

DEBORAH O'TOOLE

Autumn Newsletter, October 2024

TOPICS:

[Greetings](#) / [Hearts in Sorrow](#) / [In Progress](#) / [Fictional Genealogy](#) /
[Web Updates & New Logos](#) / [Books & Stuff](#) / [Leisure Activities](#) /
[Remembering Mischa](#) / [Until Next Time](#)



Hello dear readers,

There are no words to describe the relief I feel now that autumn has arrived. Summer in my neck of the woods was uncomfortably hot from May into the first few weeks of October, breaking heat records nearly every week. I was glad to see it make it's stubborn farewell, once and for all.

It has been nearly two years since I've had to deal with having a "day job." While that may sound trite, it is actually something I've been thankful for every day since. It also made me reflect on my work history, aside from writing. Most of my learned talents had to do with web design, which I taught myself long ago with the aid of Microsoft programs such as [Front Page](#) and [Expression Web](#). Once I had the process down pat, I designed and built all of my own websites in conjunction with [Adobe Fireworks](#), [Adobe Macromedia](#), [Adobe Photoshop Elements](#), [Color Picker](#), [Java Script Source](#) and [Luna-Pic Online Photo Editor](#), among many others. I find web design enjoyable, not something to merely be endured.

My worst job over time? Working in a call center for two years, which hawked credit repair services. It was the most negative workplace I've ever had to tolerate. Taking consistent verbal abuse from callers and trying to maintain a positive ethic was nearly impossible, and it certainly did not pay enough. The job also lent itself to my aversion to talking on the telephone, and generally made me dread every single day I was employed there. The past experience made me doubly grateful to now spend all of my waking hours writing, without the stress of a steady stream of incoming calls or having to watch the clock in order to be free of them.

I can honestly say my profession is that of an "author." As if anything else would do at this stage of my life.

~ HEARTS IN SORROW ~

In April 2024, I began writing a "prequel" to the Collective Obsessions Saga, which meant I was writing two books at once for a few months. The books include Hearts in Sorrow (prequel), and Limb of Iniquity (final installment). It brings the series to a nice, round number of ten books for the series.

I have since finished Hearts in Sorrow (receiving a publishing contract for it in July 2024), and I'm currently focusing all of my attention on Limb of Iniquity.



The storyline for Hearts in Sorrow is outlined below (or "blurbed," if you will).

SHORT BLURB:

Long before emigrating to America to settle the town of Larkin, Maine, John Larkin falls for the hauntingly beautiful Maeve O'Quinn in his native Ireland. Although

frail, she returns the love of the future Larkin patriarch in full measure as she envisions a rosy life with him, little knowing that fate has other plans for them.

LONG BLURB:

The Collective Obsessions Saga begins with the prequel, Hearts in Sorrow.

Years before emigrating to America to settle the town of Larkin, Maine in 1866, John Larkin falls for the flame-haired and green-eyed Maeve O'Quinn in his native Ireland. Although frail, she returns the future Larkin patriarch's love in full measure as she envisions a rosy life with him. Yet their love is not meant to be as fate cruelly intervenes to deny them.

After an unimaginable tragedy, John is left numb with grief but forges ahead to establish his own family. He settles for Anne O'Quinn, Maeve's older sister, who holds no candle to Maeve's beauty. Anne is tall and awkwardly big-boned, with golden brown hair, a long narrow face and dark coal eyes. She quickly agrees to marry John, secretly in love with the dashing man who had been meant for her sister.

Anne wonders if their marriage will be enough to hold John's interest, especially after they emigrate to America.

Or will he forsake her for another?

The cover art for the book cover was obtained from [Vitalentum](#) via [Ace](#), where the "free AI imagery hub is for business and personal use." So, in truth, the image is not of a real person but rather an AI-enhanced vision. The cover text and layout were edited by yours truly.

After the first round of editing, Hearts in Sorrow came in at 130 pages with 49,431 words. From start to finish, Hearts in Sorrow took me about three months to write. It is not an overly long novel, unlike other titles in the Collective Obsessions Saga, but it

was ample for establishing the love story between John Larkin and Maeve O'Quinn as she did not live much beyond her 19th birthday.

I sent the manuscript to my publisher, who in turn sent me a contract for the book on July 20th. I've said it many times before, but receiving a publishing contract never gets old, and in no way do I take it for granted. It gives me a thrill each time. If all goes according to plan, the e-book and paperback editions of Hearts in Sorrow should be released by Christmas 2024.

I also mentioned to my publisher that I was now working on Limb of Iniquity (the final part of the Collective Obsessions Saga), the timeframe for which takes place during the pandemic (2020-2022). Her reply: "That sounds fascinating, really looking forward to it. Once it's been published, we should consider a boxed set of the whole series as part of the sales initiative." I'm all for that!

~ IN PROGRESS ~

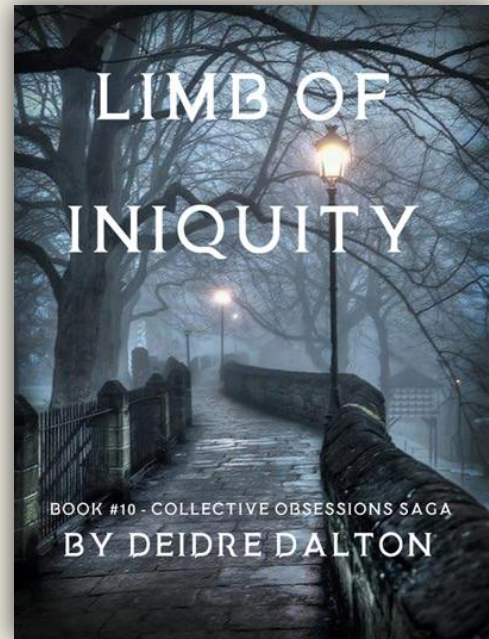
Currently in progress:

❖ Limb of Iniquity (2025; *final novel in the Collective Obsessions Saga*)

I've been making my way through Limb of Iniquity over the last few months, gathering all the points together so as to end the Collective Obsessions Saga once and for all. Hence the scarcity of my summer blog posts. Every waking moment seems to be focused on the book, leaving me little time for anything else.

Some characters in Limb of Iniquity *do* die (naturally or by nefarious means) because the timeline takes place during the COVID epidemic (roughly 2020-2022). At the moment, eight people are written in to expire in the fictional town of Larkin City, Maine. Some characters are very well known, others not so much.

There are also a handful of new characters in Limb of Iniquity. Perhaps one of the most enjoyable aspects of creating new characters - for me - is dreaming up new names, which can be inspired by a variety of things (sights, sounds, et al). Designating their physical descriptions and personality quirks is also quite pleasurable. Thankfully, I keep an updated spreadsheet that lists all things for every character, primary as well as incidental. Since the spreadsheet includes all ten books in the Collective Obsessions Saga, it has become lengthy indeed (and something readers will never see). *(Above right): Possible alternate book cover for Limb of Iniquity.*



At the moment, I'm toying with the idea of bringing back Scott Page's ghost to deal with his illegitimate offspring, Alexandra St. John Cimarelli. He showed himself as an ethereal presence in Megan's Legacy, so why not again? It would be a nice way to round out the storyline, the finale for which I have yet to firmly decide on.

I hope to have Limb of Iniquity complete by the end of the year - two more months to go. Wish me luck!

Other books in the works:

- ❖ Celtic Fragments (*sequel to Celtic Remnants; 2026*)
- ❖ Spirit of the Ossuary (*prequel to The Crypt Artist; 2026*)

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

~ FICTIONAL GENEALOGY ~

There are many complicated family tree software programs available online, but I rely on Famtree. It's been around for ages, yet it is still the best genealogy application I've ever used (even better than Ancestry.Com and Roots Magic). It is currently compatible with Windows 7, 8, 8.1, and 10.

Search complete - please click on a name or select from menu or toolbar

Adkins Kyle	b 25 Oct 1979	91	Latimer Cory	b 1954	84	Sullivan Michael Kev	b 30 Jun 1881	8
Amareto Maria There	b 1910	66	Lombardi Emma	b 1941	56	Sullivan Sara	b 31 Oct 1961	37
Barton-Brooks Layla	b 29 Nov 1878	19	Maitland Dana Lee	b 12 Feb 1951	30	Woods Leo	b 1937	98
Barton-Brooks Nigel	b 10 Feb 1850	63	Maxwell Kimberly	b 1978	51	Woods Mariko	b 17 May 1963	74
Berger Mason	b 3 Feb 1896	87	Maxwell Lynette	b 1977	50	Woods Sachiko (Fujiw	b 1940	99
Bisiker Linda Marie	b 24 Jul 1937	35	Maxwell Peter	b 1940	49			
Castaneda Lucas	b 4 Apr 1969	81	McGarren Colleen	b 29 Jan 1901	11			
Chamberlain Marianne	b 29 Dec 1947	28	McGarren Phoebe	b 6 May 1899	72			
Cimarelli Thomas	b 2 Apr 1960	26	McGarren Rory	b 1850	70			
Cimarelli Vittorio	b 13 Nov 1934	55	McShane Sascha	b 27 Oct 1864	5			
Cooper Finley	b 9 Jun 1979	80	Miles Richard	b 1933	64			
Cooper Kerry	b 29 Oct 2012	100	Mondoux Claude	b 10 Feb 1845	95			
Cooper Oliver	b 7 Sep 1954	79	Mondoux Ysabel Amelo	b 1926	66			
Cooper Sascha	b 26 Aug 2015	103	O'Connor Jennifer	b 17 Feb 1911	22			
Darcy Libbetta	b 21 Jan 2003	106	O'Larkin Kevin Patri	b 1800	90			
Dobson Joseph	b 29 Mar 1935	54	O'Quinn Anne	b 27 Feb 1834	2			
Durand François	b 1806	97	O'Quinn Dary	b 1804	57			
Fitzgerald Fiona	b 1814	58	O'Quinn Maev	b 1836	59			
Gallagher Bridget	b 29 Jan 1974	73	O'Reilly Carly (Char	b Mar 1949	34			
Garrity Rachel	b 1810	61	O'Reilly Susan	b 15 Mar 1932	33			
Gilyard Andrew	b 11 Dec 1982	101	O'Toole Denise	b 3 Dec 1927	45			
Gilyard Colin	b 31 May 2013	102	Page Angela Maria	b 12 Oct 1972	25			
Gunther Leonard	b 3 Jan 1951	82	Page Gabriel	b 15 Jun 2003	89			
Halloway Steven	b 1960	69	Page James	b 12 Dec 1973	27			
Hardy Franklin	b 1960	67	Page Scott James	b 9 Jan 1939	24			
Hogan Cora Ann	b 1939	104	Page William James	b 1904	65			
Kelly Maureen	b 1865	10	Pemberton Petra	b 6 Jun 1959	78			
LaBrecque Mary Maure	b 17 Aug 1931	15	Pettibone Clea	b 29 Oct 1855	62			
Larkin Ambrose	b 12 Aug 1974	29	Rhodes Samantha	b 1862	71			
Larkin Brian John	b 3 Apr 1920	12	Rossi Carl	b 1947	83			
Larkin Daijiro	b 31 Jul 2004	76	Sansovino Adelina	b 1943	93			
Larkin Daitaro	b 31 Jul 2004	75	Sansovino Antonio	b 1964	94			
Larkin Derek Sean	b 11 Feb 1983	31	Sansovino Desideria	b 23 Nov 1971	88			
Larkin Diana Shannon	b 11 Feb 1983	32	Sansovino Jacopo	b 12 May 1967	90			
Larkin John Ke ****	b 31 Oct 1829	1	Sansovino Mario	b 1940	92			
Larkin Kevin John	b 28 Mar 1945	46	St. John Alexander	b 1938	105			
Larkin Liam Rory	b 14 Aug 1948	47	St. John Alexandra	b 19 Dec 1995	86			
Larkin Mary Ma ****	b 7 Aug 1864	4	St. John Andrea	b 22 Jun 1958	85			
Larkin Megan Charlen	b 1 Jan 1985	48	Standish James	b 1959	68			
Larkin Patrick	b 6 May 1895	6	Sullivan Aidan Jack	b 21 Oct 1886	20			
Larkin Roderick John	b 28 Oct 1859	3	Sullivan Colm ****	b 17 Mar 1860	7			
Larkin Rory Kevin	b 24 Feb 1924	13	Sullivan George	b 15 Mar 1932	23			
Larkin Sean Brian	b 20 Aug 1951	18	Sullivan Jean-Claude	b 4 Nov 1907	21			
Larkin Shannon ****	b 20 Aug 1951	17	Sullivan John Rory	b 30 Jun 1881	9			
Larkin Tara	b 5 Nov 2007	77	Sullivan Micha ****	b 11 Jan 1956	36			

(Above): Worksheet page of Famtree, depicting the Larkin-Sullivan families.

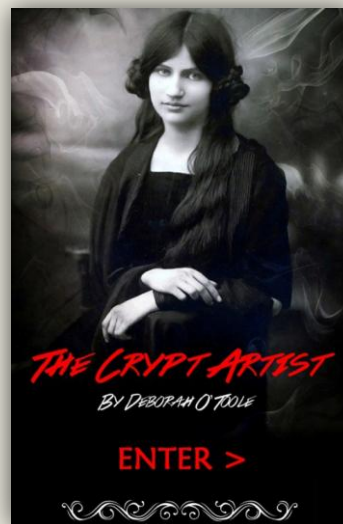
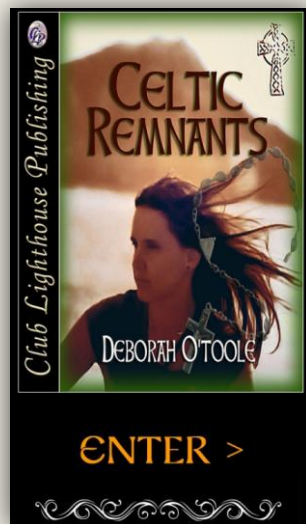
Famtree has been essential to me in building and tracking the fictional Larkin and Sullivan families in relation to the Collective Obsessions Saga. I cannot sing high enough praise to the program and its creator, Phil Sapiro.

Without it, I wouldn't have been able to create the Larkin-Sullivan Family Tree. The software, along with a text spreadsheet, helped me organize and keep consistent technical relationships between fictional characters through the generations, along with images, historical notations, birthdates, marriage and divorce dates, death dates

and other pertinent information. The most handy tool in the software was the "find relationship with" feature, which allowed me to click on one name in the family tree and find his/her relationship with any other name on the list in an instant. I highly recommend [Famtree](#) to anyone who desires to create their own family tree (for real).

~ WEB UPDATES & NEW LOGOS ~

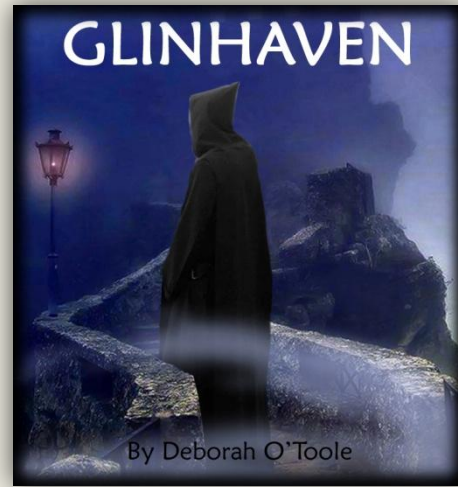
In keeping with my recent spin into re-doing book websites, I took a stab at new designs for my novels [Celtic Remnants](#) and [The Crypt Artist](#).



Hands down, the new "splash" page for [Mind Sweeper](#) turned out the best:



I also toyed with new logos for various books, including The Crypt Artist and Glinhaven.



Other new designs (Bloodline Trilogy and my official website):





I find creating designs quite relaxing, as odd as it may sound. It is third only to my love of writing and reading.

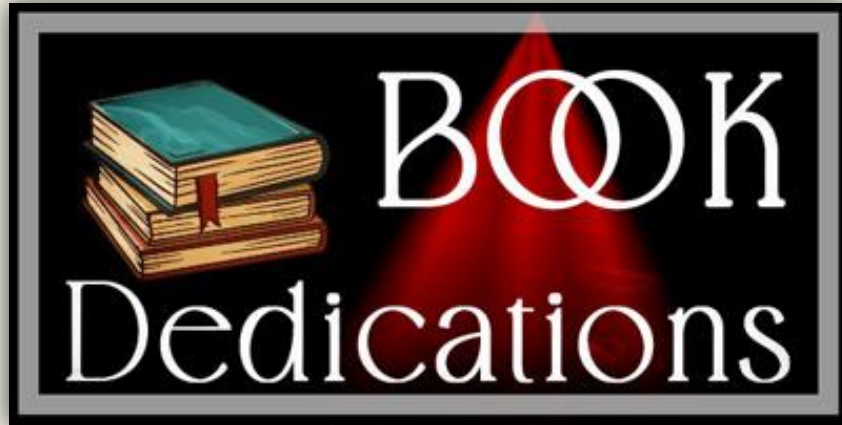
~ BOOKS & STUFF ~

Since Adobe no longer supports their flash video software, I went ahead and re-created all of my book covers in simple fashion to form a new gallery.



<https://deborahotoole.com/bookgallery/>

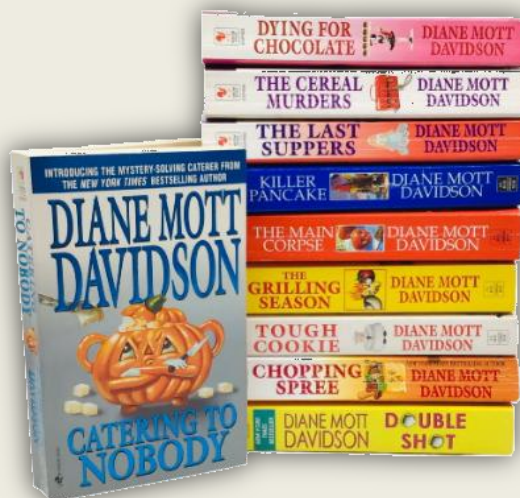
In addition, a [new page](#) has been launched on my website, which includes photo snapshots taken from the dedication pages of paperback books by yours truly and my pseudonym, [Deidre Dalton](#).



<https://deborahotoole.com/bookdedications.htm>

~ LEISURE ACTIVITIES ~

Many years ago, I read the entire *Goldy Schulz* cozy mystery series by [Diane Mott Davidson](#). I recently re-read the entire collection of seventeen books, bringing much pleasant simplicity to my otherwise frenetic world.



Jerry and I also became immersed in the "re-make" of the multi-part [Shogun](#) TV program, which was initially offered as a [mini-series](#) in 1980. I read the same-named

book by James Clavell many times over the years, and was suitably impressed by the telly redo, which was broadcast on the FX network.

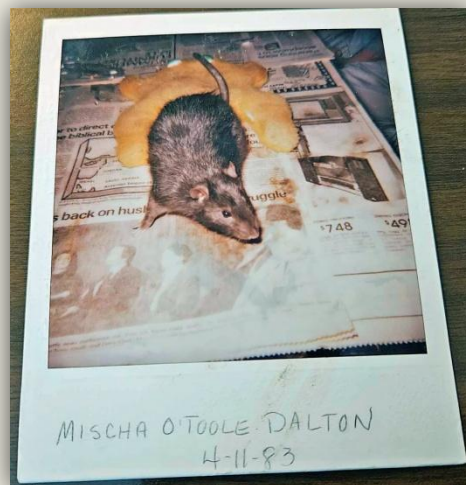
There is talk that a second season might be in the offering, although Clavell's book did not go beyond the original ending depicted in both the 1980 and 2024 television versions of the story.

Time will tell, but I'll be watching. :)

~ REMEMBERING MISCHA ~

Many years ago, when Jerry and I were married to each other in our youthful 20s, our first pet together was a black rat named Mischa. I didn't find her in a dark alleyway, but rather in a clean and reputable pet store in Taylorsville, Utah.

Jerry recently found a photo of Mischa, taken in April 1983:



Mischa was a sweet, gentle creature. She used to love curling herself into my hip-length black hair, and sleeping on my shoulder. Her favorite meal was scrambled eggs, which I cooked in a small dish in the microwave.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, rats tend to have a short lifespan. They can endure from anywhere between two to four years. Unfortunately, Mischa didn't make it to

her second birthday. I was devastated at the time, but made sure she had a proper burial in our backyard.

Some years later when I was thinking of a title for the seventh book in the [Short Tales Collection](#), I came up with [Foofer & the Magic Mischa](#). While the character in the book was a squirrel, the name came from my very fond remembrances of Mischa the rat.

~ UNTIL NEXT TIME ~

Another newsletter will likely be coming your way in Spring 2025, so keep your eyes peeled.

Meanwhile, visit my [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for updates, or go to my blog [Irish Eyes](#) to view recent posts.

Until next time - *happy reading* . . . and Happy Halloween!

Deborah O'Toole 🍀

Friday, 11th October 2024



Newsletter fonts: *Adobe Garamond Pro* and *Trajan Pro* (headings).