His quirks are tracked in the Bloodline Trilogy spreadsheet, which I rarely show to anyone because it is my basic character outline during the book-writing process, but here is a glimpse.

<b>Lester, Kendrick</b> (Ken) 	November 13, 1956 Born in Chester, Cheshire, England  Case # BPD: 26113  Prisoner Number: 561113	Northeastern University: Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services at the College of Social Sciences.  Hartford High, Northwich, Cheshire.	Tall, slender, thinning wheat- colored hair, watery blue eyes, pale skin, gap between front teeth. Slight English accent.  Moved to USA in 1977.	Nervous tick, tobacco-stained fingers. Receptor of ills from someone else.  House on 139 Chestnut Ave., halfway between JP and Roxbury.	Wife Ann & daughter Kelly killed in car accident (5 years before <i>Bloodlust</i> begins).  Drives dark brown Chevy Tahoe suburban (1995).  Leaves East End for JPND after Janessa.	Community organizer for Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development (JPND). Low-income single mothers & kids.  Prev: East End Community Center, Cambridge, MA.	Wife Ann & daughter Kelly killed in car accident (5 years before <i>Bloodlust</i> begins).  Known as the Bluebell Killer.  Appears in <i>Bloodlust</i> .
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Kendrick makes his first appearance in *Bloodlust*. His son, Kirk, becomes the love interest of Kate Grady, who is the main character in the storyline. Kirk writes poems hinting at his horrific childhood and present life, which he in turn reads to Kate.

*Bloodlust* is not saturated with poems, but rather they manifest themselves during various points in the story. I wrote the handful of verse on the fly, always trying to compose them from the character's viewpoint. Here are a few of them:

### SCREECH & MOAN

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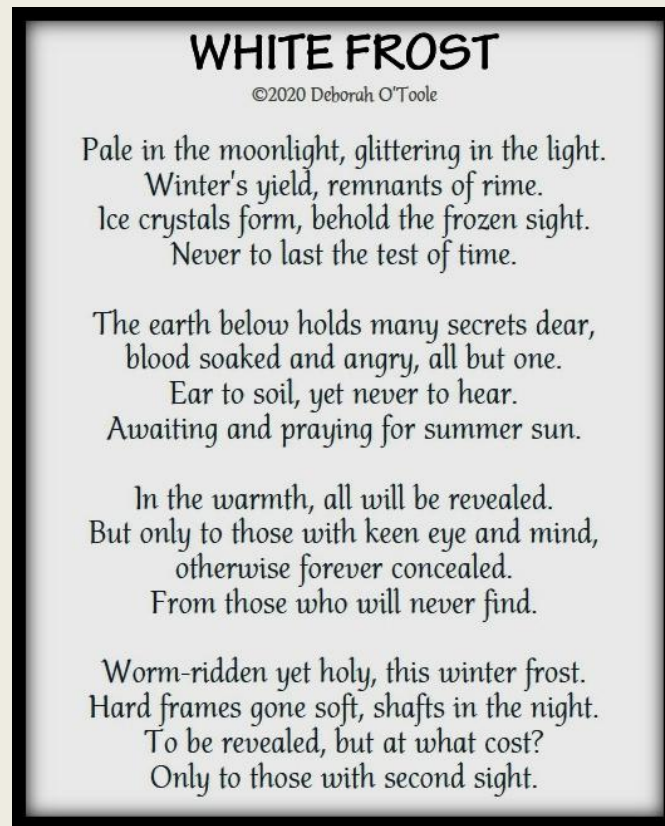
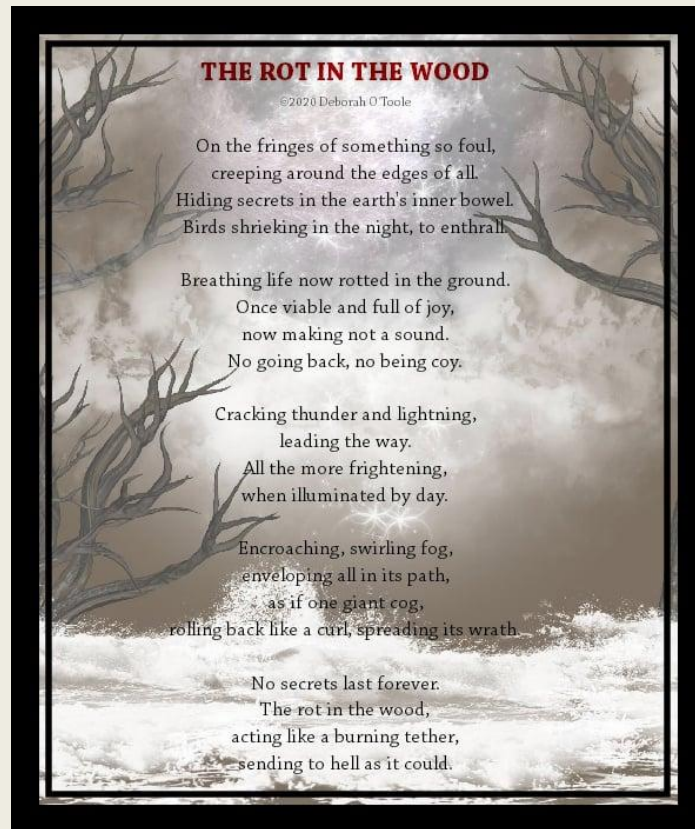
Through the rafters and floorboards I hear  
the screech and moan of many.  
Childhood full of loathing and fear,  
for my thoughts, not even a half-penny.

The cries never stop, even in my dreams.  
The screech and moan of many.  
In our house, nothing is as it seems,  
tainted hearts as black as ebony.

I pray nightly for it to cease,  
the screech and moan of many.  
Even thy mother he won't release,  
as if that would matter to any.

In the quiet of a lull,  
I still hear the screech and moan of many.  
I cannot erase, extract or pull,  
Not even in the darkest hour of agony.





**Note:** The poems will also appear in the upcoming collection Torn Bits & Pieces, to be released by Club Lighthouse Publishing later this year.

Once again, thanks to Terrie, Palvi and James from Club Lighthouse Publishing for their welcome input and invaluable assistance in bringing Bloodlust to fruition.

### ~ IN PROGRESS ~

I'm now on to Blood & Soul, final part in the Bloodline Trilogy. My current goal is to have the book finished by mid-to-late Summer 2021.

The short blurb for Blood & Soul is as follows:

*Emma Beckett is adopted into a loving home as an infant, never knowing the true circumstances of her birth. As a teenager, she discovers she has unique powers of healing. She soon realizes her abilities are an instrument of evil, begotten by a bloodthirsty monster.*



When I sit down to write a story, I usually do so in the actual order of the book: from prologue to the first chapter, and right to the end. I attribute the habit to my "Virgo" obsession with organization. It's a habit that has remained consistent throughout my entire writing career.

*Until now.*

Since beginning Blood & Soul in earnest late last year, I've been writing various parts of the story almost completely out of order. One day, it might be the main character Emma Beckett in childhood, and then the next will be scenes in her adult years, and

then back again. The story is coming to me in random chunks, which is somewhat disconcerting in my typical writing sphere.

Writing outlines for "books in the works" has always been abhorrent for me. I find them particularly difficult and unnecessary for the most part. However, many years ago when I worked with Raphael Serebreny from Tyborne Hill Publishers, he convinced me that doing an outline prior to writing a book would help me to keep the storyline organized. At the time I was resistant, but as my writing style grew, I finally came around to the viability of outlines even though I don't create them for every book.

I've also developed other ways to keep storylines organized over time - such as character spreadsheets and family trees, for instance - but doing an outline prior to writing has proven to be beneficial in an overall sense, especially in the early stages of creating a new story.

This has become the case for Blood & Soul. I finally decided to write an outline for the book, even at this late stage in the game. And, to be honest, it *has* helped.

One of the most redeeming aspects of doing an outline is the ability to change various points as needed. An outline does not dictate that the story is set in stone, especially as it's being written. The ebb and flow can change at inspirational whim. I liken it to a light bulb flash in the segment of the brain which controls fluid creativity.

However, the haphazard and unfamiliar method seems to be working for Blood & Soul. I'm not sure what is driving the unusual pattern, but I'm not complaining.

### ❖ ESSAYS & SUCH

Also on my roster is the desire to complete two historical essays before 2021 ends. I've always had a passion for boning-up on figures from history who catch my imagination. I want to learn all I can about them, and then set my thoughts to paper.

My essay portfolio includes Billy the Kid, Anne Boleyn, Jack the Ripper, the Loch Ness Monster and U.S. Political Parties.



My current projects include bits about [Lizzie Borden](#) and [Michael Collins](#). The two figures in time could not be any more different, yet that have piqued my interest for many years. Hopefully, my essays will do them justice.

Estimated dates of project completions are as follows (*as of this writing*):

- ❖ [Blood & Soul](#) (2021)
- ❖ [In the Shadow of the King](#) (2022)
- ❖ [Lizzie Borden](#) (*historical essay, Summer 2021*)
- ❖ [Michael Collins](#) (*historical essay, Autumn 2021*)

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

## ~ SEQUELS ? ? ? ~

Over the past few years, I've toyed with the idea of writing sequels to the [Collective Obsessions Saga](#) (*creating Book #9 in the series*), [Celtic Remnants](#) and more recently, [The Crypt Artist](#).

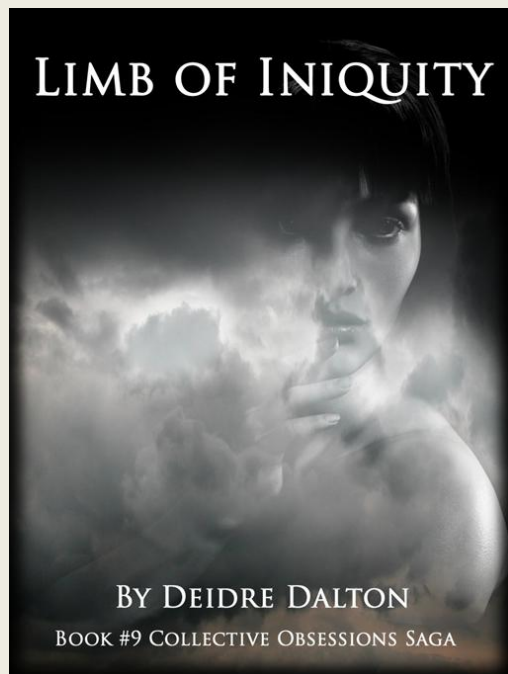
### ❖ COLLECTIVE OBSESSIONS SAGA

Tentatively titled *Limb of Iniquity*, a possible 9th book in the [Collective Obsessions Saga](#) would revolve around the deadly antics of Alexandra St. John, who first made an appearance in Book #7, [The Twilight](#). In many ways, her character begs for a continuation. Alex was the illegitimate daughter of Scott Page, who was the longtime beloved husband of Shannon Larkin. Alex was abandoned as a child by her biological

mother (Andrea St. John), only to be adopted by Angela Page, Scott's oldest daughter. Alex and Shannon have a difficult relationship. Shannon has little use for her late husband's bastard, barely civil to the child even as she grows into an adult. The hostility also creates tension between Shannon and Angela, a friction that endures for years and creates a breakdown of the mother-daughter bond.

In essence, Alex St. John becomes a literal "bad seed." The makings are definitely there for a continuation of the [Collective Obsessions Saga](#).

I've been entertaining the idea for several months, jotting down ideas when they strike me. While I haven't committed myself to Book #9 (*Limb of Iniquity*) in the [Collective Obsessions Saga](#), it is becoming a distinct possibility in the future, perhaps in 2023-24 or thereabouts.



### ❖ CELTIC REMNANTS

The ending in [Celtic Remnants](#) certainly screams "sequel," and I'm currently considering the notion with a book tentatively titled *Celtic Fragments*.

The main character in [Celtic Remnants](#) (Ava Egan) dies in the storyline, but those who have read the book know she actually lives. I'm leaning toward the idea of fast-forwarding the story to twenty years later, when Ava and the indomitable Tim O'Casey are safely living incognito in America. Ava's daughter, Chee, would be an adult in such a scenario. Through a chance encounter with her father's old secretary, Chee discovers clues that lead her to believe Ava is still alive, and she acts accordingly. I'm still developing more ideas for the storyline as of this writing, so keep your eyes peeled for more in the coming months.

## ❖ THE CRYPT ARTIST

My publisher actually urged me to eventually write a sequel for The Crypt Artist, telling me in May 2020 (just prior to the release of the book) that she so enjoyed the character portrayal of Malachy O'Leary she would like to see him make an appearance in a future novel as the star attraction: *"What can I say about Malachy, except that he's just perfect little leprechaun of a ghost. Love him! I'd love to see him featured in another story. You know you could probably create another story around helping those ghosts work their way out of their purgatory, helping someone else in the Ramsey building or otherwise."* At first, I wasn't sure how to continue with Malachy, mainly because he settled his unfinished business on earth, came to terms with his foibles while in human form, and helped main character Luca Wolfe out of a near-fatal pickle. Yet the more I consider a sequel to the story of Malachy O'Leary, the more ideas that come to me.

The tentative working title for The Crypt Artist sequel is *Spirit of the Ossuary*. Stay tuned!

## ~ LEISURE ACTIVITIES ~

Shortly after receiving the first paperback copy of Bloodlust in March, I assembled all of my books in print and placed them between my gargoylesque bookends to take a photograph. Looking at the picture afterward, I was sort of shocked to see that the number of paperbacks had reached fourteen.

I never really sit down and think about all of the writing I've done over the years. Writing comes naturally, so I've just continued by finishing one and going on to the next.

However, actually thinking about the number of books stunned me a bit. On the other hand, the achievement has kept me humble and I never take it for granted.

Hopefully, there will be many more books to come.



On that note, I have enjoyed reading "cozy mysteries" for several years. They provide welcome entertainment, especially when I'm in the midst of research for my upcoming books and need a break from it. Cozy mysteries are relaxing without being boring, lacking in gratuitous sex or violence, and are heartily recommended to those who like mystery novels in the first place.

Over time, I've developed a fondness for certain series' and authors in the genre, including Diane Mott Davidson (seventeen-novel series with caterer Goldy Schulz as the star character), *Cat in the Stacks Mysteries* (by Miranda James), *Beyond the Page Bookstore Mysteries* (by Lauren Elliott), *Maine Clambake Mysteries* (by Barbara Ross), *Witch City Mysteries* (by Carol J. Perry), *Gilded Newport Mysteries* by Alyssa Maxwell, and last but not least, the *Haunted Bookshop Mysteries* and *Coffeehouse Mysteries* (by Alice Kimberly/Cleo Coyle).

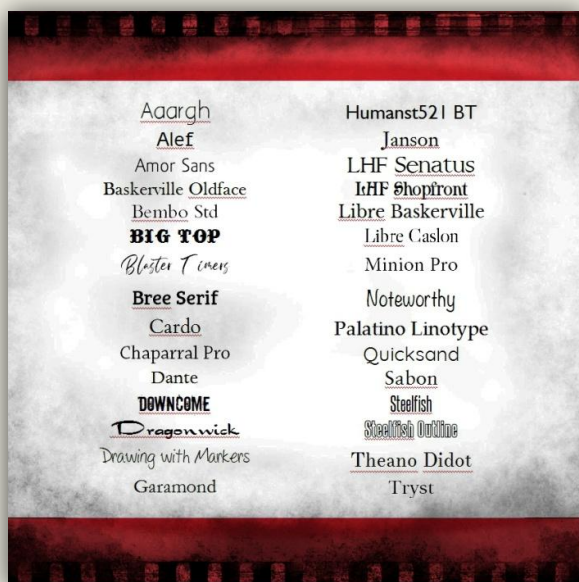


BritBox TV also became a firm favorite during the winter months, and will probably remain so for the long foreseeable future. I've been binging on *As Time Goes By*, *Ballykissangel*, *Father Ted*, *Fawlty Towers*, *Keeping Up Appearances*, *Mrs. Brown's Boys*, *One Foot in the Grave*, *Rosemary & Thyme*, *The Good Life*, *To the Manor Born*, *Vicar of Dibley*, *Waiting for God*, *Wild Bill* and *Yes, Minister*.

Some of the other television programs (non-Britbox) that we have become avid watchers of include *Britannia* (Epix), *The Equalizer* (Queen Latifah series on CBS), *His Dark Materials* (HBO), *Lovecraft Country* (HBO), *Outlander* (Showtime), *Pennyworth* (Epix), *Perry Mason* (2020 HBO series), and *Resident Alien* (Syfy).

I also spent some of my free time by assembling new fonts. I've been fascinated by print styles since I learned to read as a child, so collecting fonts has become a long-held hobby for me. I recently put together a variety of "book-type" and handwriting fonts, some of which I use in my own manuscripts and web design, including various graphics (website menu buttons, memes, et al), as well as text on book covers.

One of the things I learned early on in web design is that if people don't have a particular font on their computer or device, they won't see the unique text if it is just typewritten on a page. The actual font needs to be imbedded on an image or in a PDF document in order for the intended text to become visible.



- ❖ **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Over the past few months, I have joined several online author communities, such as [Book Bub](#), [Book Lemur](#), [Bookshop.Org](#), [Book Sniffer](#) and [Reedsy](#), among others.



In mid-November 2020, I was featured in the "Author Spotlight" at [Book Lemur](#), which includes hundreds of author bios and related book links.

I'm happy to join all of them. :)

### ~ UNTIL NEXT TIME ~

Another newsletter will be coming your way in late summer/early autumn 2021, 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.

And until next time, *happy reading* . . .

Deborah O'Toole 🍀

*Sunday, 28th March 2021*

