

Love & Lore

Journey to the heart of Celtic myth and legend...



Wildish Things

One man. One woman. One Harley.

And one dangerously horny goddess.

Ireland may never recover.

A year after a horrendous accident, wildlife artist Beith Molloy journeys to Ireland to get her career back on track. And maybe recover her missing spirit of adventure. A twist of fate lands her with sexy, bad-boy tour guide Kellan O'Neill, who whisks her away on his Harley to the wild and mysterious Burren.

Like the Burren, Kel is not what he seems on the surface. His impulsive plan to kidnap Beith – all in fun, of course – and entice her into a casual summer fling starts to go awry when her wounded spirit touches his heart. Things go even more sideways once they set foot on the Burren.

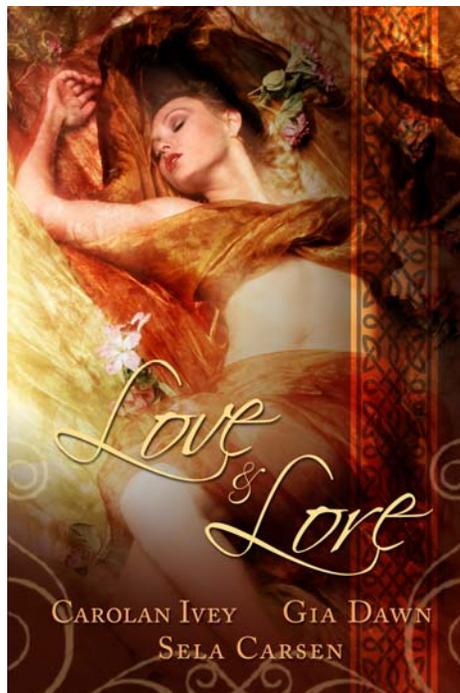
What awaits them there is the Cailleach, an ancient, nearly forgotten goddess who's bored, lonely, and more than a little horny. When Beith and Kel begin their dance of seduction, the Cailleach sees her chance to use their desire to release her pent-up lust. There's just one problem.

Legend has it that once the Hag's lust is aroused, men die.

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*"From selkies to gods... **Love & Lore** is a spellbinding, sensual delight!"* – Mandy M. Roth

*"Carolan Ivey's fluid writing and beautiful description in **Wildish Things** makes me long to capture the notice of a certain meddling Hag."* – Michelle M. Pillow



Love & Lore: Wildish Things by Carolan Ivey

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Kellan was within minutes of pulling this caper off.

Beith Molloy bore little resemblance to the fuzzy faxed photo he'd glimpsed in Declan's office last night. The same one Declan had snatched out of his hand and into a concealing file. As if his big brother didn't trust him around a beautiful woman.

He'd known if he wanted to meet her, he'd have to take matters into his own hands. Luckily he'd gotten enough of a look at her flight schedule to know when she would arrive in Dublin. The hard part had been acting completely uninterested while his mind had churned with plans to whisk her out from under Declan's very nose.

The woman before him now had a carry-on almost bigger than she was. Her hair was darker, her skin still creamy but with a translucent quality, as if she'd been cooped up indoors too long.

His first prickle of conscience had come when she'd looked up at him, fearlessly displaying her scarred mouth.

As if she knew it would scare him off.

But something in those chocolate-brown eyes... The challenge in them had softened to complete trust as she'd accepted his story without question. He'd completely forgotten about her mouth once the eyes had softened. Where had she been living that she'd willingly walk off with a stranger without demanding so much as an ID card? In a cave?

Outside on the sidewalk, he stopped and pretended to adjust his load of baggage, using those few precious seconds to scan the area. Good. No sign of Declan.

Fionna had slipped him Beith's itinerary; the first thing he'd noticed was that it wouldn't take Beith anywhere near the prime nesting grounds of the endangered bird she was seeking in order to fulfill a commissioned art work. He'd take her to the places she needed to be in order to complete her contract.

Along the way, he planned to enjoy her company, tease her, make her laugh and smile, and, if things went as he planned, she'd be inviting him into her bed before the trip was over. Preferably *long* before it was over.

A little summer fling would be good for both of them. He was certain of it.

He detected a slight shiver in the arm he'd tucked into his, but she continued to follow him willingly down the row of compact cars. He let a smile widen his lips.

She was going to love this. He was sure of it.

"Have you a jacket?" He kept his tone casual as he tipped her suitcase to stand on its end and let her carry-on slide to the ground.

"In my suitcase. Why?"

He watched her face as her eyes centered on his vehicle, and waited for it to break into a smile.

Instead, it went curiously blank. She swallowed audibly.

"Is this...is this your, um, vehicle?"

Kel gazed fondly at his pride and joy. A midnight-blue-and-silver Harley-Davidson Softtail.

"Indeed it is. She's beautiful, isn't she?"

He thought he heard Beith make a noise, but he was busy glancing at his watch, and caught a shiny red flash out of the corner of his eye.

Right on time. *Don't squeal the tires, Fionna.*

The boxy Honda van pulled up strategically between them and anyone who might be in the terminal looking for them.

Fionna unfolded out of the car, all six feet of her, vivid red hair tucked up under a battered baseball cap. She slid open the side door, then turned to smile warmly at Beith. Like all people exposed to Fionna's smile, Beith smiled back, partially if not thoroughly disarmed. Kel had always thought Fionna possessed more than a bit of Fae blood in her veins.

"Offloading?" said Fionna cheerfully.

"A bit," he replied, swinging Beith's suitcase into the opening and unceremoniously unzipping it.

"What are you doing?" Beith squeaked.

Fionna and Kel stood staring into her suitcase, momentarily stunned.

"She has no clothes," murmured Fionna.

"Yes, I do," protested Beith. "Everything's in there. Lots of thin layers. I know the drill. There's just a few other things on top."

"A few other things?" Kel began lifting bubble-wrapped parcels out of the suitcase. Through the wrap he recognized thick sketch pads, colored pencils, and...heaven help them...an easel?

"I'm an artist," said Beith, apparently reading his expression. "These are the tools of my trade."

"Well," said Kell cheerfully. "There's nothing for it—they'll have to go."

"What?"

"They won't fit in the bike's panniers. Besides, if you're going home tomorrow, you don't need all this, now, do you? Fionna will keep it all for you until you're ready to go. And," he shrugged offhandedly, "if you decide to stay, there's nothing here we can't purchase on the road. If you need it."

Beith looked up into his eyes, and Kel met her gaze squarely, hoping not a trace of urgency showed. He could see in the dark circles under her eyes that all she wanted was to find a bed and sleep. He felt a prickle of remorse when she shifted her gaze to the car.

"I'd almost rather leave my clothes behind than my art supplies," she said absently.

The word "Brilliant!" was on the edge of his tongue, but he managed to hold onto it.

"Why don't we just trade vehicles?" suggested Beith. "If you don't mind, of course, Fionna. Then, if I end up staying, I'll have everything I need."

Um...

Fionna didn't miss a beat. "I'd be happy to, but me cousin needs it for his pizza delivery route." She reached out and touched Beith's arm, and that Fae magic did its work.

Kel watched in growing fascination as Beith took another long look at his Harley, lifted her chin and squared her shoulders. "All right. I'll just need my camera, and..." She reached between Fionna and Kel, grabbed a sketchpad and a package of pencils, then turned away to unzip her carry-on. If possible, she looked even paler.

Kel didn't miss the look of interest Fionna gave Beith. He mentally rolled his eyes. *Here it comes.*

Fionna lapsed casually into Irish, keeping her voice cheerful as she pulled what little clothing there was out of the suitcase and handed it to Beith to tuck into one of the panniers.

"I dreamed of the Hag last night, Kellan."

"Did you now?"

"You're taking her to the Burren?"

"Of course. She's to go to the prime little tern nesting sites." He snorted. "Whoever set up her itinerary hadn't any idea what they were on about. I know where the best ones are."

"Just be careful. The Hag is restless, which doesn't bode well for a man like you. Whatever you think this woman needs..." She hitched her chin toward Beith.

"Oh, I fully intend to give her what she needs, have no fear about that," he said, smiling wolfishly.

Fionna regarded him briefly, not a trace of amusement in her blue eyes.

"Her needs have nothing—and everything—to do with what you intend to 'give' her, you fool. Stop for a minute and think what you're doing. If the only reason you're carrying on with this is to pull something over on Declan, back out now."

Kellan reached out and tapped the end of her nose. "Been scrying the bottom of a whiskey glass, have you?"

She gave him a look that brought him up short.

"Whiskey doesn't touch my cauldron, and that scrying once saved your life, if you recall. Last night I saw the Cailleach, and she is no one to be trifled with. You know that. The Hag will have what she requires, and if you deny her, she will twist off your wee balls and have them with her tea."

The Cailleach. Kellan zipped Beith's suitcase shut and shoved it deeper into the car, then slid the door shut with more force than was quite necessary. Trust Fionna to ruin his day with talk of the Hag. Yet he knew Fionna had never been wrong about things unseen. And she was also right—her timely warning had once saved his life. He owed her at least a moment's attention.

Even if he planned to ignore her advice. Hag or no Hag.

"Then why did you agree to help me with this?"

Fionna tilted her head as if it should have been obvious. "Because I dreamed of Beith Molloy, too. The Cailleach wants something from her. And it's the only reason I'm letting you do this."

"And what would the Old One want this time?"

"What she wants for every woman, Kellan. To be whole."

To his surprise, Kel's heart did a funny little flip in his chest. He turned his head and looked at Beith, and whatever expression was on his face, Fionna laughed at it.

"You're a chancer, Kel. Just do me a favor and be careful. With luck, all three of you will get what you need."

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