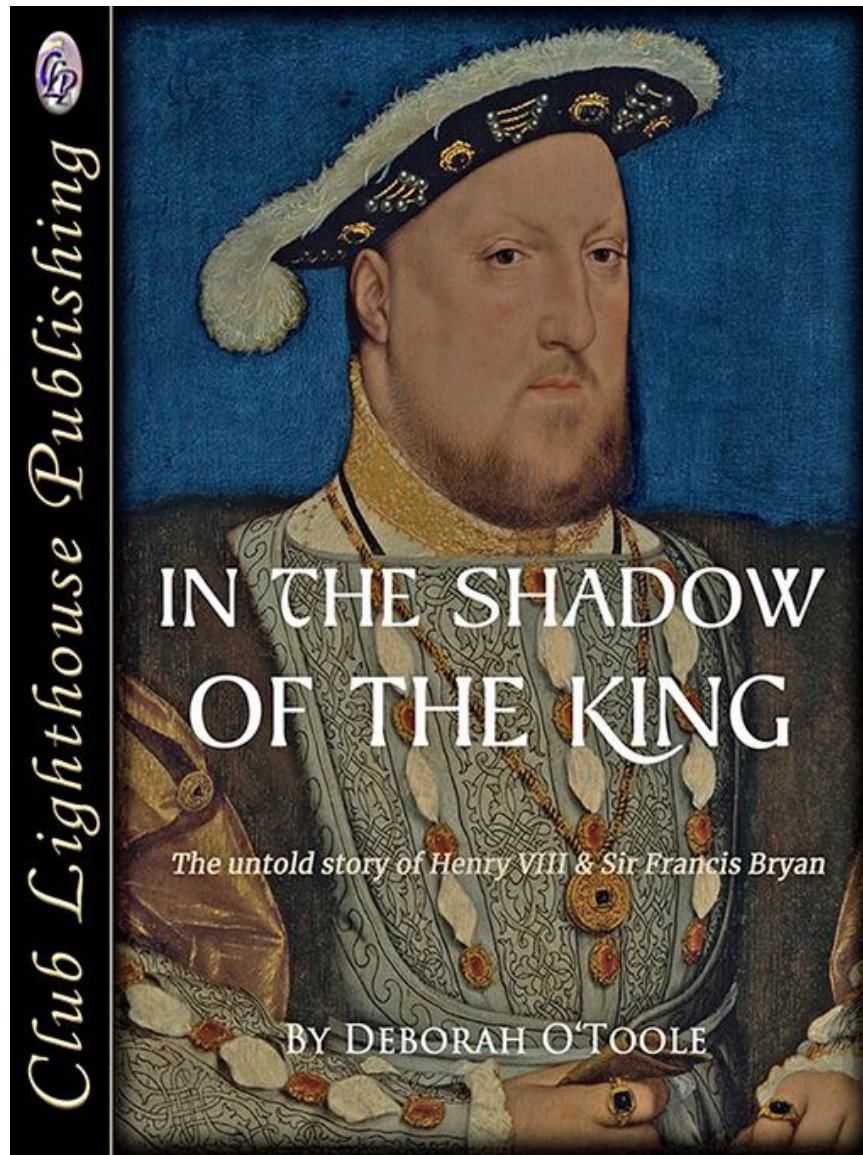


Background & Credits



IN THE SHADOW OF THE KING

By Deborah O'Toole

"In the Shadow of the King" is a work of semi-fiction. Some of the names, characters, places and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to a specific portion of actual events, locales, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and beyond the intent of the author.

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The text in this book was set in Lora (body), Merriweather (headings), and Seaker & Trahan Pro (book cover).

ABOUT

In the Shadow of the King by Deborah O'Toole is a semi-fictional account of the dramatic life of Sir Francis Bryan, confidant to King Henry VIII.

Sir Francis Bryan was a man of letters who distinguished himself as a cipher, diplomat, poet, sailor and soldier. He was also knight bannerette, chevalier, Lord of the Tor Bryan, chief gentleman of the privy chamber, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland and a gifted sportsman. He lost an eye during a jousting tournament and forever after wore a rakish eye patch, which merely added to his allure.

During his time in Henry VIII's court and one of the few who escaped the King's wrath, Bryan was dubbed the "one-eyed Vicar of Hell" by the King's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, because of his apparent lack of scruples and legendary sexual exploits. Bryan had a well-earned reputation as a self-indulgent libertine, and was said to have been a willing accomplice in the King's tangled love affairs.

Bryan's irresistible charm masked an inveterate intriguer full of barely-contained energy. He could be duplicitous, manipulative and promiscuous as well as highly articulate, ferociously witty and generous when the mood struck him. In videlicet, he was the perfect courtier.

Many observers were astounded by the familiarity he used towards Henry VIII, especially in speaking his mind. However, Bryan was no creature of principle. By bending his opinions to fit the King's policy, he managed to remain in favor throughout Henry VIII's reign.

In the Shadow of the King brings to life the story of Sir Francis Bryan, as told by one of his descendants in the twenty-first century.

The book was released by Club Lighthouse Publishing in July 2023.

"In the Shadow of the King" is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Bernard "Barney" O'Toole and Joyce Mondoux-O'Toole, may they rest in peace. If it wasn't for them, I would have never happened upon the PBS/Masterpiece Theatre series "The Six Wives of Henry VIII" when I was but nine years old. My fascination with all things Tudor continues, unabated, to this day.

Thanks, Mum and Dad.



"In the Shadow of the King" by Deborah O'Toole is a semi-fictional account of the life of Sir Francis Bryan, in particular his relationship with King Henry VIII. Embellishment of historical events, people (real or fictionalized), dialogues and location descriptions were created solely by the author for storyline purposes.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

First, I would like to reiterate one point:

"In the Shadow of the King" by Deborah O'Toole is a semi-fictional account of the life of Sir Francis Bryan, in particular his relationship with King Henry VIII. Embellishment or omissions of certain historical events, people (real or fictionalized), dialogues and location descriptions were created or employed solely by the author for storyline purposes during the writing process.

That being said, it was always my intent to write the book from a semi-fictional angle, fully aware that fans of the historical period might take issue with omissions or fabrications. Second, I make no apologies for it. The book does include many noted historical events, as well as several fictitious ones. It is to be read for entertainment purposes at the behest of the reader.

❖ BACKGROUND

Delving into Tudor history came easily for me. I've been obsessed with the era since I was nine years old, when I first saw the original PBS/Masterpiece Theatre series "The Six Wives of Henry VIII," which starred the late actor Keith Michell as King Henry. Subsequently, I became a huge fan of "Elizabeth R" (also debuting on PBS decades ago), featuring the late Glenda Jackson as Queen Elizabeth I. For the longest time, Michell and Jackson were synonymous in my mind as the father-daughter characters they portrayed, and still are to some extent.



Since then, I've avidly pursued the study of Tudor history. I have countless (but probably numbering more than one hundred) tomes on the subject, beginning with *A Crown for Elizabeth* by Mary M. Luke, which was the first book I ever read about the Tudor era. While none of the basic history is new to me now, little bits of information continue to trickle in, thus intensifying my interest in the topic. Fairly recent discoveries include a collection of Tudor coins unearthed by a family weeding their garden in New Forest, Southern England; a 16th-century warrant book detailing instructions from Henry VIII on how he ordered the execution of his second wife, Anne Boleyn, to be carried out ("*we command that the head of the same Anne shall be cut off*" at the Green "*within our Tower of London*"), researchers offering theories about Henry VIII's bouts of anger and memory issues, and a discovery of the *Mary Rose* shipwreck, which sank near the Isle of Wight in 1545 and provided insight into Tudor-era cod fishing.

Combining a real person from history with fictional elements is a difficult task at times. It was made more so by the scant information available about Sir Francis Bryan. Although quite famous in his day, many avenues of Bryan's life are shrouded in mystery with no hints or plentiful historical documents to light the way. However, I was able to find several references to Bryan and his family tree, as well as mention of him in official papers from the reign of Henry VIII. There are plenty of resources out there, you just have to find them.

Nonetheless, my first instinct was to tell the story of Francis Bryan through the eyes of one of his fictional descendants. Creating a fictional storyline was the best option, considering little information about Bryan's life is available. Plus, I'm not an author of historical non-fiction. My focus has always been fiction, regardless of the subject matter. However, I'm also inclined to mix fiction with non-fiction for storyline purposes, such as putting in place real locations and people amongst my fictional characters and imagined structures.

I also took liberties with various locations in the storyline as most of the actual places no longer exist, or are in ruins. I modeled Marsworth Manor, Sir Francis Bryan's childhood home, on Castle Ashby in rural Northamptonshire, England, while his final residence, Butler Castle in Clonmel, Ireland was entirely fictional but built around Malahide Castle in County Dublin, Ireland. Interior descriptions of the places came from online resources and my own imagination, but hopefully illustrative of the times in which they are based in the book. In addition, descriptions of Francis Bryan's fictional house on The Strand in London were based on a structure known as the "Double Cottage," which is actually located in Blaise Hamlet, Bristol, England.

Notations of diaries, letters, poems and songs are presented in modern English rather than the language of the times, with few exceptions.

❖ RESOURCES

Perusing the vast amount of research material I ultimately collected for *In the Shadow of the King* was daunting at first, but I soon found myself engrossed in all of it. The resources included more than two hundred websites, print and e-books, articles, essays and dissertations. Connecting the dots, so to speak, and building the semi-fictional story of Sir Francis Bryan was perhaps one of the most satisfying projects I've ever undertaken. It's saying a lot, however, as prior to *In the Shadow of the King*, I was the published author of fifteen fiction novels. Needless to say, the rather elusive life of Sir Francis Bryan kept me hooked to the end.

I would like to shine a light on some of my resources, which is done with much appreciation.

The men and women who surrounded Henry VIII and became part of his life were often as well-known as he was.

Sir Francis Bryan: Henry VIII's Most Notorious Ambassador by Sarah-Beth Watkins proved to be a good tool in attempting to trace Bryan's career in the court of Henry VIII. While the slim volume shed little light on Bryan's personal life, it did impart information

about the political tightrope he walked as a close confidante of the King and as a courtier in the royal court. It also allowed me to track the timelines of his movements, mainly to France.

Food in the Tudor court was another topic I researched, mainly to look for exacting details on food and dish names, preparation and ingredients. I'm grateful to the information provided in *A Tudor Christmas* by Alison Weir and Siobhan Clarke, *All the King's Cooks: The Tudor Kitchens of King Henry VIII at Hampton Court Palace* by Peter Brears, *Food & Feast in Tudor England* by Alison Sim, *The Tudor Cookbook* and *The Tudor Kitchen* by Terry Breverton, and *The Shakespeare Cookbook* by Andrew and Maureen Dalby.

Other resources ranged from topics such as **disease in Tudor times** (*Medical Downfall of the Tudors: Sex, Reproduction & Succession* by Sylvia Barbara Soberton), **relationships** (*Henry VIII and the Men Who Made Him* by Tracy Borman, *Among the Wolves at Court: The Untold Story of Thomas and George Boleyn* and *Inside the Tudor Court: Henry VIII and His Six Wives Through the Eyes of the Spanish Ambassador* by Lauren Mackay, *Debrett's Peerage of England, Scotland, and Ireland; Revised, Corrected and Continued* by G.W. Collen), **peripherals** (*A Journey Through Tudor England: Hampton Court Palace and the Tower of London to Stratford-upon-Avon and Thornbury Castle* by Suzannah Lipscomb, *Household Servants in Early Modern England* by R. Richardson and *Living Like a Tudor Woodsmoke & Sage: A Sensory Journey Through Tudor England* by Amy Licence), **royal specific** (*The Divorce of Henry VIII: The Untold Story from Inside the Vatican* by Catherine Fletcher, *Henry VIII: The King and His Court* by Alison Weir, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty* by Tracy Borman, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* by Alison Weir, *The Tudors: The Complete Story of England's Most Notorious Dynasty* by G.J. Meyer, *Tudor: Passion. Manipulation. Murder. The Story of England's Most Notorious Royal Family* by Leanda de Lisle), and many more.

I found the website *Henry VIII, The Reign* to be helpful, especially the timeline of his tenure as King of England (1509-1547). Key events during his reign are highlighted for each year, which aided me in keeping actual historical milestones organized. <https://www.henryviiithereign.co.uk/henry-viii-timeline.html>

Another invaluable resource was *The Henrician Court During Cardinal Wolsey's Ascendancy C. 1514-1530* by Neil Samman (1988). The thesis details Henry VIII's travel itineraries from 1514-1530. It was useful when I was setting a scene, when I could reference the specific itinerary to find out where the royal court was lodged at any given time between those years.

I also searched for obscure little facts to toss into the mix, such as fishing rods during Tudor times (*The Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle* by Dame Juliana Berners, 1496), Berganza (Tudor jewelry for men), Chalke Valley History Festival (Henry VIII's medicine cabinet), Great Pendragon Campaign (fictional knighting ceremony), Library of Congress (the rate of paper deterioration), Little House Ink & Envelopes (using sand to dry ink), Properly Dressed UK (Tudor men's fashions), Study.Com (16th-century furniture; tables) and Village Matters (medieval fish ponds), among many others.

A *Journey Through Tudor England* by Suzannah Lipscomb mostly contained information I was already aware of. However, her inclusion of little "sidebars" scattered throughout the book proved to be useful. They were like bits of trivia added to the mix, including a Tudor Timeline, Tudor Portraiture, Royal Progresses, Food in Tudor England, The Early Tudor Great Hall, Clothing in Tudor England, Social Climbing the Tudor Way, Tudor Sports & Pastimes, and the Typical Tudor House. For example, bear-baiting was popular spectator sport in Tudor England. Apparently, archeologists found layers of hazelnuts in the remains of an old baiting ground, which were the equivalent of popcorn in Tudor times.

My life is often guided by sticky notes while I'm researching. Orange notes inserted into resources were meant to signify direct mention of Sir Francis Bryan, while pink-purple sticky notes referred to pertinent events, structure descriptions, kitchen routines (massive in Henry VIII's court), tidbits about hygiene, and a host of other related content that hopefully brought authenticity to the storyline.

Part of the research also included developing a spreadsheet of characters and locations (ongoing and constant), which allowed me to verify consistency in descriptions, life events and general history. The research and writing of *In the Shadow of the King* was a long haul indeed, but I enjoyed every second of it - even when doubts surfaced.

In the early stages of every book I've ever written (sixteen novels to date, including *In the Shadow of the King*), I always ask myself: "Can I do this? Or is it all just crap?" When the storyline is rough at the start, or becomes complicated as it progresses, I find myself questioning my ability to pull it off. However, I recognize the doubts are merely part of a phase, and I eventually get past them. As is what happened with *In the Shadow of the King*.

I'll let the reader be the judge.

❖ FICTIONAL AVENUES

Whether Sir Francis Bryan had children, legitimate or otherwise, is debatable, depending on the resource chosen. I devoured the information to be had on several websites, in print books, electronic books and essays. Some sources refer to Sir Francis Bryan as having "children unknown," while others suggest he had an illegitimate son by Abigail Elwell in 1518, another son named Edmund by his first wife Phillipa Spice in 1522, and a third son dubbed Francis by his second wife, Joan Butler, in 1549.

One genealogy website reports that Francis and Philippa also had another son, Robert Bryan, date of birth unknown. Mention of the second son is found in *Footprints in Time: Thirty-Two Generations of Bryans* by Linda Bryan Johnston. The author noted that data concerning ancestry of Sir Francis Bryan is based partly on research done by *The Society of Genealogists in London*, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, and the *Complete Peerage*. The same websites report that Francis and Joan also had a daughter, Margaret Elizabeth Bryan, born in 1548.

For storyline purposes, I went with the existence of four children: John Bryan Elwell (illegitimate son by Abigail Elwell), Edmund Bryan (by his first wife Phillipa Spice) and Francis Bryan II (by his second wife, Joan Butler), although circumstances and dialog are highly embellished and of my own making. Again, for storyline purposes, I gave the name

"John" to Sir Francis Bryan's illegitimate issue by Abigail Elwell. Physical descriptions and characteristics of all alleged three sons are purely fictional, although I tried to be mindful as actual events in history played out.

Fictional fourth child: The existence of the character Angela Perrette-Quillon as Francis Bryan's French mistress resulted in the birth of an illegitimate daughter, Charlotte Bryan Quillon, in 1536. *Both characters are purely fictional.*

There are several scenes and multiple dialogs in the book that are of my own making, although more often than not they are crafted on the peripherals of real historical events or milestones in Tudor times.

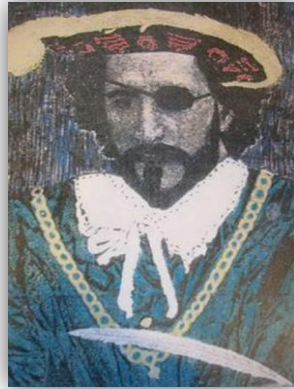
In addition, mention of the *Primero* card game in scenes from 1509 pre-date its actual first reference in 1526. The inclusion of the game in the storyline was deliberate as I wanted to give Henry VIII and Francis Bryan something to focus on as they became acquainted in the early days of their relationship. It also gave me the opportunity to introduce Charles Brandon, Henry VIII's best friend, into the mix.

The historical timelines included near the end of *In the Shadow of the King* are mostly factual. However, where little or no information is available on the dates for specific events, certain notations were established for the flow of the storyline. The "Chapter Notes & Citations" section of *In the Shadow of the King* details events and locales that occurred in history. References are included, as well as clarification of certain events or locales that may have been altered for storyline purposes. Use of the term "for storyline purposes" is meant to explain alteration or embellishment of certain events, dialogues and timelines so they go hand-in-hand with the fictional aspect of the story.

I glossed over or omitted some events from real history not for their lack of importance, but because building a fictional setting and dialog around every event - whether small or large - would have propelled *In the Shadow of the King* to a likely 1,000+ pages. Certain Tudorphiles might find fault with the omission, alteration or addition of known or fictional events in history, but I embellished as I saw fit as the story progressed in my head. Any faults, non-intended or otherwise, are purely the responsibility of yours truly. It was not my intent to short shrift readers, but leaving out certain events was essential for the smooth flow of the semi-fictional storyline.

While there are no known likenesses of Sir Francis Bryan - allegedly because he was self-conscious about his eye patch and refused to have his picture painted - I decided to include an existing fictional portrait, which was located at Butler Castle in the storyline. Because I'm a visually inspired author when it comes to descriptions of people and locations, I based his looks on one source: a sketch of a 16th-century man wearing an eye patch, credited to John Wilhite at the website *Find-A-Grave*.

Then my publisher also came up with a rendering of the man (*pictured below right*), which hits the nail on the head, in my opinion. Tall and swaggering, Bryan simply had to be handsome in order to earn his reputation as a rake in the court of Henry VIII.



In the Shadow of the King is an ode to my nearly lifelong fascination with all things Tudor. Hopefully, I was able to do it justice, along with the physical description of Sir Francis Bryan, however he may appear in the reader's mind.

❖ WITH MUCH APPRECIATION

I would also like to thank the many people who made *In the Shadow of the King* possible.

I'm grateful to Club Lighthouse Publishing, in particular Terrie Lynn Balmer, Palvi Sharma and James Wason. Their welcome input and assistance has helped me through more than one book. A special nod also goes to video-master extraordinaire, Barbara Cerda.

Heartfelt appreciation is given to my friends and family, who remained supportive even while I was basically incommunicado during much of the past year as I worked on *In the Shadow of the King*: Sulaiman Av, Barry & Bobbi Barber, Karen Bittleston, Kami Corry, Ken Davies, Krista Davis, Terri O'Toole Denham, Sheila Domon, Jeff Dorsey, Shaun "Retribuse" Ferguson, Phil Foster, Brendan Gallagher, Jen "Talia" O'Toole, Kathy O'Toole Holley, JoAnn Huber, JoAnn Kaiser, Debbie Lanier, Bernadette McGirk, Mike & Kim Miner, Mike Mortimer, Anne O'Halloran, Rheata O'Hare, Ben & Sharon Opfermann, Cainneach Ciaran O'Siofra, Karen O'Toole, Nancy O'Toole, P.J. Peterman, Dawn Ashley Phillips, David Policansky, Tracy John Powell, Marie Spencer Russo, CoCo Saltzgiver, Patricia Schneck and John Whiting.

I also have a close-knit community of online friends who have remained supportive throughout, including Nathan Baxter, Diane Best, James Bieurke (*along with the comedic antics of his Ginger & Bella*), Francine Tyson Boness, Kerry Ross Boren, Kandace Bryan, Greg Campbell, Pam Diane, Keri Elkington, Pauline Jamias, Jon Leythorne, Karen Lindquist, Maria Martinez, Eleanor Wood Mason, Francesco Mele, Denis McCloskey, Steeven Prabakar (*along with his adult children, Sushma and Sun Deep*), David Michael Ryan, Rick Simonson, Daniel Timothy and Wilson Rodriguez Vacca. I see and read all of your comments and emojis, which frequently offer me inspiration.

I definitely want to give a shout-out to all of my readers, many of whom contact me on a regular basis. Your input is much appreciated, even when it is critical.

And last, but not least, much love and thanks to my significant other, Jerry Dalton. His sense of humor and calming influence kept me from going over the edge several times as I wrote *In the Shadow of the King*. In addition, his observations and offhand remarks sometimes found their way into the storyline, but it's up to the reader to guess where.

Thank you.

Deborah O'Toole

<https://deborahotoole.com/>

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IMAGES

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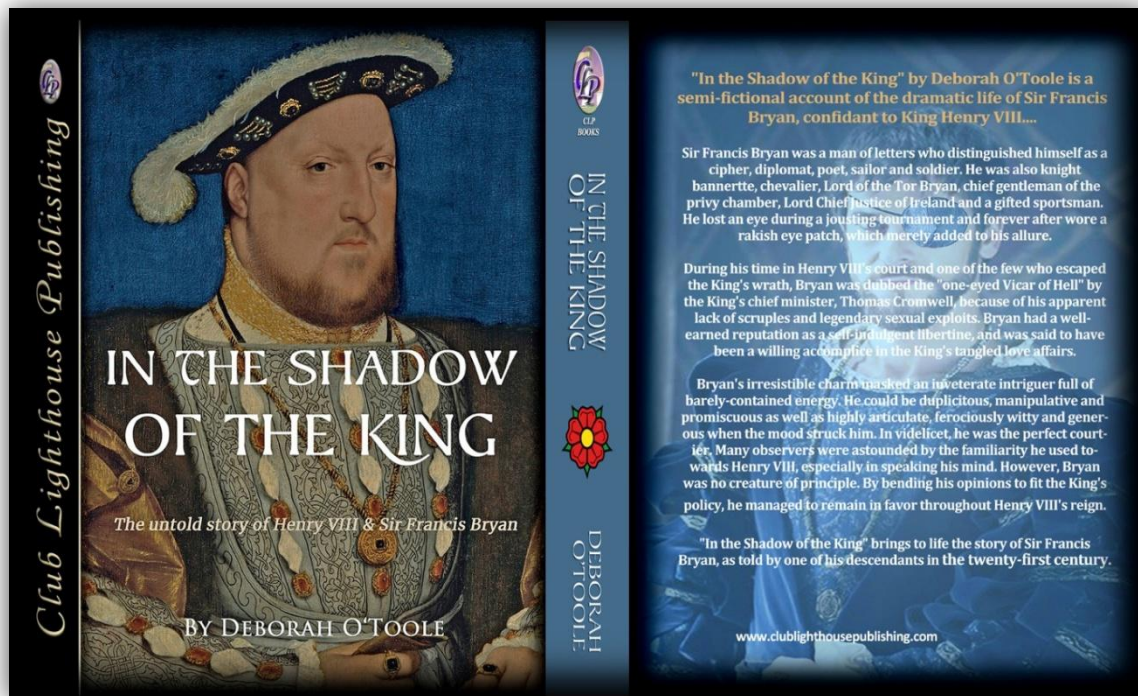
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"IN THE SHADOW OF THE KING" INFORMATION

In the Shadow of the King by Deborah O'Toole was released by Club Lighthouse Publishing in July 2023. The book is available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble.



BOOK DETAILS:

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-77217-251-5

Paperback ASIN: 1772172510

E-Book ISBN: 978-1-77217-250-8

E-Book ASIN: B0CCCHNHT8

E-Book BNID: 2940161100820

Released: July 19, 2023

Released By: Club Lighthouse Publishing

Cover design: T.L. Davison and Webs Divine



EXTRAS:

Official website:

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

In the Shadow of the King @ Facebook:

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Deborah O'Toole is the author of *Celtic Remnants*, a novel of enduring yet impossible love and betrayal set in the turbulence of Ireland, glamour of London and wilds of Scotland. She is also author of *The Crypt Artist*, *Glinhaven*, *In the Shadow of the King* and *Mind Sweeper*. The novels were released by Club Lighthouse Publishing.

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Deborah O'Toole: <https://deborahotoole.com/>

BOOKS BY DEBORAH O'TOOLE

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The King's Table

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