

DEBORAH O'TOOLE

Spring Newsletter, 2020

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Hello dear readers,

Being a writer is isolating in itself, for the most part. However, the recent COVID-19 virus scare has made the isolation seem all too genuine, removing the self-imposed structure of my days in real time. Whether I want it or not, it is a simple fact of life for now. While I'm accustomed to solitude because of writing, having it enforced is a different kettle of fish. There is no avenue of escape, no sudden decision to head out the door on a whim.

The suggestion of "social distancing" has overtaken the norm, and none of us can predict how long it will endure.

I was witness to panic-buying at the local grocery store on more than one occasion. Some people adorned masks for protection, while others didn't appear to be bothered by the near-pandemonium. I've only had to go to the store a few times, thankfully. My significant other has always seen fit to bulk buy foodstuff and other products, so we've had no shortage of supplies.

Adding to the anxiety was a 5.7 earthquake in my community in mid-March. No one was injured, thankfully, but during the quake books fell off shelves, and a few dishes toppled out from cupboards and landed on the kitchen counter. The ensuing aftershocks have been unpleasant as well. To say the least, it has been keeping us all on our toes.

For most of March, I kept busy with [Bloodlust](#), and prepping for the release of [Glinhaven](#). When a break was needed, I made my way to the kitchen to concoct various meals, sometimes with the help of my significant other. We put together mini-

pizzas on wheat pita bread, green salad with homemade olive oil and red wine vinegar dressing, pressure-cooker steaks and pork chops, scalloped potatoes and chili in the crock pot, biscuits and gravy, and an endless variety of muffins.

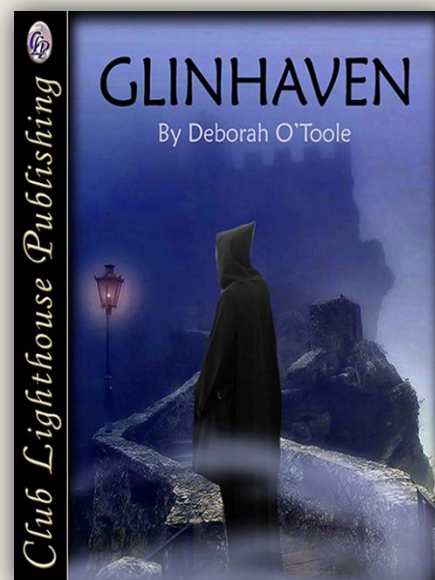
As confirmed cases of people with the virus increase by the day and the death toll rises as well, I watch the daily news with dismay. The situation is an international crisis, which I'm praying is resolved sooner rather than later.

Stay safe out there. 💕💕💕

~ GLINHAVEN ~

Glinhaven was released by Club Lighthouse Publishing on April 8, 2020. The novel is available in multiple e-book formats from Club Lighthouse, and in both Kindle and paperback editions from Amazon.

Piper Hunt leaves Boston to take over her grandfather's unique curio shop in Glinhaven, Massachusetts. While adjusting to life in the quaint seaside village, she uncovers dark secrets hidden at the forbidding Glinhaven Monastery which may also unlock mysteries from her past.



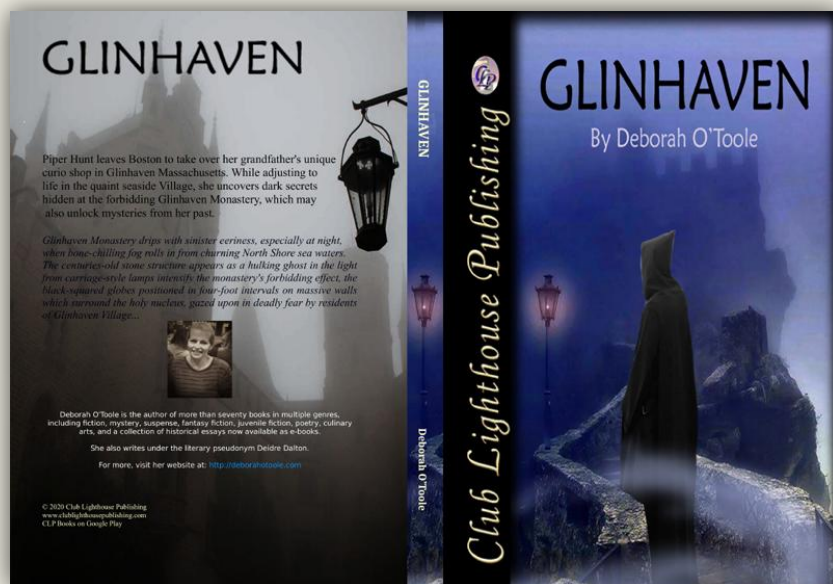
There are some extra goodies accompanying Glinhaven, including a cookbook derived from characters and food mentioned in the story line, excerpts, book cover history, Q&A, Cast of Characters, FAQs About Monks, The Cats of Glinhaven and a bit about Piper's Hats.

Those who purchase Glinhaven through Amazon will receive a free e-edition of Glinhaven Cookery, which is a collection of more than 45 recipes mentioned or prepared by characters in the fiction novel. The cookbook will be e-mailed separately to those who buy the novel. *Bon Appetit!*

And there is now an official website for Glinhaven, where news about the book will be posted regularly.



When my publisher first received the manuscript for Glinhaven, she made a comment along the lines of "it has a Dark Shadows feel to it." No higher compliment could come my way, because that's exactly what I set out to do when I began writing Glinhaven.



By the way, I adore the new cover for Glinhaven, depicting the monk in his robe as he approaches Glinhaven Monastery in the mist. *Is it Brother Albert, perhaps?* Much thanks and appreciation to T.L. Davison and James Wason for the enigmatic rendition.

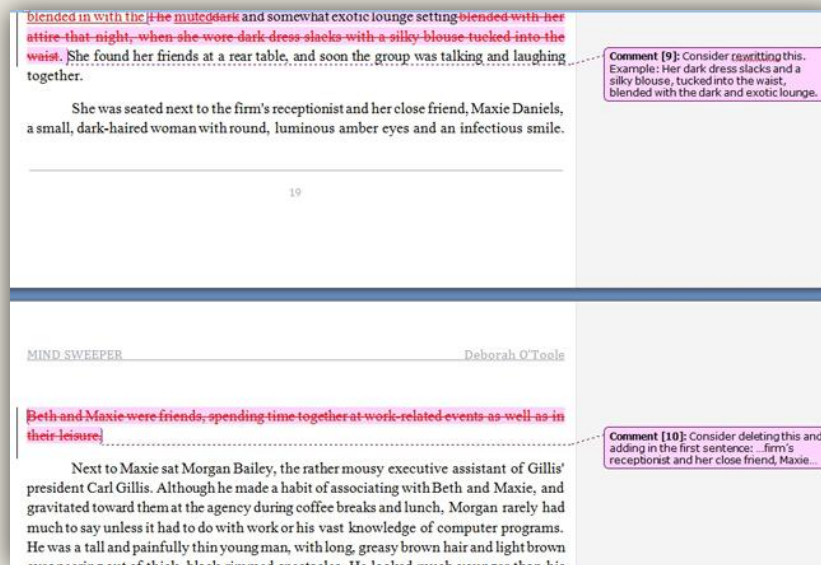
I'm thrilled with the release of Glinhaven for a few reasons. First, I love the storyline and the characters within. Second, I'm inexorably drawn to the book cover. It is haunting and unique, much as the story itself is. And last, but not least, I'm happy with the writing style of the novel. As I've said many times before, Glinhaven is my ode to the gothic fiction genre.

Hopefully, I was able to do it justice.

~ EDITING X 2 ~

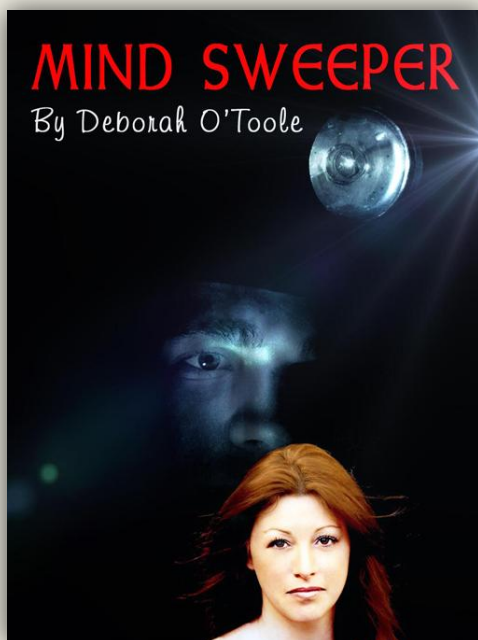
Editing two different books at once is not my idea of heaven, but that's exactly what I found myself doing for the first few weeks of March.

I worked with my editor Palvi on Mind Sweeper, which is slated for release in late May 2020. While proficient with many software programs and applications, I'm not so familiar with the "editing" mode in Microsoft Word. Plus, my 2007 version of the software misbehaves with irritating regularity. However, we finally made it through. I'm so appreciative to Palvi Sharma for her expertise, as well as her infinite patience. Final word count for Mind Sweeper: 70,800.



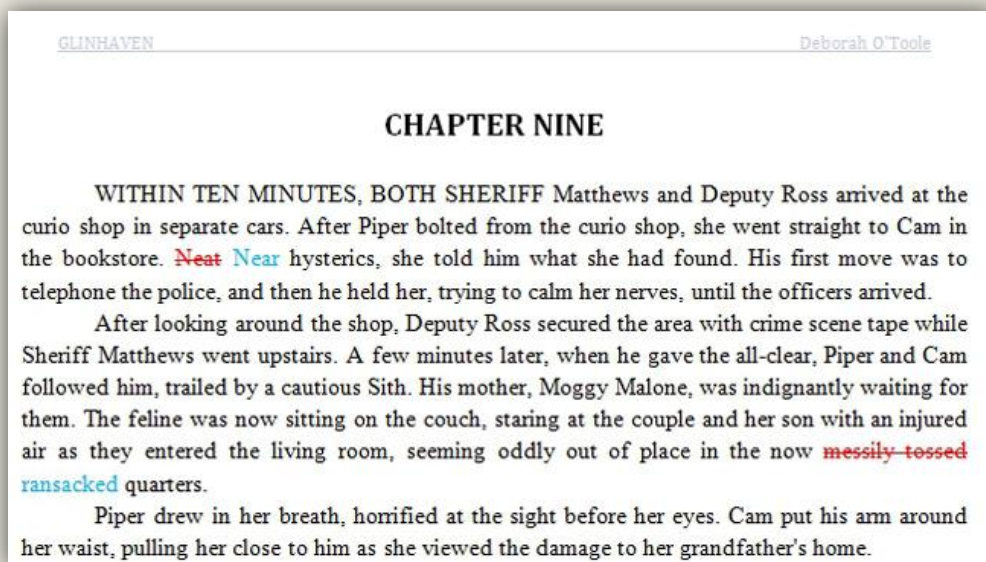
(Above): Editing Mind Sweeper in Word.

A new cover for Mind Sweeper is also under consideration.



(Above): Possible new cover for Mind Sweeper.

Around the same time, my publisher Terrie Balmer (owner and CEO of Club Lighthouse Publishing), sent me suggested revisions for Glinhaven. Since the novel had an imminent release date, I jumped right into the edits. Thank you, Terrie, for making my writing life much easier. Final word count for Glinhaven: 92,216.



(Above): Editing Glinhaven in Word.

How stressful was it to edit two very different books, back-to-back? Oddly enough, not as difficult as it sounds. The two novels are so far removed from each other in content, as well as characters, that I had no difficulty in maneuvering my way through all of it.

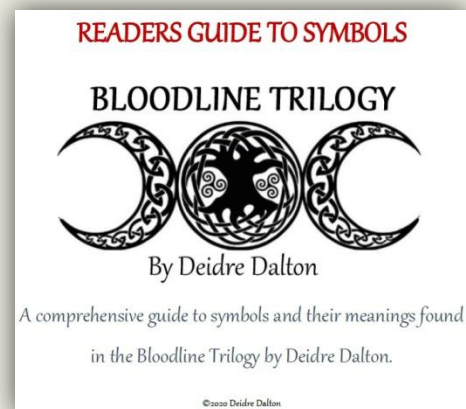
I'm still in the midst of writing Bloodlust, but The Crypt Artist, while complete, still has to go through the final editing stages. The novel may be coming your way in late summer or early autumn.

2020 has turned out to be a very busy year, indeed.

~ IN PROGRESS ~

Bloodlust is my primary focus at the moment. My goal is to have the novel complete by summer's end. However, there has been a copious amount of research involved during the writing process as I'm honing in on symbolism to be a semi-staple throughout the Bloodline Trilogy. I recently received a paperback copy of *Maiden, Mother & Crone* by D.J. Conway, which is proving to be a valuable tool in my attempt to piece together a "triple goddess" feel to the collective storylines in the trilogy. Basically, the Bloodline Trilogy is about a uniquely magical yet ominous journey of three women through time. To that end, I'm assembling hints of the triple goddess myth in the books. The premise is certainly not the primary focus in the storylines, but is rather alluded to on occasion.

None of the books in the Bloodline Trilogy are about witchcraft or pagan lore, but the representation of Maiden, Mother & Crone (and the various symbols associated with them), reminds me of the rather intricate and uniquely magical blood ties between my three female characters. 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 (*Samantha Beckett*), the underworld and full moon (*Kate Grady*), and the heavens and waning moon (*Noel Gatsby*).

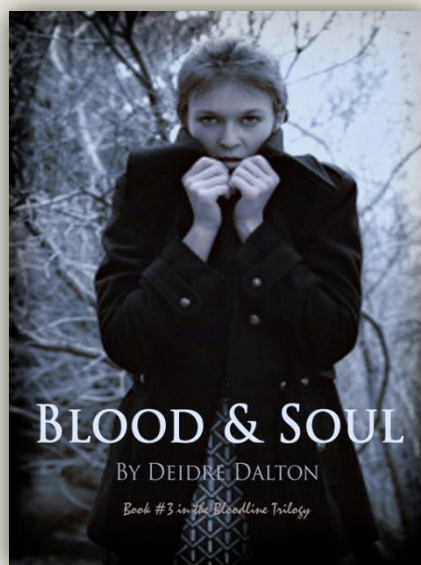
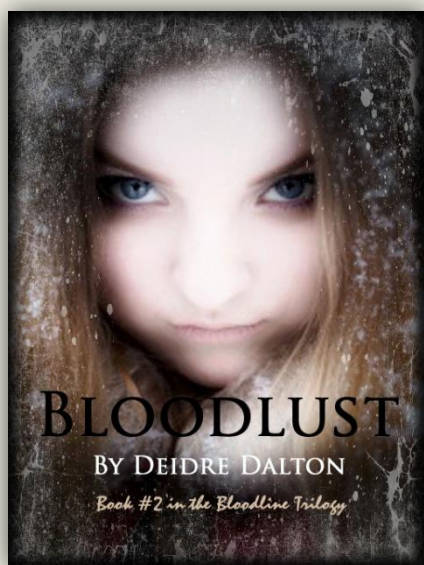


I've also developed an offline document to keep track of all the symbolism present (*pictured above*), which I will make available once all three books have been published, probably by 2021.



(Above): Research bookmark being used in relation to the Bloodline Trilogy.

It's difficult to see in the photo above, but the bookmark I'm using for research into triple goddess symbolism for the Bloodline Trilogy has three 3-D owls as the background. Very apropos, without intention.



(Above): New book covers for Bloodlust (left) and Blood & Soul (right).

While boning-up on symbolism over the past several weeks, I also took an hour or so and played with the book cover designs for both Bloodlust and Blood & Soul. Sometimes, but not often, the quickest excursions into cover design brings about the best results. And so it did this time, luckily. Special thanks goes to artist Anton Belovodchenko for the wonderful photos, on which each cover was based.

Estimated dates of completion are as follows (as of this writing):

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

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

~ MORE LOCKDOWN ACTIVITIES ~

During the lengthy lockdown, I've managed to keep myself busy cooking, reading, writing, playing games, doing needlepoint and watching episodes of the old Dark Shadows television series on Tubi from my iPad. It helps pass the time during frequent lulls, and when the daily grind becomes akin to sheer boredom.



(Above): Watching "Dark Shadows" on my iPad.

In my younger days I used to needlepoint with regularity, but not so much in recent years. I was never much of a "crafty" person and wasn't really talented in that area, yet I enjoyed the process. It felt soothing after a long day. However, I picked up the habit again a few months ago and now have four different projects in the works.



(Above): Current needlepoint projects.

As for reading, over the space of the last few weeks I read through all of my books in print (Bloodfrost, Celtic Remnants and all eight novels in the Collective Obsessions Saga). It was quite entertaining, and I enjoyed every minute of it. I also began re-reading the Dark Shadows novels by Marilyn Ross (*aka Dan Curtis*), which were originally published between 1966 and 1972. All thirty-two books in the series are being re-issued by Hermes Press, so I have started to collect and read them again. I'm also toying with acquiring the many titles in the Nancy Drew series by Carolyn Keene, but have made no moves in that direction as of yet. I loved the books as a teen and twenty-something. Despite their simplicity and wholesomeness, the books are cleverly well-written and enjoyable to read.



(Above): The original "Dark Shadows" novels by Marilyn Ross.

And just recently, Jerry and I spent a Saturday in [Delle, Utah](#), where we rode the ATVs for a few hours. It was a breath of fresh air to get out of the house and to roam open spaces. We came across groups of black cows who were grazing peacefully, but eyeing us with wariness. The baby calves running about were a delight to watch, taking off like shots when we drove by. It was a much-needed respite from the abnormal ordinary awaiting us back home.

~ UNTIL NEXT TIME ~

Another newsletter will be coming your way in late autumn/early winter 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.

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

Deborah O'Toole 🍀

Wednesday, 15th April 2020

