

DEBORAH O'TOOLE

Summer Newsletter, 2022

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Hello dear readers,

It probably goes without saying, but I *really love books*. I'm fine with reading e-books, yet I prefer novels I can hold in my hands. I adore the feel and the smell of print books, and I'm endlessly fascinated by written words which seem to appear like magic on the pages. I love being surrounded by shelves and mounds of books, anyplace, anytime. My first act when I want to relax is to reach for a book. I read every single day, without fail.



Being an author and not just a reader, I can also appreciate the structure, struggle and supreme satisfaction one has to endure and enjoy in order to create a story in the first place. The germ of an idea, the planning stages and ever-changing outlines, creating character spreadsheets to maintain consistency throughout, the thrill of penning the end on the last page, even the painful task of editing, is all part of the process. I wouldn't change it for anything in the world.

Having a vivid imagination helps, too. Being an only child, I was quite often left to my own devices. It was either create something interesting, or go mad with boredom. It obviously carried over into my adult life because my imagination still runs wild at times, especially when I'm writing or contemplating a new project. In the middle of it all is the awareness of other writing elements: plot construction, threading and strident

attempts to keep from meandering. And as loathsome as the editing process sometimes is, it is quite often the last saving grace.

I don't claim to be brilliant, deep or otherwise prolific as an author. However, I know I'm a better writer than I was ten years ago, and hope to become even better as time marches on. I can say, without a doubt, that the drive to write is very strong within me. It always has been, as my memory serves to date. Whether I'm any good at it is left for the reader to decide. Either way, I'll likely continue to write as long as there is breath in my body and lucidity in my thoughts.

Writing is a continual learning process, which is the way it should be.

~ BLOOD & SOUL ~

I finished Blood & Soul at 10:23am on February 21, 2022. Before two intense editing sessions, the book was 201 pages long with a 90,249 word count. After the edits, it came in at 223 pages and 99,674 words.

The piecemeal way in which I wrote Blood & Soul filled me with doubt for a time, but now I'm of the opinion it's the best book in the Bloodline Trilogy. I rarely see a book as "best," but I feel it with Blood & Soul.



Blood & Soul was released by Club Lighthouse Publishing in June 2022, thus ending the Bloodline Trilogy in all of its debatable glory. It was a long haul, eight years from start to finish (with interruptions in between, of course), but the series is now complete.

The following is the last line on the last page of the book, without giving too much away:

❖ *Shoji's ethereal image grew fainter within seconds, finally dissolving into thin air and into the night.*

Once again, thanks to Terrie Lynn Balmer, Palvi Sharma and James Wason from Club Lighthouse Publishing for their welcome input and invaluable assistance in bringing Blood & Soul to fruition.

~ IN PROGRESS ~

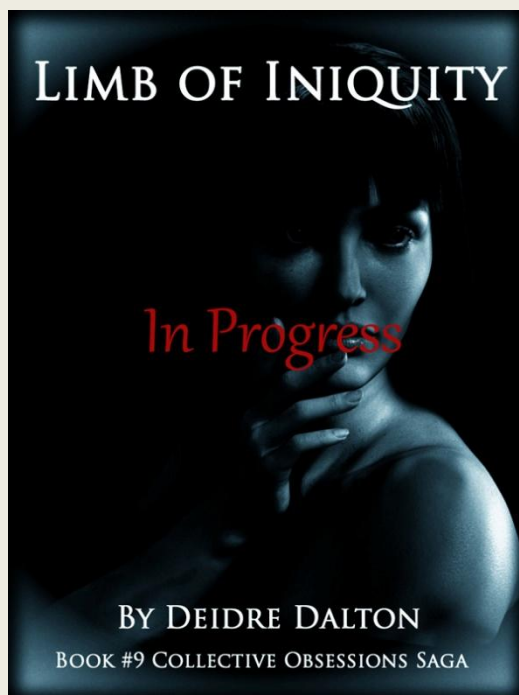
Books currently in progress:

- ❖ Limb of Iniquity (2023)
- ❖ In the Shadow of the King (Christmas 2023)

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

~ LIMB OF INIQUITY ~

Speaking of Limb of Iniquity, upcoming 9th book in the Collective Obsessions Saga, I've spent the last several weeks revisiting many old - and developing a few new - characters for the storyline.



Perhaps two of the most interesting new characters include Suki Sutton Shimada and Quinton Cabot. Each one, in their own way, abet Alexandra St. John on her nefarious mission to destroy Shannon Larkin.



(Above, left to right): Depictions of new characters Suki Sutton Shimada and Quinton Cabot.

Suki is technically the professional boss of Alex and Quinton (whom Alex calls "Quint"). They work for her fashion design company, developing perfumes for a famously growing catalogue. Suki is somewhat formal with most of her employees, but she takes a great liking to Alex. The two women become close friends, even sharing a bed together on occasion. Suki lives in a townhouse on Perry Street in the West Village.

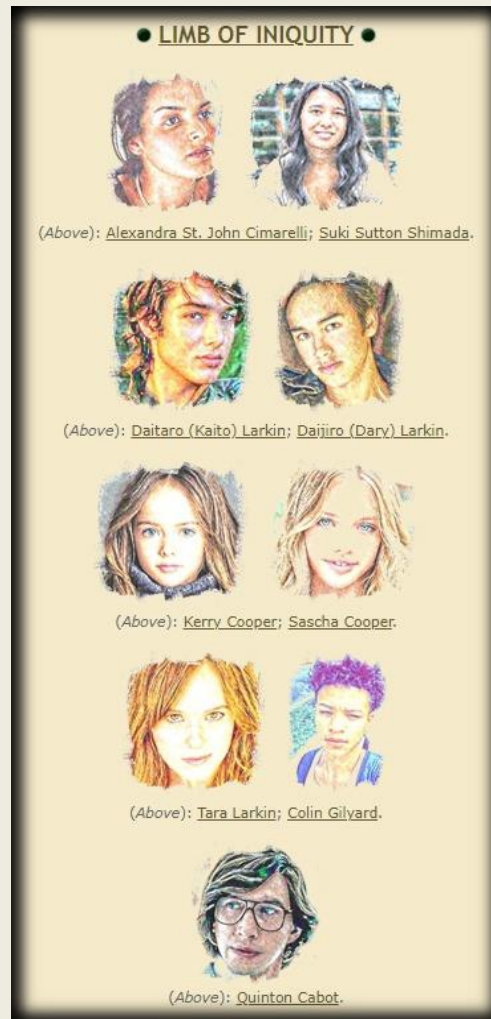
Alex's friends and co-workers assume Tom and Angie Cimorelli are her real parents. She never lets on that she was adopted by her half-sister, Angie, preferring that her dubious past be kept hidden. She barely remembers her birth mother, Andrea, or her grandmother, Cora Ann Hogan.

Quint was born Quinton Edward Cabot unto Adam and Lacey Cabot on Friday, 19 November 1993 at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. Lacey Astor Cabot inherited family money from her mother, while Adam developed a career as a software engineer. Quint attended New York University, where he received a BA in chemical engineering (2011-2015). He began working for Suki Sutton Shimada as a perfumer shortly afterward, but not meeting Alexandra St. John Cimorelli until she joined the design firm in 2018.



Quint and Alex develop a close friendship rather quickly, spending copious amounts of time together as they concoct perfumes for Suki Sutton Shimada. In time, they create *Calamity Untamed* (wildflowers in a black-pink bottle), *Calico Breeze* (coconut and vanilla in beige packaging), *Nocturnal Lunacy* (sage and sea salt mixed with patchouli, blue-green packaging with black lettering), *Onyx Jade* (black violets in a black/emerald bottle with gold lettering), *Purrvessence* (cream and sugar cookie scent for children, brass/white packaging), and *Waterfall Bay* (lemon and lime scents mixed with wild cherries, dark red and deep yellow packaging). Eventually, Quint and Alex also develop a line of natural soaps and body splashes: *Almond Cream*, *Cherry Dreamscape*, *Cinnamon Sticks*, *Earthy Musk*, *Mint Reflections*, *Poppy & Pears* and *Vanilla Pearl*.

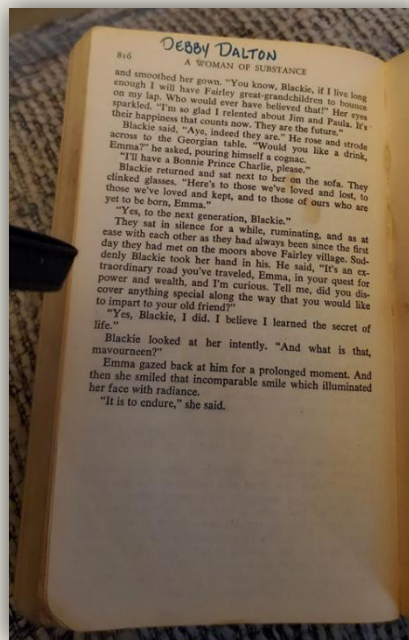
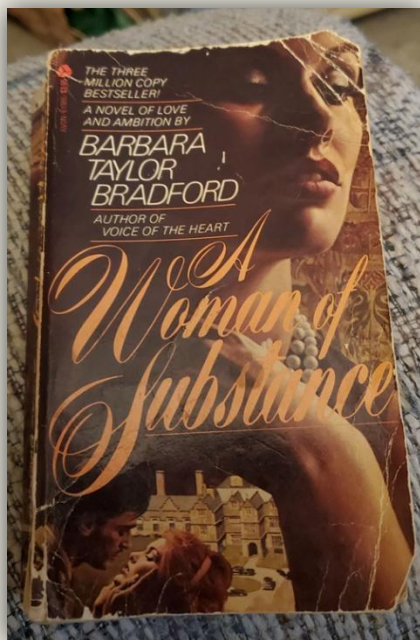
Other new characters include some of the following:



Creating characters is one of the most enjoyable aspects of writing to me. I allow my imagination to run wild, unfettered by historical facts and reality. ;)

~ NOD TO BTB ~

Every five years or so, I re-read *A Woman of Substance* by Barbara Taylor Bradford, along with the book's six sequels. I still have the first copy I bought of *A Woman of Substance*, which was acquired in the early 1980s when Jerry and I were married (hence "Debby Dalton" written on the last page).



The following is my review of the novel, written many years ago:

Book Review by Deborah O'Toole:

"A WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE"

Never has a book inspired so much emotional feeling and admiration for basic human determination. I know this sounds a bit exaggerated, but it's true. *A Woman of Substance* by Barbara Taylor Bradford is one of those rare books that hold the reader spellbound in amazement. While fictional, the premise of the book is quite possible. A young girl named Emma Harte rises from the ashes of poverty and becomes one of the richest and most powerful businesswomen in the world. The people who took advantage of her, or abused her as a child, are paid back with all the cold vengeance Emma came to possess as she grew more powerful.

Bradford's writing is exceptional and follows the twists and turns of her character with fascinating detail. For women readers especially, the book makes one feel that anything is possible. You can be as low as you can possibly be at some point in your life, but eventually you can find a way out and realize your dreams.

A Woman of Substance is rich in detail, dialog and dramatic scenes. You feel as if you are really there with Emma, through every low and high point in her life. Her will and

determination to succeed will spurn you on from one chapter to the next, filling you with amazement as you go. Emma Harte's dreams come to fruition, making her the epitome of *A Woman of Substance*.

A Woman of Substance is a perfect example of personal courage, determination, ambition and success. You won't want this book to end, even when it does. The only consolation is the anticipation of reading the sequels: *Hold The Dream*, *To Be The Best*, *Emma's Secret*, *Unexpected Blessings*, *Just Rewards* and *Breaking the Rules*.

I re-read *A Woman of Substance* every few years, and enjoy it immensely each time. It is truly a testament to the extraordinary writing skills of Barbara Taylor Bradford.

A Woman of Substance is still one of my favorites, alongside *Trinity* by Leon Uris and *Bleeding Sorrow* by Marilyn Harris.

In my mind, they never get old.

~ LOGOS & SUCH ~

I thought it was time to re-do my blog ([Irish Eyes](#)) logo after more than a decade. The green eyes have been the mainstay since I began the blog, which is fine, but I think it's due for a change.



(Above): Longtime and current logo for my blog, [Irish Eyes](#).

I've narrowed the new logo down to the two following images. I'm leaning toward the light greenish logo.



I posted an entry on my [Facebook](#) page to see which version of the logo people preferred, and the majority of them favored the light-green variation.

What do *you* think? To respond, please send me a comment via my [Contact](#) page.

~ FELINE ANTICS ~

Our cats Dusty and Hissy still remain at odds with each other, so we have keep them separated for the most part. Dusty likes to be outside during the day (unless it's raining or overly windy), but he comes in the house at night. Jerry installed a "cat door" in the basement laundry room window, which allows Dusty to come and go as he pleases. No other creatures can get in because the door reads Dusty's chip and only

lets him have access. A 7pm to 6:30am curfew is set through an app on Jerry's phone so Dusty is safely inside the house during those hours.



(Above): Dusty O'Toole Dalton admiring his cat door.

I've always assumed cats were color blind, but Dusty seems to be strangely drawn to the color red. He has a red sack in the basement that he loves to hide in, as well as several red toys and a red blanket that he favors, not to mention a laser that darts around the room when he makes a move.



(Above): Dusty loves the color red!

And Hissy remains my faithful companion during the long days I spend in the computer room. She has a cat bed positioned on a chair behind my desk, where she snoozes for long stretches of time. She only stirs to go and drink water, or to meow at me for greenie treats.



(Above): Hissy is my faithful daytime companion.

I would love to come back as a cat in my next life, especially if I could pick owners such as Jerry and myself.

What a life! ;)

~ LEISURE ACTIVITIES ~

I've recently started collecting bookends with a gothic theme. I love the look of gargoyles and other related sundry, so my choices are predictable.

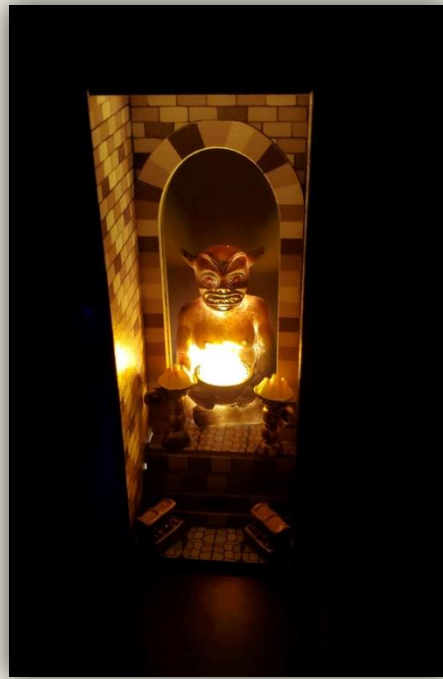
My newest acquisitions:











Per [Wikipedia](#):

In architecture, and specifically in Gothic architecture, a gargoyle is a carved or formed grotesque with a spout designed to convey water from a roof and away from the side of a building, thereby preventing rainwater from running down masonry walls and eroding the mortar between. In the Catholic church, the primary use of the gargoyle was to illustrate evil through the form of the gargoyle.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux was famous for speaking out against gargoyles carved on the walls of his monastery's cloister: "What are these fantastic monsters doing in the cloisters before the eyes of the brothers as they read? What is the meaning of these unclean monkeys, these strange savage lions and monsters? To what purpose are here placed these creatures, half beast, half man or these spotted tigers? I see several bodies with one head and several heads with one body. Here is a quadrupled with a serpent's head; there a fish with a quadrupled's head; then again an animal: half horse, half goat . . . Surely, if we do not blush for such absurdities, we should at least regret what we have spent on them."

On the flipside in other lore, I've read that gargoyles were placed on churches as part of the design to ward off evil forces. The television series [Charmed](#) once depicted gargoyles as warding off evil. When they sensed the presence of wickedness, they would become animated and screech to harm the evil near them.

Naturally, I prefer the myth where gargoyles ward off evil.

~ UNTIL NEXT TIME ~

Another newsletter will be coming your way in late autumn/early winter 2022, 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.

Have a lovely summer! And, until next time - *happy reading* . . .

Deborah O'Toole 🍀

Friday, 17th June 2022

