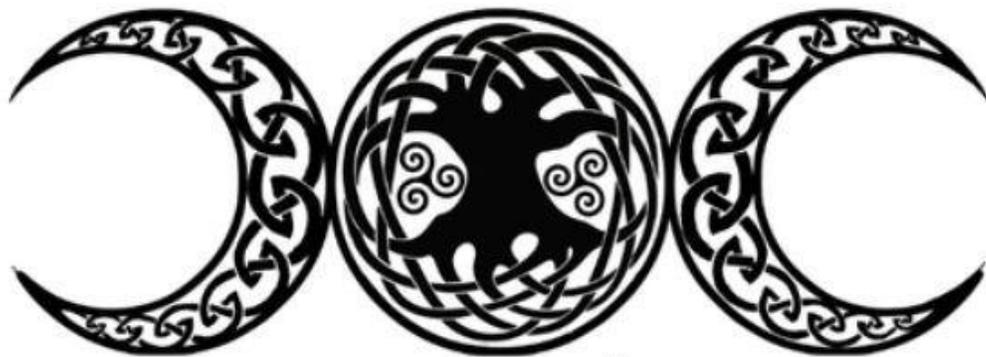


READERS GUIDE TO SYMBOLS

BLOODLINE TRILOGY



By Deidre Dalton

*A comprehensive guide to symbols and their meanings found
in the Bloodline Trilogy by Deidre Dalton.*

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INTRODUCTION

The following pages contain a guide to the symbols used in the Bloodline Trilogy, which begins in "Bloodfrost," continues with "Bloodlust," and concludes in "Blood & Soul."

Prominent symbols in the Bloodline Trilogy include candles, bells and crescent/triple moons. More than once, Noel envisions a combination of all three. According to her healer Shoji, the items represent notification (when other symbols are etched in candle holder glass), arrival or conception (bells), and a hint to the time Noel and Pim would conceive Kate (crescent moon).

Bluebells also figure in the storyline as symbols, beginning with "Bloodlust." During the train ride from London to Chester, Kate meets a sadly demented woman who demands of her: "Do you like bluebells, my dear?" And then warns her: "Don't forget to look for the bluebells. If you find them, remember my words. Death and evil lurk where bluebells grow."

Symbols in "Blood & Soul" are not as pronounced. However, Noel's dream about Emma telling her "it was time" might qualify, as does Pim's vision of a "fizzing circle" just before he dies and Shoji's prophecy to Noel: "Others you know will be taken away in a fiery explosion. They have served their purpose on this earth."

There is also a special section detailing the visions of Madge Tilley in this guide, which differ slightly from the typical sightings that Noel experiences in symbolism.

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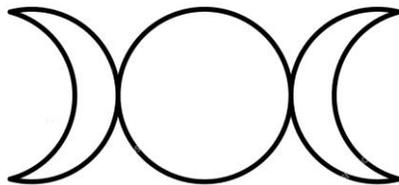
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God the Mother.

God the Daughter.

And she whose name has not been spoken in this world.

- Robert von Ranke Graves (1895-1985), 20th century British novelist and poet



GUIDE TO SYMBOLS

❖ BELLS

Bells are first mentioned in "Bloodfrost" when Noel Gatsby sees their imagery sketched on the glass holder of a candle. Pim Grady has a similar vision, separate from Noel's. Most of the sightings are to do with Christmas bells, specifically. For instance, Noel can hear the bells of St. Theresa's Church ringing in the distance. When she first hires on with Madge Tilley, she finds two pewter bells tied together with a velvety red bow. She also notices the city Christmas decorations on the street, where bells festooned with red ribbons at the intersection at Park Street and Belgrade Avenue as she walks home from work. There are other instances when bells play a prominent role in Noel's daily life, such as when she inadvertently chooses holiday bells as a Christmas gift for her neighbor, Alvin Carter, whom she and Pim suspect has also had a life-altering "healing."



Each of these sightings fill Noel with a sense of déjà vu, as if she is revisiting a former memory, or that the visions are trying to tell her something about the future. Later, Shoji tells her the bells are hinting at the conception of her daughter, Kate.

Indeed, Noel and Pim conceive Kate on Christmas night, as Noel hears and sees flashes of the bell-adorned streetlamp, and hears the distant bells of St. Theresa's Church signaling the advent of midnight mass.

It wasn't the bell so much that kept her momentarily transfixed, but rather the crescent moon glowing in its wake. For once, unlike the occasions when she viewed bells and half-moons separately in various forms, they were now aligned together in her line of vision. The bell nestled atop the streetlamp glowed with muted light, deflecting the gold color with a misty ambience, while the crescent moon was bright in the sky, providing a stark background tableau.

❖ BLOOD-DROP DAGGER EARRING

The blood-drop dagger earring is an ornament worn by Kirk Lester, which first appears in "Bloodlust." Noel has a dream about the earring just prior to when Kate meets Kirk for the first time. The dream is warning Noel about Kirk's arrival in their lives, and it also hints at his father's savage predilections (although unknown at the time).



In Noel's dream, her vision shows: "a distant, tall figure of a man following her daughter in the hallway, swathed in a dark duster coat and striding with purpose. The man soon overtook Kate, touching her shoulder from behind. Kate emitted an involuntary gasp, whirling around to face the apparition." In her dream, Noel could not decipher the tall man's facial features. They were blurry and indistinct, only his dark eyes burning like coal embers set against a deathly-pale tableau. Noel's attention was drawn to his left ear lobe, which was impaled by a tiny silver dagger with a red crystal blood drop dangling from the end. The sight of the dagger-like earring sent a chill down Noel's spine.

Then the faint scent of cigarettes mixed with Grey Flannel cologne assailed Noel's dreamlike senses, increasing her trepidation.

❖ BLUEBELLS

Bluebells also figure in the storyline as symbols, beginning with "Bloodlust." The "hyacinthoides non-scripta" are plentiful in the yards and gardens of Ken Lester and his great-aunt, Maura McInerney. SPOILER ALERT: Bluebells actually indicate where Ken Lester has buried the bodies of his victims in "Bloodlust."

During the train ride from London to Chester after arriving in England, Kate meets a sadly demented woman who demands of her: "Do you like bluebells, my dear?" And then warns her: "Don't forget to look for the bluebells. If you find them, remember my words. Death and evil lurk where bluebells grow."

In addition, Kate finds freshly-cut bluebells in the room she shares with Kirk in Maura's cottage. She eventually helps the older woman put together a catalog of her vast collection of herbs and spices, where she notes that crushed bluebells scattered in a specific place will protect it from discovery.



❖ CANDLES

Candles are the vehicle in which other symbols are dispatched, specifically etched in the glass of votive candle holders.



Noel's first "vision" comes about when she sees a crescent moon etched onto a glass candle holder in her dreary apartment. Pim has a similar vision, separate from hers. Noel next sees etched symbols at church, just prior to giving birth to Kate.

From Chapter Eleven of "Bloodfrost":

On the candle closest to the altar, Noel saw the depiction of a tiny dagger, with one solitary blood drop at its pointy tip. The blood drop appeared red because of the coloring of the glass, giving a realistic illustration of a dripping dagger. A few candles down, Noel deciphered another etching of crossbones and a tiny skull. Farther down still, she saw twin heart shapes – one colored black, the other red – entwined together at the base. Yet another showed a pair of lips, shaded black with a white outline. Finally, there was a tiny white face, its mouth opened to form a full circle, as if the subject was screaming out in pain.

❖ CRESCENT MOON (aka "half-moon") & THE TRIPLE GODDESS

The crescent moon becomes apparent to Noel just after her "healing" experience. She is sitting in her drab apartment with her mother, staring at two burning candles on the coffee table. Later, Shoji tells her sightings of the crescent moon gave hint to the time she would conceive her daughter, Kate.



In addition, the triple moons (aka Triple Goddess, or Maiden, Mother & Crone) becomes symbolic in the Bloodline Trilogy. As the storyline progressed with each book, I fancied the three women as far-fetched depictions of the Triple Goddess. 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), reminded 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 as the trilogy draws to a close. In pagan lore, they also rule different realms such as earth and the waxing moon (Emma), the underworld and full moon (Kate), and the heavens and waning moon (Noel).

From "Bloodfrost" (first sighting):

NOEL FIXED HER MOTHER'S dinner that night, and then settled on the sofa to watch television with her. Rather than turn on the lights, Noel lit a few scented candles so they wouldn't be in complete darkness. As June settled in to enjoy *As Time Goes By*, Noel allowed her mind to wander. Her eyes fell to the two candles flickering on the coffee table, their flames licking up the glass sides slowly.

The candles were quite old. Noel used them sparingly, knowing a new one might set her back nearly fifteen dollars. She favored cinnamon and spice scents, which were by now faint at best. Wax splatters marked the insides of the glass, creating spontaneous patterns. Her eyes traced one of the patterns, imagining it resembled the shape of a half-moon. She looked at the second candle, and thought she saw the clear outline of a tiny Christmas bell with bows on the glass.

"I'm seeing things," she thought. "Aren't I?" She stared at the candles for a long time, going back and forth between the waxy etchings. After a few minutes, she was convinced the half-moon and bell were present. She'd never noticed them before, so how was it possible?

She looked closer at the wax etchings as she deliberately stirred her tea slowly. The half-moon and bell were still there, almost as if they had been etched by a professional. Even the bow outlines were visible in the tiny bell representation, which puzzled Noel further.

She settled back on the sofa, tea cup in hand. Were the etchings some sort of message? If so, from whom? What could a half-moon and Christmas bell possibly signify? Were they simply reminders that the holidays were just around the corner? And why call attention to the obvious?

Noel sipped her tea absently. Perhaps the etchings were trying to tell her the miracle cure she was enjoying would come to an end at Christmastime in the light of the moon. Had Pim received a similar message in the way of symbols, or was it just her imagination running away with her?

In addition, the crescent moon appears on the front-cover design of a herb-collection journal Kate buys (in "Bloodlust") at The Paperchase stationary store in Chester, England, where they are living with Ken Lester's aunt, Maura McInerney.

Kate also receives a needlepoint of the triple moon from an unknown person, who is later revealed as Qwendolyn Baskerville. The item is mailed to her via her attorney CC Giampietro's office in Boston.

From Chapter Twenty-Nine of "Bloodlust":

One day, a large, flat envelope was delivered to CC's office. It contained no return address or note inside, but was postmarked from San Francisco, California. The contents included a framed needlepoint of the Triple Goddess symbol, with one full moon in the center surrounded by waxing and waning moons on each side. Kate was fascinated by it, tracing the blue and grey ridges of thread with her index finger. She asked CC if she could take it home. "It's all yours," she replied in agreement. "But why? It's rather odd, isn't it?"

"Yes," Kate told her with a smile. "Yet I like it."

Kate was stymied as to the identity of the sender. Who would know about the symbolism in regards to her, her baby, and Noel? A practicing witch, perhaps? While she tended to disbelieve the credibility of those who espoused witchery, Kate's experiences with her own abilities, not to mention those of her parents and Madge Tilley, left behind lingering doubt.

When Noel and Pim came over to the Lester house for lunch a few days later, bringing takeout fish and chips from the traditional Scottish Haven Cafe, Noel noticed the framed needlepoint on the hallway wall.

"Where did you get this?" She asked, standing close to the frame to inspect the needlework.

"It was sent anonymously from someone in San Francisco," Kate told her, coming to stand next to her mother in the hallway. "I know it's rather strange, but I took an immediate liking to it."

"Oh," Noel responded faintly, her mind going to Triple Goddess references from the past. Who in San Francisco would know of their connection?

And when Cabral and Darcy Beckett bring Emma home, the triple moons also figure into the story:

Cabral brought down his old oaken crib from the attic, which was large enough for a toddler, while Darcy hauled up the rocking chair from the living room, placing it strategically in front of the large window in the nursery. She visited the Bebe Lapin baby boutique in Mendocino town and picked out a basinet, surrounded by wispy white material and a lacy pillow. She bought generic baby clothes, with pacifiers, rattles, stuffed animals, and toys. She also looked through a catalog of miscellaneous decorations, choosing glow-in-the-dark ceiling appliqués that depicted stars and triple moon symbols. The stars winked subtly in the dark, while the triple moons seemed to glow around their outer edges.

Rather than buy baby food, Darcy prepared homemade versions of infant victuals using fruits and vegetable from their own garden. Within a month, she had canned and preserved varieties of softened apples, avocados, bananas, blueberries, carrots, grains, pears, pumpkins, rice, strawberries, sweet peas, winter squash, yams, and zucchini.

Now all that was left was the waiting for the child's birth, and then the Beckett family would be complete.

* * *

WHEN THEY FINALLY met their daughter for the first time, on a cold, rainy afternoon just after Halloween, both Cabral and Darcy fell in love. The baby girl was perfect to them, with wheat-colored fuzz on her head and blue, inquisitive eyes.

Darcy's heart melted the first time she held her daughter in her arms, but she was also highly aware of the birth grandmother's anguish in letting the child go. Noel Grady was affable, but the pain on her face, and that of her husband Pim, was palpable. They were giving up their grandchild, probably the most wrenching thing they would ever do.

Darcy meant what she said when she told Noel that she would keep in touch. She planned to e-mail Noel and send pictures of the baby and her new environment every month. She felt it was the least she could do, realizing that it was small consolation for the loss. Noel and Pim were not voluntarily surrendering their granddaughter but merely abiding by the decision made by of their own daughter. It was a difficult position to be in, and she felt nothing but sadness and compassion for their predicament.

Both Cabral and Darcy were moved to giving their new daughter the middle name of Noel, while they chose Emma as her first name as it was a common moniker in Cabral's family tree.

The plane ride from Boston to Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport in Santa Rosa was uneventful, as was the two-hour drive from the airport to Mendocino. Emma slept like a proverbial baby. Cabral and Darcy could not help but stare at their perfect daughter all the way home. They were enthralled by her very presence, watching as her chest rose and fell with each breath, and the random twitch of her tiny fingers.

Emma awoke briefly, taking a bottle of formula and seeming to enjoy a diaper change, a toothless smile on her face. Darcy set her in the bassinet gently, covering her with a small, white-knit blanket. She and Cabral watched the baby as she fell asleep again, her head turning slightly to the right as she relaxed.

"This has been a busy day," Cabral whispered to his wife. "Let's go downstairs and have a cup of tea."

"I don't want to leave her," Darcy whispered back in protest.

"Neither do I, but we can't hover twenty-four hours a day, honey. Let's have some tea, and perhaps a croissant, and we'll come back. We'll be gone twenty minutes, tops."

Darcy finally relented. She followed her husband out of the room, with one last look over her shoulder at her sleeping daughter.

A few minutes later, Emma opened her eyes in the bassinet, her little hands clutching at the blanket. She moved slightly, the starry array on the ceiling above her attracting her attention. She gazed upward, her mouth slightly open with the suggestion of a smile on her face.

The stars twinkled intermittently, but the baby's eyes appeared to focus primarily on the glowing edges of the triple moon symbol. She stared at it for a few minutes, her infant vision still slightly indistinct.

Then, with another tiny smile, Emma Noel Beckett closed her eyes and went back to sleep.

❖ DAMASCUS STEEL KNIFE

The Damascus steel hunting knife makes an appearance in "Bloodlust," when Kendrick Lester uses it to cut a freshly-baked pan of cornbread into squares. Kate notices the knife as she sits at the breakfast bar with Kirk, but thinks nothing of it at the time.

From Chapter Four of "Bloodlust":

His son's comment broke the unknown spell Ken seemed to be under, as intended. He smiled affably, bringing the pot to the breakfast bar and ladling steaming chili into the bowls, and then retrieved a glass dish of cornbread from the oven. Kate watched as he took a knife from a tan-colored butcher's block on the counter, deftly cutting the cornbread into squares. Her eyes focused on the knife momentarily, taking in the uniquely colored splotched handle and gray-black swirled blade. He brought the pan of cornbread to the breakfast bar, smiling. "Dig in, and enjoy."

After Kate begins dating Kirk Lester, Noel has a dream about his father (although she doesn't know it is him at the time of her dream) sexually assaulting a woman and stabbing her to death. The weapon in Noel's dream is a Damascus steel hunting knife, with a uniquely cream, black and white-colored splotched handle and gray-black swirled blade.



❖ **FIERY ENDMOST** (Blood & Soul)

SPOILER ALERT: As foreseen by Shoji, Emma's adoptive parents, Cabral and Darcy Beckett, and Shawn's mother, Gwen Baskerville, perish in a fiery plane crash a short way from Little River Airport in California. They were on their way to Boston to spend Christmas with Emma and Shawn.



SHOJI'S PROPHECY AS TOLD TO NOEL GRADY: "Others you know will be taken away in a fiery explosion. They have served their purpose on this earth."

From Chapter Fifteen of "Blood & Soul":

"THIS PLACE LOOKS as crappy as it did twenty years ago," Gwen observed with distaste as she alighted from a taxi with Cabral and Darcy. The driver retrieved their suitcases from the trunk of the cab, and then went on his way.

It was a cold, misty day in Mendocino County. The sky was full of dark clouds almost obliterated by fog, it's fine mist leaving a frosty sheen on everything it touched. The ground was wet and shiny, but there was no hints of rain as yet.

The Little River Airport, two miles from Mendocino Village, contained only one asphalt paved runway. The light blue main building looked like a deserted shack on the side of the road, surrounded by a painted-green chain link fence.

"You were here twenty years ago?" Darcy asked as they approached the entrance to the main building, such as it was.

Gwen nodded. "Quentin grabbed a charter flight to Sacramento from here one time." She gave a rueful grin. "And nothing has changed."

Inside the terminal was a crude waiting area and one small counter, with restrooms in the back. There was no café or vending machines, lending a deserted feel to the structure. A cork board near the counter had a long-past event advertised by the now-defunct Little River Airport Pilot's Association.

The threesome approached the counter where an older, grey-haired man stood, smiling at them in greeting. He was wearing a uniform of dark blue slacks and a periwinkle shirt, the name "Gavin Kelly" embroidered above the left breast pocket.

"We have a reservation for Santa Rosa," Cabral told him. "I'm Cabral Beckett, and this is my wife, Darcy. Our friend's name is Qwendolyn Baskerville."

"You're on the books," Gavin assured him. "Despite the weather, your flight is scheduled to take off on time at 8:45, twenty minutes from now."

Flights went to and from Little River to the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport in Santa Rosa twice a day, but only on Thursdays, Fridays and Mondays between eight in the morning and five in the evening. It was ninety-seven miles from airport to airport, so a select few commuters often took the flights rather than make the two-hour drive. The airport only housed two planes, one Cessna 172 Skyhawk with room for one pilot and three passenger seats, and a Piper M350, with the capacity for one pilot and five passengers.

Cabral, Darcy and Gwen took a seat in the small waiting area, which contained six hard chairs centered by a dusty coffee table littered with old magazines: Aviation, Flight Journal and Plane & Pilot among them.

Darcy crossed her legs as she shifted in her seat, trying to get comfortable. "Just think, in a little over seven hours time, we will be in Boston with Emma and Shawn."

"It's the only thing getting me on the plane," Gwen told her.

"I'm also looking forward to meeting Kate," Cabral spoke up. "From what Emma said about her, she seems to a nice if not interesting person."

"It's thanks to her we have Emma in the first place," Darcy replied. "We have so much to be grateful for this holiday season."

"But it's all rather bittersweet this year, isn't it?" Gwen said thoughtfully. "Kate and her mother are likely still in heavy mourning over the loss of their respective husbands. I still find it shocking that Pim Grady and Kirk Lester died on the same day last month, albeit from different causes."

"We will have to tread carefully," Darcy agreed.

"We'll just take our cue from them," Gwen told her.

"I have something I'm extremely grateful for this year," Cabral said when the two women grew quiet, lost in their own thoughts. "Namely, our daughter is still our daughter. She didn't turn against us when she realized we kept the truth from her about being adopted. And even after meeting Kate and her other biological family members, she still considers us her true parents."

"We are blessed," Darcy said to her husband. "Every minute we've been Emma's parents has been a gift. I'm looking forward to seeing her grow into a mature young woman and starting a family of her own."

Gwen chuckled. "Emma and Shawn will be inseparable their entire lives."

"So says the soothsayer," Cabral teased her.

"Mark my words," Gwen said firmly. "We'll be mutual grandparents someday." Then her attention was drawn to a man entering the terminal by the front door. He was short and slender, with longish brown hair and pale skin. He was wearing khaki slacks and a black flight jacket over a red-plaid shirt. Yet, despite the dreariness of the day, he wore dark aviator shades over his eyes.

He went to the counter and spoke briefly to the clerk, Gavin. Then he turned and walked toward the waiting area, where he came to a stop behind Gwen's chair.

"Hi, folks," he said jovially, if not loudly, a smile pasted on his face. "I'm Marvin Comstock, your pilot for today's flight to Santa Rosa." He waved his hand at the front window, as if to dismiss it. "I realize the weather is a tad inclement, but I'm accustomed to flying in such conditions. I foresee no problems today. We should make the Sonoma County Airport in Santa Rosa by 9:30."

"Perfect," Cabral enthused. "Just in time to connect with our flight to Boston at 10:30."

Gwen was made uneasy by the presence of the pilot standing behind her chair. She thought she detected a whiff of alcohol emanating from him - bourbon, perhaps? - and he also smelled as if he hadn't bathed in a few days.

She stood from her chair, giving a brief smile to the pilot. "Excuse me. I'll be right back."

"Sure," he replied easily. "But we'll be boarding soon."

"I won't be long," she said hastily.

She went to the counter, leaning over slightly so she could speak softly to Gavin. "Is this pilot one of your regulars?" She asked.

Gavin nodded. "Yes, Ma'am. He's been flying for us for years. Why?"

"I thought I could smell alcohol on him," Gwen stated frankly. "Is he a drinker?"

Gavin looked startled. "No, Ma'am, not at all. He lives about twenty minutes from here with his wife and two kids. He's always been a good guy."

Gwen believed him, but still felt uneasy. "Okay, thank you. Please don't mention that I asked about him."

"I won't, Ma'am."

Gwen rejoined Cabral and Darcy, still troubled by the prospect of getting on a plane piloted by Marvin Comstock. Perhaps her inherent nerves about flying were getting the best of her. It was best to just settle in and get the short flight over with.

The pilot helped them board the waiting white-and-blue Cessna 172 Skyhawk, which was parked on the tarmac behind the terminal. He placed their luggage and boxes in a storage chamber on the right side of the plane, rubbing his hands together as he fastened the compartment door. The Cessna was small, with room for only one pilot and three passengers. The soft, velour-covered seats were worn but comfortable, each one with its own window. Gwen took the seat behind the pilot, while Cabral and Darcy took seats on the other side.

Gwen stared out the window, watching rivulets of mist turning into drops as they slid down the glass. She thought about Shawn, which brought a smile to her face. Even though it had only been a week since she saw him last, she missed her son. She was looking forward to spending the holidays with him, even if it

meant going to Boston. Cabral, Darcy and Gwen were due to return to Mendocino on December 30th, unwilling to leave their shops closed much longer, despite the slowness of the season.

The pilot started the plane, the motor sound rattling the windows slightly. Gwen fastened her seatbelt and leaned back into the headrest, closing her eyes.

Cabral and Darcy also settled in, their nerves seemingly not impacted by the coming flight.

"I can't wait to see Emma," Darcy declared.

"Not much longer now," Cabral answered her.

Gwen braced herself as the plane taxied down the solitary 150-foot runway. She opened her eyes to see the grey sky in the waning mist as the plane climbed into the air. She felt herself relax as the Cessna finally leveled off at twelve thousand feet, the path smooth with the barest hint of turbulence.

Darcy watched her friend with a smile. "See, it's not so bad, is it?"

Gwen flashed her a grin. "No, I guess you're right. Sometimes I over-think and worry too much, and it puts me into a state."

"I know," Darcy replied kindly. "I figured that out some thirty years ago."

"And yet we're still friends," Gwen joked with a smirk.

Darcy nodded. "Forever, and always."

A few minutes after the plane leveled off, Gwen could hear the pilot coughing. She saw him loosen the top button of his plaid shirt, and then spit into a plastic cup in his hand.

"Are you okay?" She called out over the noise of the engine.

She watched the back of his head as he nodded assent. Yet a few minutes later he was coughing again. Then he suddenly vomited over the yoke in his hands and across the lighted console in front of him.

Gwen unbuckled her seatbelt and made her way to the front of the plane. Just then, the pilot's head slumped over the yoke, leaving his hands free and dangling at his sides. The plane took a violent and abrupt nosedive, forcing Gwen forward. She landed on top of the now lifeless pilot, which gave her a clear view of the earth flying closer through the front window of the plane. They were in the Cobb Mountain range as far as she could tell, the massive mounds of the array coming closer as the plane accelerated downward.

She was vaguely aware of Darcy's screams as the aircraft plummeted at increasing speed. It was similar to a car wreck in Gwen's mind - she couldn't stop watching under the spell of sheer terror and was powerless to stop it.

"Gwen!" Cabral shouted, fear edging his voice. "Gwen! What's going on?"

"I think the pilot passed out," she shouted back, her eyes still transfixed by the horrific tableau playing itself out through the window. "Or he's dead."

"Oh God," she heard him say.

Darcy continued screaming. She threw her head back and closed her eyes as she gripped the armrests of her seat.

"Shawn."

It was Gwen's last thought before the Cessna smashed into the mountain and exploded into flames.

❖ FIZZING CIRCLE (Blood & Soul)

Similar to Alka-Seltzer just touched by water; the fizzing circle simulates a brain aneurysm or lung embolism.

SPOILER ALERT: While Pim Grady received a miracle cure years ago, by the time he appears in "Blood & Soul" he is an elderly man. He has enjoyed excellent health to date, but ominous warnings from both Shoji and Hoshi make him realize his time is limited. Pim suffers a stroke after having lunch with his old boss, Jared Smythe, at the Somerset Club in Boston. His last cognizant thought is the image of a multi-colored fizzing circle as he closes his eyes for the final time.



From Chapter Thirteen of "Blood & Soul":

Pim leaned back against the headrest and closed his eyes as Jared pulled away from the Somerset Club. The rain had worsened, pelting against the windshield with strong, intermittent wind gusts. His head hurt badly, worse than ever, and his skin felt hot. Except his hands. His hands were ice cold, almost painfully so.

He could feel, as well as hear, a fizzing sound in his head now. It reminded him of dropping an effervescent tablet into cold water and watching as it bubbled with medicinal properties. The fizzing filled his head until it almost overtook his thought process. The bubbling effervescence was multi-colored now, fanning

out in blue, green, pink, purple, white and yellow - the same colors he had just seen in the Somerset Club garden.

He had a fleeting thought of Emma. With sudden clarity, he realized her special power was driven by one element. The power of love heals. It was as simple as that. She may have inherited her genetic make-up from him, Noel and Kate, but Emma was unique unto herself. The power she wielded was pure, coming directly from her heart and soul.

He felt another stab of pain take over his head, which made him wince. "This is it," he thought disjointedly. "My time is here. Please God, if you exist, take care of my family. Let them remember me fondly and without grief." He turned his head toward the passenger side window of the car. "I love you, Noel. I'll never be far away."

The image of a multi-colored fizzing circle filled Pim's brain as he closed his eyes for the final time.

❖ SKULL & CROSSBONES

"Skull and crossbones" is the symbol for Toxica, a date-rape drug given to Kate by Kirk Lester and his father, Kendrick. The drug appears in "Bloodlust."



From Chapter Twenty-Five of "Bloodlust":

NOEL TOLD THE attending physician in Brigham & Women's Hospital's emergency room that Kate had been given some kind of drug, so they ran blood tests first thing, waiting for the results.

Kate awakened, finally, again clutching her belly and moaning in pain. In an aside, the doctor told Noel that Kate was in the onset of early labor, and there were signs of sexual trauma with traces of semen from two different men. Once it had been determined Kate had been dosed with Toxica, well-known as a popular date-rape drug, they administered an injection of Terbutaline into her system to help slow her labor contractions, also in the hopes of stopping them altogether.

Although the possibility of Kate being raped while in the Lester household had always lurked in the back of Noel's mind, the confirmation of it sent her into a mental tailspin. What had Ken - or Kirk, for that matter - done to her daughter? What horrors had been visited upon her? They had resorted to drugging and raping her, even as she carried Kirk's unborn child?

❖ SKULL SPHERE

When Kate Grady and Kirk Lester return to Boston from abroad, they move in with his father, Kendrick Lester. Aside from the overwhelming presence of bluebells surrounding the house, Noel has a dream that depicts a wall of skulls, some with candles over the top of them. Along with bluebells, the skulls signify Kendrick Lester's victims over the years.



From Chapter Twenty-Four of "Bloodlust":

Noel found herself inside the Lester house, down in the same basement she had visited before. She was alone in the small room through the alcove, standing in semi-darkness. The wall in front of her, where she knew the drop-down bed to be located, suddenly started to bubble. It appeared similar to a pot of stew that had started to come to a boil, the surface in liquid motion as elements roiled together like a continuous somersault. Then shapes began to emerge from the churning mass, their outlines becoming clearer as they pushed forward.

Her eyes grew wide with terror as she realized what was materializing in front of her. The wall had turned into an array of skulls, each one pushing through as if fighting against thick, clear plastic. Some of the skulls had candles melted to the crown, the red wax dripping down the sides like trickling blood drops. They were protruding farther into the room, getting closer to her as she let out a long, continuous scream. She had nowhere to run, nowhere to hide, as they advanced on her with agonizing slowness.

❖ TRIPLE MOON AUTO REPAIR (Blood & Soul)

When Kirk was released from prison, he had been awestruck by the Minot townhouse. Kate wanted airy, open spaces to counteract his decade-long confinement. And determined to make reparation for the heartache he had caused Kate in the early days of their marriage, Kirk went right to work as an auto mechanic in Beacon Hill. He made a great deal of money catering to the cars of wealthy residents in the area, which moved Kate to subsidize him to open his own auto shop after a few years. Triple Moon Auto Repair soon became a staple of Beacon Hill residents in need of his talents, located nearby on West Cedar Street.



Description: Shop front is comprised of a dark-green facade, with "Triple Moon Auto Repair" stenciled in tall gold letters over the large picture window facing West Cedar Street. The store covered a small area, with a long counter and cash register, and several rows of miscellaneous auto parts and accessories on display. The repair zone was located through a door behind the cash register, stretching as far as the eye could see to a set of tall garage doors that opened onto an alley.

From Chapter Five of "Blood & Soul":

A typical day would have cars lifted into the air on tall auto lifts, most of them of the expensive variety: Aston Martin, Bentley, BMW, Bugatti, Cadillac, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Lincoln, Mercedes, Porsche, Range Rover and Rolls Royce, among others.

Kirk employed more than twenty mechanics, most of whom worked from Monday through Saturday. Triple Moon Auto Repair was not open for business on Sundays and major holidays, although Kirk had been known to help longtime customers regardless if they found themselves in a pinch when the shop was supposed to be closed.

Emma found the shop front on West Cedar Street without too much difficulty, thanks to the map Kate had printed for her. She entered the store, map in hand, and proceeded to the back. A young man, not much older than herself, stood behind the counter. He had thin, dark brown hair and eyes, and was wearing the auto shop uniform of black trousers and a coal grey shirt, the name "Mick" stitched in gold thread over the right breast pocket.

"Can I help you?" he asked politely, his eyes widening as she drew closer.

Emma gave him a smile. "I hope so. My name is Emma Beckett, and I'm here to see Kirk Lester."

"Do you have an appointment?"

Emma shook her head. "No, he wasn't expecting me, but if you tell him I'm here, I'm sure he'll see me."

Mick paused, keeping his eyes on her face. "If you don't mind me asking, are you a relative of Kirk's?" He looked sheepish. "I mean, you bear a stunning resemblance to him."

"Yes, I'm a relative."

He nodded. "Sure, that's what I thought. Give me a minute, and I'll go find Kirk in the shop." The young man turned and quickly disappeared through the door behind the counter.

Emma glanced around the store as she waited. The floor was hard but highly polished, auto parts and accessories hanging from small hooks and lined neatly in rows. She saw all manner of belts, hoses, fasteners, filters, hardware, and chemicals: plastic oil canisters, windshield wiper fluid, WD-40, along with a large variety of air fresheners.

She heard the door behind the counter open, so she turned to see Kirk approaching her, wiping his hands on a dark green shop towel. He wore the same uniform as Mick, only with his name "Kirk" above the breast pocket.

"Hi," she said quickly. "I didn't mean to barge in unannounced, but I wanted to see where you worked."

He regarded her, a puzzled expression on his face. At first, she thought he was going to dismiss her, but then his features softened. "Nothing to see, really," he replied casually. "Just a bunch of cars on hoists, with men working underneath them."

"I'd still like to see it."

He shrugged. "Suit yourself. Follow me, and I'll give you the grand tour."

She trailed him through the door, immediately assailed by a blast of cool air, and the mingling aroma of grease, oil and human sweat.

"It can get hellishly hot in here," Kirk offered in explanation when he saw her wrinkle her nose. "I keep several swamp coolers on the roof, which also helps circulate any exhaust in the air."

"You seem to do a brisk business," Emma noted as she gazed more than a dozen cars up on hoists, two rows back on the sides of the shop. "And they look like fancy cars."

Kirk flashed her a brief smile. "We keep busy all year round. The elite of Beacon Hill like their cars fixed quick. We do a pick-up and delivery service as well, so they don't have to traipse to the shop."

"What kind of car do you and Kate drive?" Emma asked, curious.

"I have a Camaro, while Katie drives a Camry."

"I belong to the sierra club at school," Emma said as they began walking down the aisle between hoists. "I never learned to drive, I always take my bike everywhere."

"That would probably suffice in a small town like Mendocino," he told her with a nod. "But Boston is a big city. Having a car is pretty much a necessity here, unless one takes public transport."

Emma suddenly became aware that she and Kirk, while talking about trifles and walking along together, were being closely observed by several employees of the shop. Kirk didn't seem to notice, his

stride long yet slow. He had a confident air, a tranquility that seemed to come naturally. She wondered if there was something deeper, hidden just under the surface, that made her biological father tick.

One man in particular, his name of "Salvatore" above the right breast pocket of his short, seemed spellbound by the sight of father and daughter moving along together. He was holding a long, heavy wrench, which had gone somewhat slack as he watched Kirk and Emma, his mouth slightly agape. He was older, perhaps in his forties, with a pencil-thin mustache and thinning black hair.

Just as Emma and Kirk were to pass by Salvatore, he let the wrench slip from his hands. It fell with a resounding thud on the top of his left foot, causing him to cry out in sharp pain and drop to his knees.

Kirk darted toward the fallen man, Emma quickly on his heels. Salvatore was sitting now, both his hands covering his left foot, his face wincing in pain. "I think I broke it," he moaned, his heavy Italian accent making his words barely comprehensible.

Kirk knelt down next to the man, touching his shoulder. "Do you think we can get your shoe off so we can take a look?"

"I don't know," he replied reluctantly. "It's throbbing like fire, and I think I feel something piercing the skin."

"Let me try, Sal," Kirk said gently.

The man nodded. "Okay, but go easy, will you?"

Kirk untied the shoelaces on the black canvas shoes slowly, reaching down to hold the heel so he could pull the shoe outward and off. Emma watched in consternation, wincing slightly as she saw the pain written on Salvatore's face.

Kirk drew off the shoe after a few minutes, eliciting several deep moans from Salvatore. He then peeled off the dark-colored ankle stockings, setting it with the shoe turned on its side on the concrete.

Emma stared at the man's bruised and bloodied foot, detecting the bone from his big toe joint sticking out through his skin.

"Oh my God," Salvatore said, horrified as he looked down at his foot.

"We'll get it taken care of," Kirk told him. "Let's get you to Mass General hospital, Sal, and get it fixed up. I'll cover the cost since it happened while you were on the job."

"Wait," Emma spoke up as she kneeled down next to Salvatore. "Let me have a closer look."

Salvatore looked askance at her, but said nothing. She held his gaze to draw his attention away from his foot as she placed her hand gently on the protruding bone. "It'll be okay," she said in a soothing tone. "It's not as bad as it looks."

"Emma," Kirk spoke softly. "What do you think you're doing?"

She gave him a brief glance. "Trust me," she whispered, and then turned her attention back to Salvatore.

A group of mechanics had gathered around the scene, watching as Emma knelt over their co-worker. Kirk noticed them, pointing his finger at Mick. "Go and get a clean cloth soaked in warm water. Hurry."

Mick scurried off to the rear of the shop, but soon returned with a dampened dark green shop towel. By the time, Emma had relaxed her stance and removed her hand from Salvatore's foot. She reached for the towel, so Mick thrust it into her hands.

She gently wiped away traces of blood on Salvatore's foot. His eyes grew wider as he watched her. The warm wash had revealed smooth skin all over the top of his foot, the protruding bone no longer in evidence. Apart from a slight reddening around his big toe joint, his foot looked as normal as before.

Salvatore gasped loudly, pulling his foot away from Emma. "Il Malocchio," he cried out, terror in his eyes as he pulled himself to his feet. He grabbed his show and stocking, and quickly ran to the door leading into the store, slamming it behind him.

Kirk had heard enough of Salvatore's Italian utterances over time to understand what the man had relayed. He had said to Emma, plain and simple: "The evil eye."

"What the hell just happened?" Kirk wondered aloud, his eyes going to Emma.

She shrugged lightly, pulling herself upright. "It wasn't as bad as it looked once I washed the blood off. Salvatore will be fine."

Kirk stared at her, his mind suddenly in a whirl. Emma had healed Sal's broken bone right in front of his eyes. There was no doubt about it. He felt an encroaching fear run along his spine. Emma was his daughter, true, but she was also Kate's daughter, and Noel's granddaughter. Did Emma have a special

gift of her own through the bloodline, somehow filtered and mutated through Noel and Kate? As fantastic as it sounded, it was the only plausible explanation to what he had just witnessed.

He rose to his feet, gesturing to the mechanics who were still standing around, most of them wearing dumbfounded expressions on their faces. "Okay, guys," he said sternly. "Back to work."

The men shuffled back to their hoist stations. The shop had grown eerily quiet as the drama had unfolded, but began filling with noise again after a long minute.

Kirk turned to Emma. "Thank you for helping Sal. You're right, it must have looked worse than it really was."

She nodded. "What did he say to me just before he ran off? I didn't understand it."

Kirk hesitated. "Sal is a superstitious Italian, full of weird sayings."

"I get that, but what did he say?"

"Il Malocchio is an Italian phrase meaning the evil eye."

Emma drew in her breath. "Why would he say that to me?"

"He thought his foot was broke, and seemed to fix it just by touching him. It probably seemed other-worldly to him."

She nodded slowly. "That makes sense, I guess." She raised her head and looked Kirk in the eye. "I was just trying to help."

"And you did," he assured her. "Thank you."

Emma smiled thinly. "Well, I've taken enough of your time. I'll go back to the house. See you tonight?"

"I'll be there," he replied, returning her smile.

Kirk watched her as she made her way to the store door. Then he turned back to the shop, where he saw the mechanics watching her departure as well.

"Back to work," he growled. "That's my daughter your ogling after."

The men hastily returned to their work, casting furtive glances at Kirk as he returned to his own hoist station. He ignored them, concentrating on the underbelly of a silver Porsche over his head instead.

❖ TWIN HEARTS

The symbol of "twin hearts" (one red, the other black) comes from graffiti, which may signal a foretelling of the future for Noel and Pim's daughter, Kate Grady. The red heart signifies Kate, while the black heart portends of her future with Kirk Lester.



From Chapter Eleven of "Bloodfrost":

Graffiti was common along Wren Street. Most of the row houses had been doused by teenagers over the years, with episodes becoming more frequent during summertime. It was never a surprise to see one of the buildings defaced with foul words or gang symbols, although tenants or landlords tried to wash off the offending marks within a few days.

Just underneath the first floor window, which also happened to be the location of Pim's rent-free flat, Noel spied a graffiti rendering she hadn't seen on the building before. It must have been done while they were away at the christening and party afterward. There was no mistaking the twin heart shapes, which crossed over at the base. One of the hearts was spray-painted black, while the other was red. Both were outlined in what appeared to be white chalk.

Pim followed her gaze. His face flushed with anger when he saw the new graffiti. "Those damned kids. Every time they screw around, it takes me an hour to wash away their handiwork."

"Look at it," Noel thought in a panic. "Really look at it, Pim."

He was quiet for a few seconds, but then his face went from flushed to ashen.

"Do you see what I see?" she prodded his mind.

"It looks like the..." he didn't complete his thought.

"It looks like one of the symbols we saw in church," she finished for him.

He shrugged, trying to make light of it. "Could be pure coincidence."

"Not likely, and not with our track record for such things."

"We're going to stick to the plan," he thought firmly, staring at her. "Just like we decided. Kate will have a loving and safe home, no matter what."

"Are the two of you going to stand there all night?" June groused from the top of the stairs. "I know I'm slow, but I've got an excuse. I'm old. What's yours?"

"Coming mother," Noel said quickly.

Pim turned away to walk up the steps, carrying June's folded wheelchair. With one last look at the menacing twin hearts, Noel followed her husband into the building.

❖ WALLS ON FIRE

When Noel is in the throes of labor giving birth to Kate, she envisions flames lapping up the walls of her hospital room, reaching the ceiling in slow-motion curls. The vision is her portent of the pending birth, which might produce the "sour and tainted" child Shoji warned her about.

From Chapter Eleven of "Bloodfrost":

The next few hours were slow and agonizing for Noel. The pain ripping through her body increased with frequency and duration, the heat making her feel as if she was a turkey baking in an oven. At one point, she became confused and frightened. In her mind, she saw flames licking up the walls of her hospital room, reaching the ceiling in slow-motion curls.

"Do you see the fire?" she mumbled, directing her question to no one in particular.

"There's no fire, Noel," Pim tried to console her. "Your skin is hot, love, and the room is hot, but there is no fire."

"But I see the flames," she insisted stubbornly.

"Doctor?" Pim asked, concerned.

"She's just having a mild hallucination," Noel heard Dr. Mintz say. "We put a bit of Demerol and Meptazinol in her IV, just enough to take the edge off her pain. That, combined with the heat, has made her slightly delirious. It's nothing to worry about, Mr. Grady."

Noel felt herself go in and out of conscious thought. Whenever she opened her eyes, she saw flames snaking up the wall, so she quickly closed them again. She held onto Pim's hand tightly, afraid to let go.

"I'm right here," he whispered in her ear. "I'm not leaving you."

Her head lolled back and forth on the pillow, which was now stained and soaked with her own sweat. The heat was simply unbearable, made worse by the relentless flames in the room. Why didn't they catch everything else on fire? What kind of flame simply curled up a wall but did little else? Or was the fire another omen?

"But we did all the right things," she cried out, her eyes still closed. "We went to church, we prayed...we've made plans to be the best parents on earth...we'll be loving parents, you'll see...what else can we possibly do to stave off such horrible evil?"

"Noel," Pim's frantic thoughts broke through her jumbled mind. "Everything is going to be okay. Please, believe me. Think about our beautiful daughter...think about good things...don't conjure up hellacious images in your head. You can do it, love. Think about our darling Kate; think about taking her home to the little room you created for her. She's ready to meet us, Noel. She's ready to come into the world and meet her parents."

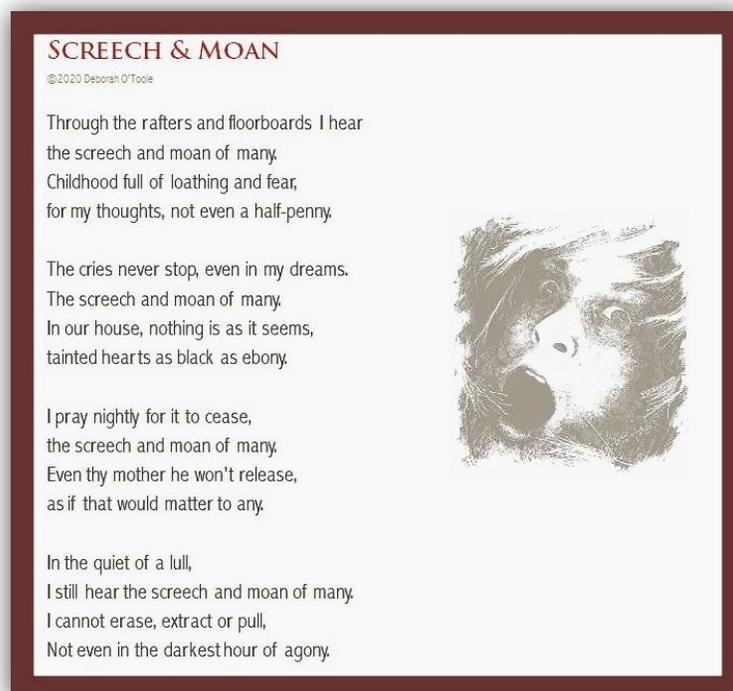
"I believe you," she whispered out loud, opening her eyes to stare at her husband. "She won't be sour and tainted, will she?"

Pim shook his head. "No, she won't be sour and tainted. She'll be perfect, Noel. Our little Kate will be perfect."

She felt relief after hearing his soothing words. She closed her eyes again, squeezing his hand as another wave of pain bore down on her. It was the last thing she remembered for quite awhile.

❖ **WHITE FACE** (screaming)

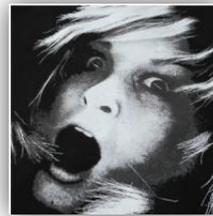
At the very end of "Bloodfrost," Noel is in the backyard with Kate. They had just moved into their new home on South Street, and celebrated Kate's first birthday. Kate is drawn to an old shed in the backyard, so Noel follows her there. The weather has turned from hot and humid to rumbles of thunder in the distance. Deciding it is best to go inside, Noel moves closer to her daughter, but then pauses as her eyes take in the back wall of the shed. Slightly warped by weather and time, the surface displays large rings that are a natural element of the wood. Most of them are nondescript shapes, circular or elongated, or a combination of both. Noel focuses her attention on one particular shape, located near the middle of the wall. It appears to resemble a depiction of a tiny face, mouth wide open as if screaming in pain.



She stares at the symbol for a long time, everything else fading into the background as her mind worked furiously in tandem with her growing fear. It looked nearly identical to

one of the etchings she saw on a votive candle at St. Theresa's Parish Church more than a year ago.

Light rain drops begin to fall, shaking Noel from her reverie. Bending over, she takes Kate in her arms. With one last look at the anguished face on the shed, Noel hurries to the house and slams the door shut behind her.



"Bloodfrost" church scene (prior to Kate's birth):

Noel listened to Father Kerrigan speak for a few minutes, but then her eyes wandered to the row of votive candles next to the altar. They burned steadily, faithfully, gently flickering in the natural draft of the church. Noel found herself mesmerized by their muted orange glow, her eyes dilating as she fixed her gaze on the smoky glass holders. Father Kerrigan's voice came in the back of her head, as if from a great distance, as she focused on the myriad of tiny etchings on the glass. They were all the result of burning wax, but she remained fascinated by them nonetheless.

It was the sight of waxy etchings that gave her a glimpse into her future so many months ago, even though she didn't realize it at the time. Bells and half-moons, then unknown to be an omen of her baby's eventual conception. Only now, the etchings were distinctly different. But, as before, they did not make any sense to her in the moment.

On the candle closest to the altar, Noel saw the depiction of a tiny dagger, with one solitary blood drop at its pointy tip. The blood drop appeared red because of the coloring of the glass, giving a realistic illustration of a dripping dagger. A few candles down, Noel deciphered another etching of crossbones and a tiny skull. Farther down still, she saw twin heart shapes – one colored black, the other red – entwined

together at the base. Yet another showed a pair of lips, shaded black with a white outline. Finally, there was a tiny white face, its mouth opened to form a full circle, as if the subject was screaming out in pain.

❖ WILTED LILY (Bloodlust)

Signifying a burial of someone near and dear.

The white lily symbol ties together Kate with Emma Challcross (an older, demented woman she'd met on the train at to Chester), and Cabral Beckett, who eventually, with his wife Darcy, adopts Kirk and Kate's daughter, Emma. Cabral's family originally came from Chester, settling in America in the mid-1800s. The link between Emma and Cabral is through his mother's side of the family, making Emma his great-great-great-great aunt.



From Chapter Seventeen of "Bloodlust":

After twining four daisies together with a silky purple ribbon, Kate walked the half-mile from the flower shop to the entrance of Overleigh Cemetery on Grosvenor Road. The picturesque burial ground had been consecrated in 1850. It was normally lush with greenery, but the winter months had tossed trees and other offshoots with a fine dusting of snow and frost, which seemed to muffle modern sounds from the street. Some of the more notable residents of the cemetery included Mary Finney, Ishiao Ishimura, Edward Langtry, Henry Raikes and archaeologist Robert Newstead, along with famed architects John Douglas and Thomas Meakin Lockwood. Not to mention Elizabeth Lester, Kirk's grandmother, whose grave they had visited on their first day in Chester.

Kate went to the chapel office building near the entrance to inquire about Emma Chalcross' burial site. Within minutes, she was following a map the office clerk had printed for her. Emma's grave, as yet to be marked with a headstone, was about twenty yards from the chapel inside the burial grounds.

A white placard atop a small wooden post and covered with clear plastic to protect it from the elements was all that marked Emma's final resting place for the time being. The bold, black print was simple and to the point: E. CHALLCROSS, 1919-1998. There was a single white lily, now wilted, resting against the post.

Although she hadn't known Emma Chalcross extremely well - merely exposed to her on the train from London and then in brief encounters at the flower shop - Kate felt an extraordinary sadness, as if she had lost a close friend. It was nonsense, of course. Nonetheless, the feeling of sorrow within her was tangible.

Kate placed the bundled daisies underneath the shadow of the wilted lily. Never having been a religious sort, she was at a loss as what to say in parting. Rather than search her brain for some colloquial idiom, she touched the lily and spoke nine words:

"Rest in peace, Mrs. Chalcross. Until we meet again."

As she turned to leave, Kate paused as a sudden gust of wind bent the lily sideways but not completely over. She glanced back at the temporary marker, her eyes riveted on Emma's name on the placard. It was then, in that instant, that she thought she heard the older woman's voice, which almost sounded like a whisper on the wind as it settled down.

"Watch for the bluebells and mind your baby."

Kate gasped, a shiver going down her spine. She hurried from the cemetery without looking back again.

In "Blood & Soul," Emma Beckett also lays white lilies at the graves of her adoptive parents, Cabral and Darcy Beckett, and Shawn Baskerville's mother, Qwendolyn. The threesome had died in a fiery plane crash, as predicted by Shoji.

❖ THE VISIONS OF MADGE TILLEY

Madge Tilley first appears in "Bloodfrost." She is an attorney with her own practice in Boston. Like Noel and Pim, she underwent a "healing" event (after being told she had terminal cancer), which gave her the gift of foreseeing the future.

Noel applies for an advertised position with Madge and gets the job almost instantly. Little does she know, Madge saw her coming prior to their first meeting. Since her "healing" event, Madge experiences dreams that come to fruition, which she records in a handwritten journal. Her first entry about Noel went as follows:

Had the strangest dream last night. An attractive woman in her late thirties came to my office for a job interview, wearing a pair of pleated black slacks, white blouse and off-black blazer. I could tell the clothes were a bit worn, but they were clean and well taken care of. The woman was of medium build, with dark brown-gray hair pulled up into a French-braid bun. Her eyes were blue, and very alert. She came into my inner office for a chat, and I decided to hire her then and there.

Later, Madge has another dream, just prior to Noel and Pim's wedding:

My dreams were all about Noel last night. I didn't feel any bad vibes about her wedding or Pim, but rather a portent of her future revealed itself to me. As much as I'd like to, I simply can't ignore the unpleasant stuff. I consider Noel a dear friend, not just an employee, but I'm not sure it would be wise for me to tell her about my abilities, and this latest dream in particular. She'll think me as mad as a hatter if I did.

In my dream, Noel tells me she is pregnant. Can you imagine? After all this time, years of being childless, and she finally conceives with Pim? At any rate, she has terrible morning sickness. This is just a few weeks after she and Pim have their weekend honeymoon, but I suggest she take a few days off anyway. After she leaves the office, the postman comes in with a stack of mail for me. The first thing I notice is a colorful flyer on top, advertising a rendition of Ray Bradbury's "Something Wicked This Way Comes" at the Charles Playhouse on Warrenton Street. I toss the flyer into the trash, not thinking twice about it.

Later, as I'm leaving the office for the night, I see the flyer in the wastebasket. It's sitting on top, even though I know I've thrown other garbage inside during the day. The title "Something Wicked This Way Comes" seems to glare at me from inside the can, as if daring me to retrieve it. So I take it home, leaving it on the foyer table. Later, when I go up to my office loft, the flyer is smack dab in the middle of my desk. What the hell? I sit there and stare at the damned thing for awhile, sipping my glass of vodka as I do.

Then it came to me, in a rush of dread. Noel's baby, the unborn seed of her passionately loving union with Pim, is meant to bring a wicked force into our lives. Maybe not right away – after all, what can a mere infant do? – but someday in the not so distant future, this child will bring more emotional pain and suffering than either Noel or Pim thought possible. How could something as pure and wonderful as the love obviously felt between Noel and Pim produce such a hideous result? And why am I being allowed to sense it?

The reference to "Something Wicked This Way Comes" also has a connection to Noel and Pim's neighbor, Alvin Carter. They suspect he has also undergone a "healing," although he never admits to it. One of Alvin's favorite books is "Something Wicked This Way Comes" by Ray Bradbury. The reference in Madge's vision is related to Alvin's death (at the hands of Kate near the end of "Bloodfrost").

Noel and Pim spend their first wedding anniversary at their honeymoon spot at the Hawthorne Hotel in Salem. In their absence, Madge looks after Kate.

From Chapter Twelve of "Bloodfrost":

Madge retrieved her journal from the desk drawer. She sat down, opening the pages to her last entry and then slipping on her eyeglasses. Frowning, she realized she hadn't experienced one of her visions since dreaming about Noel announcing her pregnancy, exactly one year ago. "Where did all the time go?" she asked herself, puzzled. "And what's happened to my dreams?"

She decided to write anyway.

Maybe it's over. I had a stream of visionary dreams after my cancer scare, and now they've stopped. I can't tell if that's a good thing, or a bad thing. It shouldn't make any difference – I couldn't see into the future before my illness – so why does it bother me now?

She paused, chewing the end of her ink pen. Maybe her dreams were meant to be ephemeral, residual leftovers from her strange but miraculous disease-reversal. She had lived a happy and fulfilling life before they came along, and so she would again.

So be it. It's back to normal for me.

She snapped the journal shut, returning it to the desk drawer.

Just then Dither trotted into the room, making a beeline for his favorite recliner in the corner. Before Madge could stop him, he leapt to the armrest, fully expecting to see his place of rest unoccupied and waiting for him. He froze as he glared down at Kate in her carrycot.

"Easy Dither," Madge said softly, rising from her chair. "You know Kate, so don't get all pissy just because she's in your favorite spot."

Kate stopped playing with her turtle, allowing the toy to fall to the side of the recliner. She gazed back at the cat, seeming to be fascinated by him, and his regard of her. Baby and feline traded stares for a long minute, the air between them suspended with uneasy anticipation. Apparently Kate didn't feel threatened by the furry beast before her – she had seen the cat before, just not in such close quarters – because she pasted a big grin on her face. She waved her hands in the air, making a chortling noise and kicking her feet.

Dither tensed, his light blue eyes narrowing with hostility. Madge stepped forward to take him off the recliner, but before she could lean over to grab him Dither gave a loud-mouthed hiss and darted away. She heard his frenzied, padded steps as he raced down the stairway.

"What the hell was that all about?" Madge asked out loud, shaking her head.

She looked down at Kate, who was now quiet in her carrycot. The baby met Madge's eyes, her lashes unblinking. Madge stood, as if mesmerized, returning Kate's gaze.

Then Kate broke the moment, giggling and waving her arms in the air again.

Madge sat down in her chair, continuing to stare at the baby. It was an innocent event, bound to happen sooner or later with the territorial Dither, so why did she feel a queasy churning in the pit of her stomach?

Later, in Madge sees Ken Lester in her dreams.

From Chapter Nine of "Bloodlust":

Last night's dream was more clear, yet convoluted at the same time. Kate is the subject of my dreams lately, and nothing has changed. They grow more disturbing with each passing night. There are times I wish I didn't see things in my dreams, and this is one of those times.

I always see Kate and Kirk huddled together - at a restaurant or in the front seat of a car - holding hands, gazing into each other's eyes. The young man is handsome enough, but I could do without his bloody dagger earring. While he seems normal, there is an aura of menace about him nonetheless.

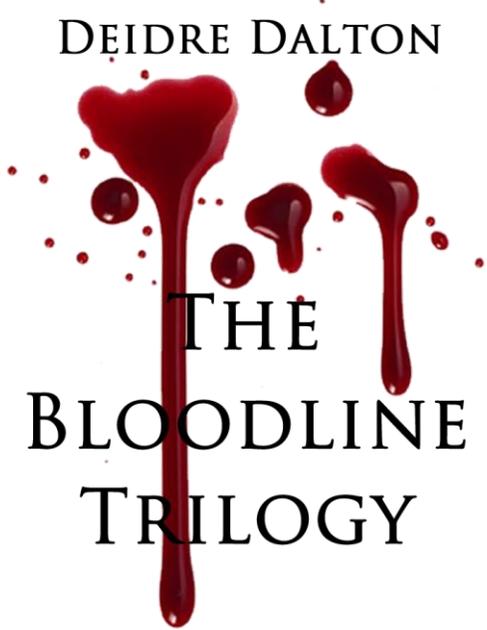
In last night's dream, Katie and her young man were standing at the top of a stairway, looking down into a squalid basement room. It had plain walls and a bare light bulb hanging from the ceiling. The only piece of furniture in the room was an old-fashioned Nottingham metal spindle bed, upon which rested a man and a woman, both of them stark naked. Kate and her young man were watching the couple on the bed. The dim light depicted them in the act of sex, but it was far from a normal interaction. The woman's wrists and ankles were chained to the four corners of the bed with steel cuffs, and she was screaming. Kate and the young man were just watching. They were not saying or doing anything to stop it.

The dream took an even more horrifying turn. The man on the bed twisted his head to the side, and I could see his face. He looked like an older version of the young man with Kate, with wheat-colored hair, watery blue eyes and pale skin. The only difference between them was the older man had a gap between his front teeth, whereas the younger man did not. The older man proceeded to pull a knife from between the mattress and box spring of the bed. It had a tan-white-grey colored splotched handle, with a grey-black swirled blade. Then he began stabbing the woman with it, over and over, as her blood flowed and her screams eventually died out.

Then my dream's view switched to Kate and the young man at the top of the stairs. They were laughing now, leaning against each other with obvious enjoyment at the scene before them. Then the horrifying tableau faded . . .

Madge's visions dwindle by the time "Blood & Soul" comes about, but she still remains an integral part of the Grady and Beckett families.

DEIDRE DALTON

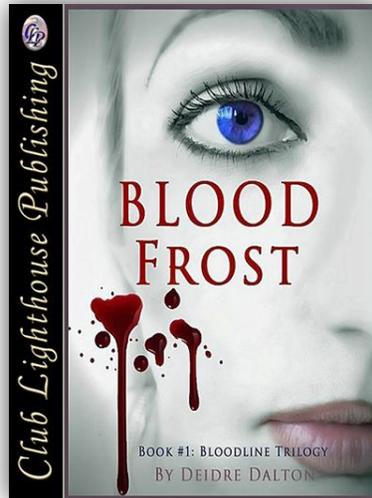


THE
BLOODLINE
TRILOGY

*The Bloodline Trilogy follows the uniquely magical yet ominous journey
of three women through time.*

#1 Bloodfrost

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. She has also developed traits unbeknownst to her before: the power of mind-reading and an acute sense of sight.

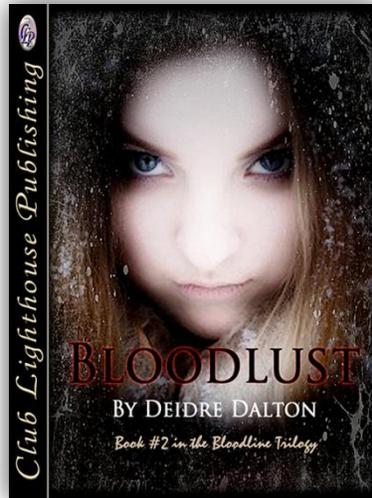
Her unique affinity with the handsome Pim Grady gives her hope for the future, although their blossoming love is tempered by knowledge of their shared and secretive dreams.

Noel soon learns her miraculous recovery comes at a price.

"Bloodfrost" was released by Club Lighthouse Publishing in December 2019.

#2 Bloodlust

Noel and Pim's daughter Kate Grady has unusual powers which allow her to bend people to her will. At first she uses her gifts wisely, but then goes astray after falling in love with Kirk Lester. She finds herself honing her special powers to keep her place in Kirk's heart, no matter how evil or depraved life with him becomes.



The Bloodline Trilogy continues with Book #2, "Bloodlust."

Kate Grady comes from a happy home, never knowing fear or insecurity. Thanks to her extraordinary parents, Pim Grady and Noel Gatsby, her childhood is full of wonder and unconditional love.

However, she soon realizes she possesses special powers which allow her to bend others to her will. At first, she uses her newfound abilities wisely. She prevents a gang of bullies from raping and beating a young girl, and then makes them pay the ultimate price for their brutal acts.

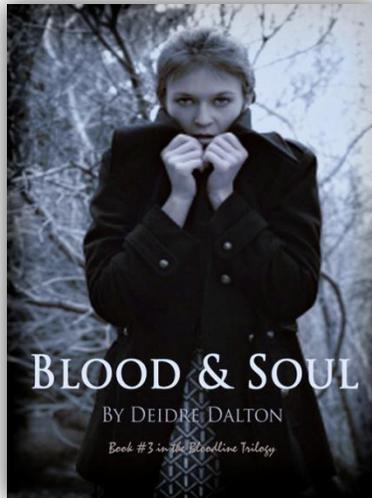
Then Kate meets Kirk Lester. She is drawn to his smooth charm and compelling physical presence, quickly falling under his spell.

Kate changes overnight. She finds herself honing her special powers to keep her place in Kirk's heart, no matter how evil or depraved life with him becomes.

"Bloodlust" was released by Club Lighthouse Publishing in February 2021.

#3 Blood & Soul

Emma Beckett is adopted into a loving home as an infant, never knowing the true circumstances of her birth. As a child, she discovers she has unique powers of healing but eventually realizes her abilities could be an instrument of evil, begotten by a bloodthirsty monster.



The Bloodline Trilogy concludes with Book #3, "Blood & Soul."

Emma Beckett has an idyllic childhood in the small Northern California town of Mendocino, only child of Cabral and Darcy Beckett. Tall and palely blonde, unlike her small, dark-haired parents, Emma occasionally wonders if she was adopted. However, the unconditional love of her parents was the one aspect of her upbringing she never lost faith in, not even when the darkness of her true past threatened to overtake her.

As a child, she discovers she has the power to heal by touch. At first, her skills are limited to healing animals, but when she cures her cancer-stricken mother she realizes her unique talent could be used to help others. The realization also leads Emma on a journey to unearth her heritage. No matter how painful it becomes, she is determined to learn the truth about her bloodline.

The quest may finally give her the answers she seeks, although horrific revelations about the past make her fearful of her own destiny.

"Blood & Soul" was released by Club Lighthouse Publishing in June 2022.

RESOURCES & CREDITS

BOOKS

- ❖ **"BLOODFROST"** by Deidre Dalton; Club Lighthouse Publishing (2019). Paperback ISBN: 978-1-67920-892-8. Used as a reference for symbols. Pages: **15** (St. Theresa's Church bells), **23-24** (candle & half-moon), **38** (candle & half-moon), **55** (x-mas box), **59-60** (x-mas box, mini-pewter bells with red ribbon), **62-63** (x-mas bells with red ribbon at the intersection of Park Street & Belgrade Avenue), **65-66** (x-mas bells with red ribbon on Wren Street), **68-69** (Madge's dream about hiring Noel before meeting her), **75** (Noel tells Pim about seeing the x-mas bells), **79** (Alvin Carter ruminates about bells), **81** (Noel visits the Gift Tree shop, where she buys Alvin a mantle figurine with bells), **96** (at the moment Kate Grady is conceived, Noel sees the street bell with a crescent moon glowing in its wake and hears the bells of St. Theresa's Church signifying the advent of midnight mass), **109** (Madge has a dream where Noel tells her she is pregnant), **121-122** (Noel tells Pim what she saw the night Kate was conceived), **127-128** (Noel meets with Shoji again, who tells her the meanings of the symbols she has seen are in regards to a momentous event: bells announce conception or arrival, the crescent moon hints at the time Noel would conceive Kate, and Shoji also tells Noel all might not be well for Kate in the future, that she will be born "sour and tainted"), **135** (Madge contemplates the dream she had about Kate being born a "bad seed" and decides not to tell Noel), **136-137** (Noel, Pim and Madge attend Sunday Mass at St. Theresa's Church, where Noel notices the votive candles etched with different symbols: a tiny dagger with a blood drop at the tip, a skull & crossbones, twin black and red hearts entwined, a pair of lips shaded black with a white outline, and a tiny white face with its mouth open as if screaming in pain), **140** (as Noel is in labor with Kate, she sees fire curling up the walls of her hospital room), **146-147** (Pim and Noel see graffiti on their apartment building depicting twin black and red hearts entwined), **150** (Madge's cat, Dither, has a hostile reaction to baby Kate), and **182** (Noel sees an image on the backyard shed of their new home: a tiny white face with its mouth open as if screaming in pain).
- ❖ **"BLOODLUST"** by Deidre Dalton; Club Lighthouse Publishing (2021). Paperback ISBN: 978-1-77217-155-6. Used as a reference for symbols. Pages: **7-9** (Kate saves Chloe Benedict from a group of boys raping her, and then wills them to all commit suicide by hanging), **11** (Noel as a dream where she sees Kate being followed by a tall man in a duster coat; the man is wearing a tiny silver dagger earring with a red crystal blood drop dangling from the end. Noel also detects the faint scent of cigarettes mixed with Grey Flannel cologne), **15** (first mention of Kate's pewter

- skull & crossbones ring), **16-17** (Kate sees Kirk Lester for the first time, in the hallway at English High School, where she notices his dark-gray duster coat, dagger earring with a blood drop at the tip, as well as the scent of cigarettes mixed with Grey Flannel cologne), **25** (Kate runs into Kirk at a nearby convenience store, where she again notices his dagger earring and is assailed by the scent of cigarettes mixed with Grey Flannel cologne), **32** (Kate ignores the warnings in her head that tell her to steer clear of Kirk), **36** (Kirk reads Kate one of his poems for the first time, "A Brief Moment"), **37** (Pim and Noel meet Kirk for the first time, when Noel realizes he was the man with a dagger earring from her dream), **56** (Kate meets Ken Lester for the first time, when she feels an immediate distaste for him), **60** (Kate is dosed with Toxica for the first time by Ken/Kirk, the symbol for which is a skull & crossbones), **74-77** (Noel again dreams about the face with its mouth open as if screaming in pain, this time not etched in wood but a real person, set in a squalid room with a light bulb hanging from the ceiling; Noel sees a man raping and stabbing a woman with a Damascus knife in the room, whom she will later recognize as Ken Lester), **91** (Noel sees Ken Lester for the first time at the Ten Tables Restaurant, and realizes he is the rapist/killer from her dream), **101-108** (Pim and Noel come clean with Kate about their healing, and abilities to read minds Noel's prophetic dreams and visions of symbols, along with Kate's ability to bend people to her will and her "test" session to get her friend Chloe Benedict to telephone her), **113** (Kate tells Kirk about her will-bending abilities).
- ❖ **"BLOOD & SOUL"** by Deidre Dalton; Club Lighthouse Publishing (2022). Used as a reference for symbols. Pages: **91-95** (healing incident at Triple Moon Auto Repair, owned by Kirk Lester); **153-157** (fizzing circle as seen by Pim Grady just before he dies); **167-174** (fiery crash that takes the lives of Cabral and Darcy Beckett and Gwen Baskerville, as prophesized by Shoji).
 - ❖ **"Distant Mental Influence: Its Contributions to Science, Healing, and Human Interactions (Studies in Consciousness)"** by William Braud; Hampton Roads Publishing; Russell Targ Editions edition, 2003.
 - ❖ **"Eyewitness Travel Guide: Boston"** by Patricia Harris, David Lyon & Tom Bross; DK Travel (Dorling Kindersley Publishers), 2011.
 - ❖ **"Maiden, Mother, Crone: The Myth & Reality of the Triple Goddess"** by D.J. Conway (1939-2019); published by Llewellyn Publications in 1994. Paperback ISBN: 978-0-87542-171-1.
 - ❖ **"The Forbidden Parapsychology"** by Jose Maria Herrou Aragon; Primera Edici-n edition (2008).
 - ❖ **"The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth"** by Robert Graves (1895-1985); first published by Faber & Faber (UK) and Create Age Press (USA) in 1948. Paperback ISBN: 978-0-37428-933-1.

- ❖ **"Torn Bits & Pieces: Books of Poems"** by Deborah O'Toole; Club Lighthouse Publishing (2022). Including A Brief Moment, Black Eyes, Blood of My Father, Bluebells & Fuchsia, Color Me Woe, Fringes, Jezebel, Lost to Me, Mind Control, My Katie, My Name is Called Disturbance, Screech & Moan, Soul Adrift, Swept Away, The Rot in the Wood, and White Frost. Poems displayed in "Bloodlust" and "Blood & Soul" reproduced with permission by the author.

WEBSITES

- ❖ Carved.Com (Damascus knife)
- ❖ Mythologian.Net (symbols)
- ❖ Psychokinesis (Wikipedia)
- ❖ Sith Academy (symbols)
- ❖ Triple Goddess Neopaganism (Wikipedia)

IMAGES

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deidre Dalton is author of the *Bloodline Trilogy*, which follows the uniquely magical journey of three women through time. Books in the trilogy include *Bloodfrost*, *Bloodlust* and *Blood & Soul*.



She is also author of the *Collective Obsessions Saga*, which chronicles the extraordinary loves and intricate obsessions between two families sweeping a span of more than 165 years, all set against the backdrop of a Gothic seaside mansion in Maine. Titles in the ten-part family saga include *Hearts in Sorrow*, *The Advent*, *Quixotic Crossings*, *The Twain Shall Meet*, *Enthrallment*, *The Keeper's Journal*, *Hearts Desires*, *The Twilight*, *Megan's Legacy* and *Limb of Iniquity*.

Writing under her real name of Deborah O'Toole, Deidre is also author of the fiction titles *Celtic Remnants*, *The Crypt Artist*, *Glinhaven*, *In the Shadow of the King*, *Mind Sweeper*, the *Short Tales Collection* (juvenile fiction), and a book of poetry known as *Torn Bits & Pieces*.

Using the pseudonym Shenanchie O'Toole, she also writes for the cooking/recipe website Food Fare. She is writer and co-editor of thirteen cookbooks, along with more than forty titles in the *Food Fare Culinary Collection*.

Deidre is a native of Greenwich, Connecticut. She has also lived in San Francisco, Reno and Spokane, among other US cities. She currently resides in the mountain west.

For more, visit Deidre's website at: <http://deidredalton.com/>.