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DEAD TO ME
De Many Deaths of Michaleen
L SHEA

BAD DOG PUBLISHING

DEAD TO ME
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DEAD TO ME:
De Many Deaths of Michaleen

All characters and events in this book are fictional and any resemblance to actual places, events or persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Dedicated to Michael,
Because you know what you did to deserve it...

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Sure, death is just a part of life,
There's nothing a boi can do,
But live each moment de best he can,
Before de fecker comes for you,
And take dem walks,
And a few bevvies too,
And sing when de sun is up,
And smile when de Oul Grim Reaper,
Decides to snuff you out,
He might come in de night,
He might come in de day,
He might even arrive when you're on de bog,
Or rolling in de hay,
No matter when de end is nigh,
When you're done, you're done for sure,
But at least you lived in a place called Cork,
And you couldn't ask for more!

DE FOREWORD

Sometimes how a story comes to mind and subsequently develops into a book touches on the bizarre. A story can have humble beginnings with no more ambition than to provide an entertaining snippet to amuse, a message to convey a feeling, or a series of events that lead a little further than intended. *Dead to Me*: The many deaths of Michaleen came about by just such an incident, as in all of the above. Each piece fell into place and it became apparent that there might just be more to the story than originally surmised. Of course it could have been a stretch, but when the words began to flow, a book became an inevitable conclusion. As such, I find myself here now writing a foreword to a book that was for all intents and purposes, an accidental happenstance. The story is about two Cork lads (referred to locally as bois, or boys). One of the aforementioned lads named Michaleen manages to test the limits of his friendship with Liamó by committing a most serious act of... well, read de story, boi and you will see just how bad it is and just what he feckin' did, like.

Unlike some of my previous forays into the literary world, I have never written a book that flowed so fast it almost seemed to write itself. Nor did I believe how completely enjoyable the experience would be in taking each and every devious step to plot the demise of the aforementioned offender and the Characters who played an essential part in my mindset to represent the unfortunate Michaleen at the core of the story. The personas also touched that individual deep enough to make him feel the depth of Liamó's disappointment. It was quite simply... so much fun! In hindsight, perhaps the story is now less about Liamó forgiving Michaleen and more about that boi offering a similar reprieve to him in light of what has transpired here. Michaleen and Liamó have been friends for a very long time and will hopefully continue to be so for many years to come. However, those others who appear to stand in the same vein

of friendship, be warned – there is always scope for the dreaded sequel.

**A NOTE ON THE CORKONIAN TERMS
(AND OTHER EXPRESSIONS USED IN THE BOOK)**

Cork is located in Ireland. The name refers to both a city and the largest county in the south of that island. Cork is often referred to as De Rebel County for reasons we will not be going into here. There is a glossary of any terms that deviate from the English language; in as much as such a thing is possible, provided later in the book and quick reference guides after each chapter. Please feel free to photocopy or print same for your reference or skip back and forth as required if some term does not readily present itself to understanding the Cork brogue. You can copy the glossary – not the book! Using the local language is essential to the flavour of the book and the story being told. There may occasionally be a few words of the *Gaelic* thrown into the mix, but nothing too challenging, like. Oh, and for those who have not read De Cork Bois (a.k.a. The Cork Bois), people from Cork have a tendency to use the word ‘like’ prolifically to the point of making a sentence seem incomplete without throwing it in everywhere, but especially at the end of any line of dialogue. For now, suffice to say, if you read the story and ignore the overuse of spurious ‘likes’, then you will get on just fine. Everything else you can figure out on the way.

PROLOGUE DE INCIDENT

Well, this is how it begins, not with a bump or a bang but with a subtle moment that could have just as easily been missed on any other day. Liamó woke in the morning, thumbed through his social media and perhaps only took in about twenty to thirty percent of what he saw as his mind struggled to come to grips with the beginning of another day in the good old Republic of Cork, de Rebel County in the south of Ireland for those who have never heard of de place. There might have been the occasional lingering pause if he got a lot of likes, shares, retweets and clicks from the night before, but sometimes it was just as likely to end in a long sigh when he realised no one had bothered to take notice, like. He really needed to get some new friends.

Breakfast came to mind after a quick visit to the bathroom to take care of a necessary morning routine – best not go into that here, but suffice to say, there was a shower involved, a vigorous scrubbing of the... teeth and a shave if he was not feeling lazy or going for the designer stubble look, or cultivating a goatee that would make Sean Connery's ample facial follicles seem sculpted to perfection by comparison. Liamó's always seemed patchy and grey bordering on white until he let it alone long enough to irritate de wife.

A green smoothie; cholesterol drink and a few stretches later, the laptop was on and the day began in earnest, though Liamó might have occasionally paused to fantasize about substituting the lot for an amply filled breakfast roll with all the trimmings – egg, sausage, two rashers, black & white pudding, hash brown and lashings of real butter with splashes of tomato ketchup. It might not be good for you, but in Cork it was deemed a glorious undertaking, sure to satisfy any boi. Alas, the fantasy was empty and his will remained strong. The urge was suppressed in favour of the healthier option. Occasionally, and by that, Liamó meant *'frequently'*, copious

amounts of coffee were thrown into the mix to keep a civilised perspective on the world. Better the coffee than the gnarly alternative of a diminished tolerance for the world and the people in it. There were a lot of feckin' eejits around. At this stage, while imbibing caffeine, if he missed anything in the previous social media feeds, it had a high probability of staying missed, though there were indulgent moments when he might have been inclined to take a peak back. The day wound on, with a snack of one slice of Low-gi toast, orange juice, followed by a coffee (or another one if Liamo drank the first one already and laboured in a state of denial) that sat there for some time to cool before being savoured and consumed. Liamo might pause now and again to ponder on why he didn't just hook it up intravenously, but weighing the pros and cons, he hated needles, so it would hardly matter. For those of you reading this, yes, you might have noticed that, besides the coffee, Liamo had a rather healthy start to the day, but it was not an exact routine. Everyone had the occasional weakness, and there were cheat days that defied Liamo's ambitions to treat his body with some degree of respect – referred to as the '*jelly baby days*', when a war was waged on the basis of making sure that none of them survived, especially the green ones. De fantasy aside, every indulgence had to be kept firmly in check. Still on most days Liamo regulated his coffee intake and there was not a jelly treat in sight. He frequently reminded himself that his body was a temple. It might have been the temple of doom, but it was still his body. Liamo stayed on track and worked the regime diligently. When all was said and done – his body was the only one he had and as Liamo had passed the fifty mark – it was high maintenance and low tolerance. Still, fifty was the new forty and Liamo like to think of it as having the potential to become the new thirty-nine with a little effort and aforementioned denial.

Now, don't go thinking that this is some sort of vain health book. The propensity towards caffeine and a special

fondness for our jelly friends should preclude any inclination towards that assumption. This is just setting the scene for an impending disappointment that took far too long to realise and could have been noticed earlier if attention had been paid to the aforementioned social media even with the ample distractions that played to cravings best left firmly locked away so as not to trouble the psyche. Again, the story is not set to promote engaging in such activity, it is merely pointing out that there was some omission in the depths of waking that led to missing a key indicator that all was not right in the universe of Liamo that morning. Moving on, lunch came and went – again a very healthy single portion of quiche and a generous salad with a large glass of water poured from a bottle and not taken directly from the tap. At this stage Liamo was so satisfied with the amount of writing he had done that it was time for a break. This meant a walk, with bursts of running at full speed. One must point out, that for Liamo, this might not seem much different from a fast walk but he did notice the distinction when exerting himself to such an effort as to break a sufficient sweat that drenched his body shamelessly so that it overcame all efforts to keep it at bay no matter how much anti-perspirant was applied before setting off. To anyone looking at Liamo so engaged, it really was dependent on the age of the observer. There will be those who think Liamo was running in slow motion like some throwback to the bionic man (six million dollars of him at that time) or for those who don't remember the slow motion TV that was used to substitute for a scene of incredible speed, perhaps referring to it as some Baywatch running parody would be better. Walking (and the running portion) usually extended anywhere from five to ten kilometres with a typical average of five kilometres on any given day. This also included a sharp incline, steps or other suitable obstacles to work his body a little harder from time to time. Again, it was not an absolute, but he generally tried to do this for half of each month, and not necessarily on consecutive days as he

lived in Ireland, and well, anyone who knows anything about Ireland, or who has stayed in this region of the world, will be aware that the weather is devious in its efforts to keep a boi indoors.

So what has this to do with de incident? Again, some assurance may be needed that this is not an attempt to try writing some health book, or implying that Liamo was in any way successful in his endeavours to keep his body working at optimum. The pain in the joints and the shame of failure were not enough to keep him from trying but, well, there were moments when it seemed just too much work to keep his body ticking over. Equally this book is not trying to delve into some psychological endeavour to achieve the same for the reader's mind. Liamo was merely following a routine that he deemed as necessary daily maintenance to halt the slow erosion that eventually leads to... well, death.

There's a sobering thought in the middle of the opening to set the tone. In case you haven't been keeping up the book does have the word '*dead*' in it.

While traversing a particularly challenging obstacle Liamo paused in his afternoon journey to take a breath, which probably meant his lungs were screaming or some other part of his anatomy had decided to rebel. Liamo did abhor inactivity on most occasions so he took out his phone, checked his health app to see the number of steps walked, calories burned etc., frowned vigorously, cursed and shook his head in self-reproach and then saw some notifications on Facebook. In fact there were enough to make him take notice so he decided to see what had caused said activity. Perhaps his friends had jumped on in a rare moment where they had nothing better to do, or felt a modicum of guilt, to give some assistance in promoting Liamo's books. That would be nice, he thought, but highly unlikely, because as previously mentioned – he had long professed to needing new friends as his regular group had become lazy, self-absorbed and bordering on useless. Liamo brought far more to any

relationship than those he engaged with enough to put in the category of *'friend'*. He dismissed this moment of delving into his value to the group, returning instead to the social media activity in question. It was a picture, a brief note from Michaleen, and it showed a familiar scene that Liamo soon realised led to a few more pictures and similar updates. *The first picture?* It was a pub in Loughborough where Michaleen was having breakfast. Liamo smiled at the thought and a sigh followed. Now that took him back. Liamo had a fondness for Loughborough and presumed at this stage that Michaleen had resurrected a nostalgic scene from their many visits in the past. He put the phone away, smiling, feeling a little warmth in his heart and moved to continue his journey.

Then it hit him! The moment of contentment dissipated in mid-stride to the realisation that perhaps he was not looking at a picture from the past. This was not a nostalgic look into a personal history. Michaleen was in Loughborough!

'No,' he thought. He must have been mistaken. After all, Michaleen and Liamo had always travelled to Loughborough together. He would NEVER go without Liamo, and certainly NOT without telling him. He stopped in his tracks, got the phone out again and examined the pictures and associated notes. In disbelief he sent Michaleen a text – ARE YOU ACTUALLY IN LOUGHBOROUGH NOW?

With no immediate reply, Liamo set off again, albeit at a slower pace as he pondered on the potential response. And then it came! Liamo paused, shook off the annoying possibility that such an incident could be true and looked to the phone in expectation of an explanation that would make the whole world seem right again.

YES! IN LOUGHBOROUGH FOR A FEW DAYS... AND BIRMINGHAM.

Well, that took the wind out of Liamo's sails and put him in a bit of a conundrum. Michaleen had gone to Loughborough without him, but worse... he never told Liamo that he was going! It had been a premeditated

infraction of epic proportions. Liamo walked in circles, took in the horror of the moment and... perhaps you can guess his first thought at this stage... 'DEAD TO ME!'

GLOSSARY OF TERMS DE CORK & D'OTHER STUFF

Expression	Meaning
Ballsack	Testicles, balls.
Bating	Beating or Fighting.
Bleedin' de Lizard	Urinating, peeing.
Boi or Bois	Boy or Boys, also lad or guys for American readers.
Bromance	A close but non-sexual relationship between two or more men.
Cailín	Irish for girl.
Cailíní	Girls - (genitive singular cailín, nominative plural cailíní)
Craic	Fun.
De	The.
De lad	Penis.
De Langer	Oisín in some stories.
De Langer	Michaleen in some stories.
De Man Flu	An illness not to be scoffed at - a very serious flu that afflicts men only, and especially Cork Bois.
De Rebel County	County Cork in Ireland.
De Wife	The Wife, when noting married partner.
DEE & DEE	Term used for well-known Sword & Sorcery Role Playing Game (RPG) instead of commercially available RPG.
Dem	Them
D'other	The other.
Eejit	Fool or foolish person.
Fakin'	Faking.
Feck	Fuck or damn for Americans.
Fecker	Fucker, eejit or a boi who is generally on the wrong side of another's wrath or displeasure.
Feekin'	Like 'Fucking' but nicer sounding in the way the Americans use 'Damn'.
Fix his lad	Fix his penis.
Gaffe	Blunder or mistake.
Gatch	A swagger or notable walk – 'Where'd you get the gatch from?'

Expression	Meaning
Gawking	Getting sick, throwing up.
Gawks	Getting sick, throwing up.
Give it a lash	Giving it a go. Taking a chance.
Hell for leather	As fast as possible.
His lad out	His penis out.
Hobbos RPG	An as yet unreleased Role Playing Game currently being playtested by Bad Dog Publishing.
Hobbos-in-Plaid	Also known as HIP. An as yet unreleased Role Playing Game currently being playtested by Bad Dog Publishing.
In the nip	Naked or next to naked.
Jax	Toilet.
Knightshade RPG	Knightshade the Role Playing Game produced by Bad Dog Publishing.
Knob	Penis
Lad	Penis.
Langer	In Cork you are known as a langer. A langer is a derogative term to describe any number of terms, such as eejit, fool but also penis.
Lapsy pa	Unknown or indeterminate infection.
Lash	A bit of.
Like	An expression that ends up in all Cork Boi dialogue. Can usually be ignored.
Long in the tooth	Old.
Mechmen 3099	Term used for Futuristic battle suit Role Playing Game (RPG) instead of commercially available RPG.
Micko	Short name Oisín has for Michaleen.
Mockie ah	Not real. Not a real thing. Pretend.
Off the rails	Getting angry to the point of violence.
Oul	Old.
Oul man	Old man.
Piss anyone off	Make someone angry.
Pissed off	Angry, fed up.
Readies	Money.
Shenanigans	Fun, craic, general boisterous fun with a little good natured mayhem.
Shite	Nice Irish way of saying shit but without the 'e' to make it more acceptable and less vulgar sounding.

Expression	Meaning
Shout of Thahulu	Role Playing Game (RPG) term used instead of well-known commercially available RPG.
Taking the piss	Making a joke, usually at another boi's expense.
Tidy whities	Underpants, underwear, briefs.
Toe jam	Stuff that builds up between the toes. Also attributed to odour of same.
Toerag	A derogatory name for someone who is being more than an eejit.
Wan	A particular class of girl – not the kind you should bring home to the mammy without some forewarning.

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By William Anthony Shea

TALES FROM A DARKLING POOL

(Author's Preferred Text)

RETURN TO A DARKLING POOL

A DARKLING POOL AGAIN

BEYOND A DARKLING POOL

ripples FROM A DARKLING POOL

*

SAGA OF THE SENTENIAL:

BOOK ONE: CAULDRON OF TROUBLE

BOOK TWO: FOR THE LAND THAT FELL

BOOK THREE: THE HOUSE OF SILMARIN

*

NIGHTMARE

VAMPIRE

FALLEN

REMNANT – NYR*

*

KNIGHTSHADE RPG:

THE INITIATE'S TOME

THE GRANDMASTER'S TOME

THE LOREMASTER'S TOME – NYR*

THE QUESTMASTER'S TOME – NYR*

*

FUMBLING VOLUME ONE

FUMBLING VOLUME TWO

By L Shea

IMMORAL DAWN

DE CORK BOIs

DEAD TO ME (De Many Deaths of Michaleen)

DE CORK BOIs TOO – NYR*

*NYR = Not Yet Released.

Dead to Me: De Many Deaths of Michaleen is a parody, but a very serious look into how friendship can be eroded by an inconsiderate act of unbelievable selfishness when one Cork Boi endeavours to go off on a journey without d'other. It is a look into using a fantasy element to clearly express feelings of neglect. The story represents an imaginative coping mechanism to vent frustrations without causing lasting harm to a friendship that has survived decades. It is a lesson to Michaleen not to take his friend Liam for granted!