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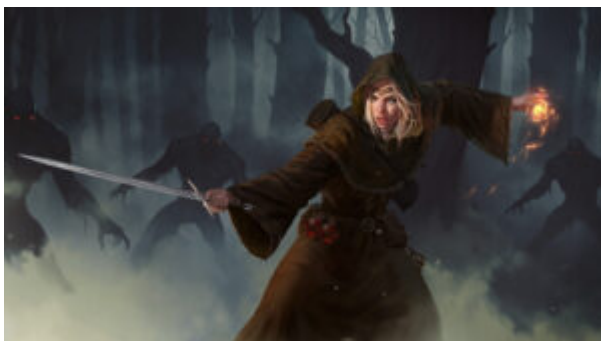
This story was written for a contest elsewhere with the theme 'Supernatural'.

It had to include at least three of the following list of 20 words, but me being me, decided I would get all 20 in.

- 1 - Nightclub
- 2 - Music Record
- 3 - Roller Coaster
- 4 - Mother (monster)-in-law
- 5 - Paris
- 6 - Misfit
- 7 - Song
- 8 - Carnival
- 9 - Monk/Nun
- 10 - Lonely
- 11 - Elements
- 12 - Abandoned
- 13 - Child
- 14 - Blood Moon
- 15 - Valley
- 16 - Creator
- 17 - Family
- 18 - Friends
- 19 - Good/Evil
- 20 - Zoo

Foreword: Apologies to any student of Irish History as I have taken more than one Gaelic legend and mashed them together to get what I wanted the plot to be. Some of what you read is based on ancient stories and some come from my head. The settings are real enough and a quick look at the map of Ireland will give you the locations. If you want to know which is which then enjoy the research otherwise hope you enjoy the tale.

The song referred to in the early part of the story is called the "Wolves of Ossory" by Barry Barnes, and can be found on YouTube.



"Gather round children, draw close to the fire and let me tell you of a legend from our ancestors." The crowd groaned in mock disappointment as the old woman spoke, as they had heard her tales every year at the Newry Carnival.

No one really knew why she appeared every year as all she seemed to do was tell tales that would frighten the children. She would recount the same old legends of ancient warriors and their tales of heroic battles of good against evil. She always ended with the same song though she would change

some of the words ever so slightly.

A couple of times she had been challenged as to why she played that song as everyone knew that Ossory was in the South of Ireland but she would dismiss them with a curse muttering about how the hounds of the North drove them South.

The words to the song ran

“Son I’ve got to save a soul tonight,
yes I’m afraid but I’ve just got to put this right
for even a man who says his prayers by night,
can become a wolf when the wolfbain blooms and the moon is full and bright.

Instead, she would twist the word wolf to wolfhound and add blood moon instead of just moon, and when she got to the verse that ran

I can’t find you or your clan,
I want to help you if I can,
are you a beast or will you be a man someday?...”

She would always add... ‘my sweet child.’

Sensing she may be losing the crowd she shushed them with a hissed curse as she went on.

“This is not the tale of Scáthach who instructed CuChalían in warrior skills. Nor is it the story of Aife who fought CuChalían, and after losing to him, was forced into bearing him a son.” The old woman paused and muttered to herself, then spat on the fire before she continued, “It is not even the story of Neasa, who was forced into marriage by that cursed monk Cathbad. Yes, the very same Neasa who later became the mother to our founding father Conchobhar.”

The crowd had quietened a little at the mention of their founding father, a name they knew rather than the ones of myths and legends.

The old woman tried to draw herself upright but failed as her back wouldn’t straighten, but despite the pain, she said firmly. “This is the story of Fionna as a child and how she learnt at the knee of Liath Luachra. Now Liath was a true warrior princess who ruled these forests along with her companion Anluan, the first hound of Culaain.”

Although she had called the gathered throng ‘children’ most of them, to her, were of warrior age, though perhaps to her advanced years they were just children. Some were spellbound as not only was this a story they had not heard before, but the old crone had referred to Fionn as a female, yet legend had it Fionn was a boy.

Sensing she had her audience’s attention back she lowered her voice to make them strain forward to hear her every word.

“Hah, I see that look on your faces, surely Fionn was a boy I hear you say and you have called her Fionna, the woman must be mad,” The old woman snorted which turned into a cough. Once she had stopped spluttering she went on, “This is the story of Fionn’s grandmother, how she met and married her true love. The tale of how she gave birth to Fionn’s mother Muirne who later bore her son Delmne who became the one we know as Fionn mac Cumhaill.”

The gathered group in the corner of the fairground fell silent as the old woman went on.

“But first we must travel back in time. Back to before the English came and captured our lands, even back to before the time when the Vikings first started to raid. Back to the middle of the seventh century when we ruled ourselves, even back then there was a conflict between the North and the South. This was the time when men who became wolves first started to appear and crept up from the South like a plague. It was here the resistance started, it was here that the hound to fight the wolves was born of a demoness and a werewolf.”

She went on waving her hands around, her voice taking on an almost melodic tone that seemed to belie her years,

“We must transport ourselves to Silent Valley that back then split the great forest that stretched from the coast at Ballymartin to where Rostrevor Forest ends today. Through those dark depths, every traveller who landed at Greencastle on the coast had to cross to travel through the Mourne mountains to reach Castlewellan. It’s in those gloomy dense depths where robbers and thieves lurked preying on travellers but also where legend has it where creatures far worse had started to invade... that is where our story begins...”

The slight child was sobbing with fear and desperation as she tried to lift the heavy sword she had picked up from her father’s inert body. Trying to avert her gaze from his ruined face she turned slowly, the point of the sword dragging in the dirt as the two men circled her. Her head twisted around as she attempted to keep each one in her sight at the same time, a task she realised was hopeless.

“You might as well give in wee missy,” snarled one of the men who drooled as he watched her movements with beady eyes waiting for his partner to get behind the girl so they could take her in a pincer movement. Their plans involved capturing her alive, though it was unlikely she would live the day out after they had finished with her.

“If you entertain us well, we may even let you live,” leered the other, a brute of a man whose stench filled the wooded glade. “After all, I am sure your young pussy is still untouched and will be tight around my cock, unlike your mother’s.” As he spoke, he indicated with his head towards an older woman who was being fucked by a man a few yards away. Her cries had long been silenced, though the man grunting as he thrust into her didn’t seem to care that she was already dead.

“Leave me alone you bastards,” the girl sobbed knowing that perhaps her final moments had come. “Leave me alone or may Liath Luachra take your souls.” The curse to invoke the ancient Gaelic warrior witch was delivered with such strength and passion it almost denied her weakened state.

The two men threw back their heads and roared with laughter as one spat out, “You think to frighten us with your tales of a legend you stupid child. Everyone knows Liath Luachra is just a made-up ghost story to frighten children and keep them from this forest.”

The other man snorted with derision as he said, “I spit on your Liath Luachra. In fact, if she was here I would fuck her, she would probably like a nice portion of cock.” The man cupped his genitalia and wiggled his hand to emphasise his point.

Those were the last words he uttered on this earth as a sword point appeared out of his mouth having been driven with force through the back of his skull. The young girl dropped the sword she was trying to lift and tried to stifle a scream while the other man just looked on in shock as his partner crumpled to the floor dead.

"Did someone call my name?" said a voice that seemed to twinkle in the moonlight as a pale woman appeared in the gloom holding a sword that dripped blood from its point to the grass below. Her ice blonde hair was pulled back from her face into a tight french plait. Her high cheekbones gave her face a regal look and her two glittering blue eyes on either side of her button nose seemed to twinkle like jewels. Her face seemed to glimmer in the moonlight and with a shrug, she divested herself of the heavy cloak around her shoulders to reveal an almost naked body with bindings around her breasts and nether regions, but very little else.

The woman looked at the young girl and smiled, her pearly white teeth glowing in her mouth, "And who might you be young girl?" she said in a kindly voice.

"Fionna," stammered the girl, her voice close to breaking as she looked deep into the pools of sapphire blue that regarded her coldly as if appraising her soul.

"Well I am..." but before the woman could reply the man from the other side had jerked himself from his shock and cut across her words.

"Your name doesn't matter bitch as you are about to die," he snarled as he raised his sword and charged across the clearing with murderous intent.

"How fucking rude," the woman laughed and winked at Fionna before she moved to face the man in a fluid motion. Fionna watched in awe as the woman didn't cease in her movement, nor did she turn away from the charge, instead she seemed to almost flow under the clumsy sword stroke and with a flick of her wrist opened the man's throat sending blood spurting in a red geyser. The man stumbled to a halt, clasped his hands to the severed arteries as he collapsed to his knees before falling flat on his face.

The third man having heard the commotion turned away from Fionna's mother, his cock still hanging from his coverings as he picked up his sword and swung it through the air menacingly. Covering the ground in the blink of an eye the strange woman moved like a striking dart in and out of range. The man dropped his sword and clutched his hands to his groin as his severed penis fell to the ground with a meaty thump. Blood gushed through his fingers as he curled in a ball whimpering as he tried to stem the flow.

The woman raised her eyebrow at Fionna as she said, "My name by the way is..." then she paused as she considered her response before continuing, "Actually my real name doesn't matter... for now... so you can call me Sheela." Then as she moved away from the whimpering man cupping his genitals as if he could stop the seeping of blood. Sheela looked at Fionna as she said, "The life of this piece of dirt is yours, do as you wish."

Fionna just stood shivering, rooted to the spot with fear as her eyes flicked between the inert bodies of her parents. Her brain wanted to propel her across the clearing and finish the man but the thought of taking a life seemed evil to her.

The woman sighed almost in resigned amusement, "One of the good ones I see," and with that moved across the clearing, lifting the sword and plunging it into the body of the man who gurgled once before he died.

Fionna staggered a few steps towards the woman but as she moved, her path was blocked by a huge shaggy beast with eyes that glowed like coals and pearls of slaver that dripped from its jaws. It stood stock still, panting as it eyed her with what she feared was a look that meant he was about to devour her and all that could emerge from her mouth was a tiny squeak of fear.

Sheela spun around and spying the beast roared with laughter, "So there you are you lazy fat hound, nice of you to turn up eventually." Then seeing the look of petrified fear on Fionna's face she smiled as she said, "Fionna meet Anluan, the hound of Culaain."

At the sound of his Mistress's voice, the dog relaxed and trotted over to Sheela and nuzzled its large shaggy head into her hand. Crouching down Sheela rubbed the dog's head with affection as she said, "Anluan is what you would call an Irish wolfhound and his name means Great Hound, though I think sometimes it should be Great Lump."

The hound snorted almost like it understood her words and turned his head towards Fionna who went to speak but the hundreds of questions she had in her brain wouldn't seem to come out. Then the enormity of what had happened hit her as she gazed again at the shattered bodies of her dead father and mother and with a small squeak crumpled to the ground.

"Oh Anluan," sighed Sheela, "Look what you have done scaring the poor wee one half to death, now we can't just be leaving her here abandoned now can we?"

"She would have been even more confused if she had heard me speak," the wolfhound laughed, though his laugh came out as more of a growl.

"Indeed," Sheela chuckled, "Perhaps we keep that a secret for now along with my real name. She could be the one you know Anluan, she really could be the one."

It was a few hours later when Fionna came round, her mouth was watering as she could smell the meat roasting over a fire that was being tended to by a figure with her back to her.

"So you are awake then child?" Sheela said without moving from her position.

"Yes, Mistress I am awake but wonder why you lied to me."

The woman visibly stiffened but then her shoulders relaxed as she laughed, "This one has spirit Anluan," pausing before she went on, "So what did I lie about little one?"

Fionna suddenly felt a warmth on her back and realised that the beast must have appeared behind her and was very close. The breaths came in shallow pants and made the hairs on the back of her neck stand on end. Almost too afraid to speak at first, she swallowed bravely and went on, trying to put some conviction in her voice, "You said your name was Sheela yet we both know that is a lie."

"Pray what is my name then oh wise one whose wisdom belies their years."

"You are Liath Luachra," Fionna said firmly, "The demoness who lay with wolves."

"Well to be fair little one he was technically a man at the time we... as you so quaintly put it... lay together," Liath chuckled to herself as she went on, "Then you should call me Liath."

"Is it true you fight the werewolves?" Fionna asked breathlessly, the hero worship clear in her voice.

Yes indeed I do, along with many other things and like all the legends about me some are true and some are not. For example, legend has it I eat small children." With those words, Liath spun round and towered over Fionna causing her to squeal in fright, but Liath just pealed with laughter, "But if truth be known I much prefer chicken."

Still chuckling to herself she drew a sharp dagger from her belt and beckoned to Fionna to come near. "If you are to stay with me, as it seems your clan have a propensity to do so, then I need to teach you how to handle a sword. After your performance earlier something that is very necessary I think," Liath paused before she went on, "Also, these locks will need to go."

Fionna squealed in horror as her hair was something her mother had loved for as long as she could remember. Many nights her mother would sit and brush Fionna's long dark tresses until they shone like polished ebony, all the time singing her a soft song about love and heartbreak. Fionna was about to protest and pull away but Liath was too fast for her and before she could even blink the small blade had flashed a couple of times and the majority of her hair fell to the forest floor.

"Now sit between my legs child and let me make a proper job as at the moment you look like someone has tried to scalp you... which I guess technically is what I just did."

As she sat between Liath's thighs Fionna listened to the poem that she kept repeating over and over as she worked on Fionna's hair with a pair of shears.

On the day a virgin attains full bloom

They must mate under the bright blood moon.

Upon the rock, when seed and fluids are dispersed

The spell that's cast shall be forever reversed

"What does that mean?" Fionna asked but Liath just chuckled.

"Nothing for you to worry your head about yet princess, your day will come soon enough. Now sleep as tomorrow we start your training for I fear the wolves are rising from the South and wish to extract what they see as their revenge for spurned love."

The next year was the toughest that Fionna had ever endured.

"When fighting werewolves you need the four S's...speed, strength, stamina and surprise," Liath said as she regarded the child. "Strength will come in time as you grow and stamina will come from training every day, so for now we will work on speed and surprise."

On stating the last word Liath flowed forward and swept Fionna's legs from under her depositing her on her ass in a muddy puddle.

"So lesson one, always be aware and ready at all times, feel free to try to strike me whenever you wish."

Fionna saw red and swung the stick she had been given as a training sword wildly at Liath who just laughed as she ducked away from the clumsy swings.

"I can see we have a lot of work to do on your sword skills so maybe we should work on speed first and start to develop your stamina." With that, she turned to the wolfhound who had been resting his big shaggy head on his paws watching the two humans fight. "Anluan," At the mention of his name the hound became instantly alert and leapt to his feet quivering to attention.

Turning her head from the dog to the young girl she smiled wickedly before saying,

"You see yonder atop that small hill there is a stone pyre that sits upon a carved rock. Reach there before Anluan and you may eat tonight, fail and you will go hungry."

Fionna stared into the distance and could just about make out the rock formation Liath referred to which must have been at least a mile away.

"But that's madness he has four legs and I have two he will win for sure," then pouting she went on, "I might as well start looking for berries to eat now."

"I am nought but fair child, so as you have half the legs he has, you will get half the distance as a start." As Fionna set off in a run Liath shouted after her, "But if he catches you he has my permission to bite you."

Liath chuckled as she heard the frightened squeal and saw the speed of Fionna increase as she rushed up the trail.

"Don't bite her too hard," Liath said quietly as she knelt beside Anluan and ruffled his head affectionately, "We will teach her more lessons when she returns."

The pair watched the girl reach the halfway point and without being bidden Anluan streaked away, a dark grey blur of fur as he sped through the trees and out of sight.

Fionna was panting with effort when suddenly she saw the stone outcrop was getting closer. Craning her head around without breaking her pace Fionna scanned the undergrowth behind her looking for signs of the pursuing dog. She almost laughed in triumph as the coast was clear but when she turned her head to the front she ran straight into Anluan who was waiting in her path between her and the stone outcrop.

"Good doggie, just sit and let me win I am starving."

Anluan regarded her with his coal-black eyes then bared his teeth and growled, more for effect than anything else. It did have the effect that he thought it might, as a small trickle of urine ran down the girl's leg and her face screwed up as she began to cry. Taking pity he padded forward intent on just nipping her as instructed but when he got close he was suddenly blinded as she threw a handful of sand into his eyes. As he shook his head trying to clear his vision he heard her laugh as she ran down the path towards victory.

The stone outcropping seemed like it was in touching distance when the flying weight of Anluan hit her full in the back sending her tumbling to the ground. She knew better than to move this time and waited as the dog towered over her, her face pressed to the ground. She yelped when she felt the sharp nip to her buttock, not enough to draw blood but enough to know that she had been bitten, Leaving her face down Anluan trotted to the structure where Liath waited for him and lay at her feet.

"Well we are a tricky one," Liath laughed, "Albeit a foolish one," as Fionna stood and brushed herself down, her arms folded in indignation.

"Why did you run to start? You wasted energy, you could have just walked." Liath said as she regarded the child watching her face. A dawning of realisation slowly appeared and Liath smiled to herself, this one would learn well.

"I liked your trickery so as a reward you may eat what Anluan doesn't want," and with that Liath turned away.

That evening they sat around the fire and Fionna watched the cooking rabbits, her mouth salivating as she imagined the taste of the food filling her rumbling belly. It didn't really register with her that Anluan only ate a few mouthfuls before he turned his head away allowing Fionna to eat ravenously. Liath noticed everything and knew that normally Anluan would devour at least one rabbit himself with ease then beg for some of hers. Yet this evening he ate like an old maid with no teeth and then watched Fiona eat while gazing at her with puppy dog eyes.

After they had all eaten, and Anluan had devoured what was left after miraculously finding his appetite again, Fionna sat fidgeting as the fire slumbered.

"Spit it out child otherwise your questions will devour you from within like demons."

Fionna looked at Liath nervously before blurting out, "I was quick, Anluan was quicker but your speed was... not natural."

Liath laughed softly, "That's true enough, but perhaps that is due to the fact that my mother was a banshee and my father a vampire."

Over the next hour, Liath explained how she was born before the birth of the one called Jesus Christ drawing a soft exclamation from Fionna as that made her at least 700 years old.

"Do you feed on blood?" Fionna asked with a touch of fear in her voice.

"No child, human blood is of no interest to me, nor do I have any need of it. I am drained if I perform spells, for many years I appeared as a young woman until I lost a little when I turned Anluan into a dog."

Fionna stared at Liath in horror and had to bite her tongue to try to stop herself from blurting out her true feelings that this woman must be a monster, "But why would you do that?"

Liath looked at Anluan and then at Fionna before she said firmly, "One day I may explain... if you live that long. Now sleep you have more training tomorrow."

For the next four years, the trio battled and won against the werewolves, attacking them as they came through the valley. They had become closer and closer until they were more than just friends, but instead a strange family of a demoness, a wolfhound and a human girl, a girl who was fast becoming a woman.

The fact that Fionna was becoming a woman was very evident when one day the odd trio came across a lake towards the end of their day's travel.

"The water looks divine and I am hot and dirty," exclaimed Fionna before, in one fluid movement, she pulled her tunic over her head to stand naked. Then with a squeal of joy, she ran into the water, her pert ass jiggling slightly before it disappeared beneath the surface. Liath and Anluan stood watching each other in half shock trying to decide what to say when Fionna's laughter pealed from the water's edge where she stood knee-deep.

The nipples on her firm young firm breasts were pointing out proudly from the icy cold water. Below her taut belly nestled tufts of fine pubic hair, and where her toned thighs met it was possible to see the setting sun through the perfect triangle.

“Girl cover yourself,” snapped Liath but at the same time was unable to tear her eyes away. Equally transfixed was Anluan who stared at the vision before him, his tongue lolling out of his mouth as he started to pant.

“Why?” laughed Fionna innocently, “You are a woman albeit older and he is just a dog.”

Liath chuckled inwardly thinking to herself that the girl may feel differently if she knew Anluan was really a man and that she herself much preferred her own gender to the male gender. Shrugging, she divested herself of her own clothing and plunged into the icy water laughing as she did. Anluan, for fear of being unable to control his emotions, turned and fled into the forest.

At first, Liath would insist that Fionna stayed well back from the fighting, using her bow at range, skewering the werewolves before they knew what was happening. Until one-day Anluan was surrounded not by two, but four great beasts that had developed the tactics of taking turns to probe Anluan’s defences. Fionna had watched from a distance becoming more agitated as she saw that sooner or later one of them would get past the dog’s powerful jaws and then they would fall on him like the wolves they were.

Remembering Liath’s continual mantra of the four S’s Fionna ran towards the melee at a speed that most humans would be envious of, this allowed her to employ the second S of surprise as she closed on one of the werewolves from behind. There was no magic required to defeat the beasts just a knowledge of where to strike most effectively. Fionna’s first slash almost seemed to miss, but in fact severed the tendons and arteries behind both of the beast’s knees, causing it to collapse to the floor snarling and howling as its lifeblood began to pump onto the forest floor.

Not pausing to check on the state of her first opponent Fionna vaulted the snapping jaws and with the precision and strength that can only come from hours of training drove the blade through the snarling mouth of the werewolf until the tip appeared out of the back of the beast’s neck. Ignoring the trapped blade in the mouth of the already dead wolf Fionna drew the small fighting axe from her belt. All of these manoeuvres she completed whilst twisting through the air to land lightly on the balls of her feet, ready to face her next opponent.

Her help wasn’t needed as her surprise intervention had given Anluan the distraction he needed to crush the third werewolf’s skull in his powerful jaws. As the final werewolf turned to launch himself at Fionna, Anluan leapt across the gap sinking his jaws into the werewolf’s throat, before tearing flesh and fur free in a visceral shower of blood.

Seeing Anluan had despatched the pair Fionna turned her attention back to the first werewolf who was slavering blood from his fangs as his final moments neared.

“Curse you human,” he snarled, “The king will come soon enough to reclaim his son and tear that demon slut limb from limb.” Whether there were further words to be said would never be known as Fionna buried the axe into the wolf’s forehead silencing him forever.

“Thanks for that,” said Anluan as he stood next to Fionna who was regarding him with more horror than she had shown about the corpses that were strewn about.

“You can talk,” Fionna stammered staring at Anluan with wide eyes.

“Well that looks like that cat is out of the bag,” laughed Liath who was regarding them from the edge of the clearing, covered from head to toe in blood. “Would you like a cup of tea I guess we have

a bit of explaining to do, but first I need to get cleaned up.”

An hour later the three sat around the fire, Fionna shifting her gaze between Anluan, who had a sheepish grin, and Liath, who simply looked amused.

“So you can speak?” Fionna said, fixing the great hound with a stare that was a cross between annoyance and disbelief. “May I ask exactly how this happened or perhaps I am truly going mad.”

Anluan looked at Liath with a pleading look on his face that screamed ‘help me,’ but she just laughed as she said, “You were the one who opened their mouth, so don’t expect me to sort out your mess.”

Anluan sighed and began his tale.

“When I was a young man, not much older than you, one day I was in the woods and found myself trapped in a cave with a pack of those creatures outside baying for my blood. It was as much as I could do to stop them from entering as I knew once they were inside and in a confined space the outcome would be certain and not favourable. I wasn’t alone and Liath offered to cast a spell that would give me a chance of survival. Seeing little alternative I agreed and I was turned into what you see before you, a wolf killer. What she didn’t mention was that the spell can only be lifted when I am bathed in the light of a blood moon.”

“What sort of a monster are you?” Fionna blurted out staring at Liath with a wild look on her face.

“The sort of a monster that will do whatever is necessary to save someone they love,” Liath said quietly. Then standing she went on brusquely, “So now you know he talks let’s get on with some ideas for tactics to kill these beasts more easily, instead of throwing insults around.” Liath went quiet, her face impassive but inside was cut to the core as she thought about the accusation of being a monster that Fionna had thrown at her.

Fionna ran like the inhabitants of hell were on her tail, which was pretty much true as the large pack of wolves were closing fast.

It had been over a year since she had learnt that Anluan could speak and they had grown close while they chatted. Fionna had grown to like the young man trapped in the wolfhound body who explained how his stature and strength meant in a one versus one, or even two versus one he was certain to be the victor. He was prepared to talk about almost anything from the beauty of the hills to the conception of what came after death. The one thing he would never discuss was his parents, if Fionna raised the subject he would steer the conversation in another direction and if she insisted he would snarl and bound off into woods.

‘The theory of life after death was in danger of becoming a reality,’ Fionna thought to herself as she could almost smell the fetid breath of her pursuers. Spying the small gap in the rocks ahead, barely wide enough to fit through, she sighed with relief and slowed a fraction to encourage the pack that victory was in their grasp.

As she sped into the chasm, the werewolves jostled to single file as they followed her. No sooner had the last one passed in, there was a crash as rocks tumbled down sealing their retreat. To confirm the impossibility of returning Anluan had appeared on the top of the rocks, growling and barking loudly at the wolves who had stopped in alarm.

Turning to pursue the fleeing Fionna the first wolf died instantly as he ran into the blade of Liath. As she stood with a cold smile plastered on her face she despatched the second leaving their dying bodies as a barrier that the rest needed to climb to escape. With grim determination, Liath despatched each one in turn and any that tried to climb back were equally dealt with by Anluan. The few that tried to scale the almost sheer walls on either side, were picked off by Fionna who had armed herself with a heavy bow that had been waiting for her.

When the gap had grown quiet and slick with werewolf blood Liath's cold laugh pealed through the air like the banshee wail of her mother. "Well that worked out just as planned," she cackled, "Let's see if that bastard wants to send any more of his people to their deaths."

That night Fionna awoke in the pitch-black darkness and knew at once she was alone. Moving silently she rose to her haunches and sniffed the air gently, the way Anluan had taught her until she picked up the faint smell of his wet fur. Making her way stealthily she approached the pair to see that Anluan was lying next to Liath with his large shaggy head in her lap as she stroked his head. She was still far enough away that although she could hear most of what they were saying, at times she missed parts.

"We should tell her," Anluan said.

"She would never understand my love,"

"But surely one day she will find out and then she might react badly, would it not be better she was prepared."

"No," said Liath firmly, "Your time with her will come soon enough until then I want you for myself."

The rest of their words were lost in the wind as Fionna felt her heart breaking. She was appalled and devastated in equal measures as here was her only two friends talking like lovers, a thought that was totally abhorrent to even consider that such a thing was even possible. Not only that, they were obviously plotting something that involved her.

Stifling her anguish she stumbled away from the awful scene and crashed through the woods, not caring what noise she made, just wanting to get away. Sobbing as the branches began to whip in her face and the rain began to fall. At that moment Fionna had never felt so lonely as her only friends and family in the world had abandoned her. Then suddenly, she was knocked to the ground by a snarling beast who pinned her on her back, his jaws dripping as he towered over her. The werewolf snarled,

"So human time for you to scream your last as I devour your heart."

"My heart is broken," Fionna sobbed and closed her eyes as she prepared to meet her creator.

That moment never came as the wolf was knocked from her body by Anluan who crushed the beast's head in a spray of blood and brain matter.

"What the hell were you thinking?" Liath's voice echoed through the glade, "You could have got yourself killed crashing around like that."

"Would make your life easier I would guess and let you and your lover have the peace to carry on."

Liath stared at Fionna and then glanced at Anluan before throwing her head back and howled with laughter. "Lover," she repeated between snorts of laughter.

"Is that what you thought?" Anluan said as he started to laugh, "Perhaps it is time she knows the truth... Mother."

Fionna stared at Liath in shocked silence who stopped laughing as she said coldly, "Yes that's right, he is my son, and shut your mouth you look like a gormless fool with your jaw hanging down."

"But you turned him into a hound, what mother could do that to her son?"

Liath looked at Fionna for a moment then sighed before she spoke. "His father is Laignech Fáelad, the king of the werewolves, and it was him I lay with in a fit of passion and stupidity."

Liath went on, methodically explaining how she started to see the real side of her lover and his cruelty. Realising her mistake she fled from the South and hid in the woods until Anluan was born. Then with the help of her lesbian lover, the druidess Bodhmall, they raised Anluan between them until he became a wonderful fine young man.

"But you said you turned him into a wolfhound to save him, surely his own father wouldn't have harmed him?"

"He would have taken him away and turned him into what he is, but by making him a dog it was the one thing that would stop his father from getting what he wanted."

Fionna thought on the words for a moment and then said quietly, "These are words of legends, how long ago did this happen?"

Liath looked thoughtful for a moment before she said quietly, "In exactly three weeks time it will be precisely 666 years since Anluan became a beast and there will be a blood moon on that day."

"And I will come of age on the same day," Fionna said quietly.

Three weeks later Fionna stood naked next to the stone, shivering slightly, not only from the cold but also a degree of nerves. Liath was nowhere to be seen, but a few days before they had stood together as Liath read the words that were inscribed around its base. Despite the stone being weathered by the elements, the words were still clear, almost like they shone.

On the day a virgin attains full bloom

They must mate under the bright blood moon.

Upon the rock, when seed and fluids are dispersed

The spell that's cast shall be forever reversed

"You understand what this means child?" Liath said softly.

Fionna nodded as she asked the question that had been in her mind for a few days, "How will it work?"

Liath looked at her with wry amusement, "Are you saying you have no knowledge of how children

are made?"

Fionna blushed, "I know that but Anluan is... errr... well you know..."

"A dog," Liath finished Fionna's words, then smiled as she went on, "As the first rays strike he will return to his human form. If the curse is not lifted by the time the moon wanes then he will return to being a hound until next time."

"That sounds like you have done this before," laughed Fionna nervously.

"Just a little over 300 years ago," Liath said wistfully, "Turned out she wasn't a virgin after all, but at least Anluan got to spill his seed before I cut the lying bitch's head off."

Fionna shivered again as she recalled Liath's chilling words, watching the moon rise fully in the night sky casting its glow on the stone. Fionna watched as Anluan's hair started to fall away from his body and his form twisted as he formed into the shape of a man. Anluan had his back to her but was as naked as she was and Fionna appraised his finely tuned body looking from his broad shoulders to his powerful hips and thighs. As he turned Fionna could see his meaty cock hanging down as he faced her and returned her gaze.

Anluan looked at Fionna for the first time as a woman rather than a friend and his cock started to stiffen and grow until it pointed upwards towards the moon. Her skin was like the most highly polished pure white stone. The curve of her breasts was like the rolling hills of the rich lush centre of the country and the valley leading to her soft curls was like the road to paradise. He felt no embarrassment at his aroused state as all he could feel was his blood pumping through his veins and pounding loudly in his inner ear.

"You don't have to do this Fionna, we can stay just friends, despite what my mother says."

"I want this more than anything else in the world," Fionna sighed as she stepped forward until Anluan's turgid cock was touching her belly. "Take me and let us be together forever."

"I will lose my immortality," Anluan said in a hoarse voice as he felt Fionna's small hand try to fit around his stiff cock.

"Do you care?" whispered Fionna quietly as she felt Anluan's member throb in her hand like it was a living animal. She could feel her pussy churning and her desire to surrender herself growing like a fire in her loins.

Anluan went to speak but the words died in his throat and instead he kissed Fionna with such passion that he thought they would burst into flames. Wanting to consummate his love he laid her on the rock as she opened her knees and arms in total surrender.

Fionna stared into Anluan's eyes as positioned the head of his staff at her opening. As she felt him push, for a brief moment she feared he would not fit inside her until, with a sighing moan from them both, her warm wetness drew him in. There was a brief moment of pain as her virginity went, never to return, then the pleasure started to build in waves as he gently moved in and out. As his strokes increased with pace and depth, she wrapped her legs around his waist, her heels on his back urging him deeper. Then like a dam bursting inside Fionna orgasmed hard, digging her nails into his back like she could pull him deeper.

Anluan felt like he was being drawn into a cave of warm wet flesh as his cock was gripped in a velvet vice as Fionna bucked and screamed under him. His thrusts drove his cock deeper than he would

have thought possible until his balls tightened and then exploded sending jet after jet into her body.

As they lay chest to breast, Anluan kissed Fionna gently.

“Stay by my side as my wife until the end of time I beg you Fionna.”

Feeling him shrivel slightly inside her and his seed with her juices start to slide from her body Fionna said softly, “Until the end of days my love, my lord, my husband.”

Liath watched from her concealed spot watching her son and daughter-in-law declare their love for each other. There was almost a tinge of sadness in her heart as she knew that the couple would no longer be by her side in battle, as they had other things to occupy them.

“Be well little ones,” she said silently as she slipped into the shadows.

The next five years were hard for Liath as much as she was a skilled warrior, with more than four werewolves in an open battle it was touch and go if she would win. It was one such day when she was surrounded by four wolves that Liath feared her time may have come for her to meet her creator.

The clearing was strewn with bodies, both human and wolf, and Liath stood breathing hard and covered in blood from head to toe. Her skin was marked with scratches and bites that would heal if given time, but that was a luxury she would not get. Determined to take at least a brace of her foes with her Liath prepared to die when suddenly one of the wolves howled as his throat was pierced with a heavy arrow. Another of the wolves met a similar fate as his eye suddenly sprouted feathers as an arrow buried into its skull. Seeing her chance Liath leapt forward slicing open the belly of the third wolf who howled and collapsed to his knees. The final wolf leapt at Liath’s back but a stout spear sped over her shoulder reversing the direction of its leap in mid-air as it was pinned to a tree.

“Hello mother... or should I say grandmother,” said Anluan’s cheerful voice as he pulled the spear from the wolf’s inert body.

“Congratulations to you both,” Liath said concealing her smile, “Where is the child? What is its name?”

Fionna appeared from the bushes returning the bow to her back and smiled at her mother-in-law. “The girl is called Muirne and we have left with your Bodhmall in the Slieve Bloom Mountains.”

Liath furrowed her brow at the words and waited for them to explain.

“We have a request of you mother, one that will be both hard and costly, but the only way we can think of is to try to turn the tide back against the rising threat of the wolves.”

Fionna picked up from where Anluan stopped, “We want you to turn us both into Irish Wolfhounds so we may raise an army to fight against them. Then we implore you to find other couples like us and do the same until we spread across the country to turn back the tide.”

Liath considered their request for a moment. “This time it would be irreversible.” The pair nodded in acknowledgement as Liath went on, “So would this make me a monster of a mother-in-law as well as a monster of a mother?” Recalling Fionna’s cutting words when she had first discovered how Liath had turned her own son into a hound.

Fionna blushed deeply, but Anluan spoke gently, "You will never be a monster in my eyes."

"Nor mine," Fionna added.

Liath laughed, "Children I will always be the monster that parents scare their children with to get them to behave. A misfit that neither fits into the world of humans or those of demons, but I care not so let us get this started."

What Liath never told them, even after they had been transformed into beasts that even wolves shied away from in fear, as each time she cast the spell part of her youth was removed. For the next century, Liath sought out couples and turned them into avenging hounds, as she herself aged each time. Eventually, she knew that if she turned one more couple it would be her last, but it seemed her work was done as the wolves were driven to near extinction.

"I suppose you are telling us you are Liath Luachra then," shouted a voice from the carnival crowd who were starting to drift away from the old woman.

The murmurs of derision were drowned out by the squeals of mock terror from the riders of the roller coaster that spun above the carnival. The old woman shook her head like she was trying to clear the fog of old age, muttering about stupid children.

As she neared her old and battered camper van parked at the edge of the carnival a hand snaked out from the shadows and caught her arm.

"Is it really you?" Said the voice of a young woman who was dressed as a nun. The young nun stared closely at the old woman before declaring, "Yes it is you. We have been searching for you for the last few decades. We need your help as the final battle approaches."

The old woman knew what the nun meant and spat on the ground, "The Liath Luachra you seek went many years ago, what is left is just a dried-out husk, no use to anyone."

The nun laughed, "You know what I am don't you?" The old woman nodded, recognising the nun as a vampire as she herself was half vampire herself on her father's side. "Please return to us Liath Luachra and help your kin when they need you most."

Liath went to ask a question as she knew a bite wouldn't work, regardless of who bit who, but the woman just smiled. Taking Liath's hands in hers she began to chant, the words flowing like water that turned into light, enveloping them both. As Liath watched the young woman's face started to age, and as it did she felt the power start to course through her own bones. She went to pull her hands free but the nun fixed her in a grip that would never be released. Then leaning close she kissed Liath hard, her mouth open as their tongues entwined like lovers.

When the kiss was finally broken and the grip released Liath got one last look at the vampire's face before she crumpled into dust at her feet.

"Welcome back Liath," said a voice from the shadows, "I do hope that Veronica's sacrifice wasn't in vain. It was her idea to transfer her youth to you."

Liath flexed her body in a way she hadn't been able to for many years. She stared at her hands seeing the old dried parchment skin had been replaced with the smooth white skin of her youth. Casting off her rags she spun in the moonlight catching her reflection in the mirrors, admiring her naked but now youthful figure. Letting out a wail that echoed through the night she snarled, "Let's

go hunt some fur.”

“Excellent,” said the voice, still shrouded in darkness and casting no reflection in the mirrors, “I have a plan to end this once and for all.”

It was four weeks later when Liath worked her way through the grungy nightclub as the music record’s heavy base beat pounded against the bare brick walls making them vibrate. The deafening noise was accompanied by flashing strobe lights that made it look like people were moving in a series of jerking pictures as they appeared and then vanished.

The nightclub was in the lower part of an old castle but was little more than a front for the werewolf lair that inhabited the labyrinth below. The challenge had always been to get the pack in the same place at the same time, so a concerted effort would wipe them out. Without fully explaining why the vampires had stressed that this time they had the perfect bait in Liath.

As she moved across the dance floor a female, whose face was adorned with dark make-up, ran her finger down Liath’s arm. Her top was open revealing her naked breast and taking Liath’s hand she placed it on her erect nipple. Liath smiled as she twisted the nipple watching the waves of pleasure run across the woman’s face. Liath’s sensitive nose detected the heady aroma of the woman’s arousal and she moved her hand swiftly downwards to cup the woman’s naked pussy. Curling a finger inside the woman moaned gently and moved to kiss Liath, her mouth open.

“Later,” Liath sighed as she removed her finger, licking it like a lollipop as she spotted a heavysset man moving away with a speed and agility that defied his bulk. It was this animal-like movement that set a warning bell clanging in Liath’s head as she followed through the crowds keeping him in sight. As he ducked through a concealed door Liath paused for a few moments and glanced around wondering where the cover she was promised was actually there. The plan to draw the wolves out and then trap them in one place seemed simple but relied on using her as bait and the vampires to hunt the hunters, springing the trap once the bait was taken.

Stepping through the doorway Liath went down a narrow staircase until she found herself in a dingy windowless room. The noise of the music was muffled and distant as the gloomy room was suddenly plunged into the light.

“So bitch, we meet again, it has been far too long. When the rumour started that you were back I wasn’t sure whether to believe it or not, but here you are.”

Liath turned to face the werewolf who spoke, taking in his hulking form of half man and half beast. She regarded him with cold eyes and then spat on the ground.

“Can’t say I have missed you Laignech Fáelad, still full of yourself I see.”

“Times have changed,” he laughed but the attack she expected never came, instead she was enveloped in a cloud of gas that rendered her almost instantly unconscious.

As her consciousness returned Liath kept her eyes tightly shut as she used her other senses to ascertain her surroundings. She could smell the fetid scent of werewolves, and by the strength of the stench, there must be a lot of werewolves. This thought was further confirmed as she heard the movement of many feet on a hard floor. Some clicked as their toenails began their transformation into claws. Her sense of feeling told her she was naked, with her hands bound above her head, and

suspended so her unbound feet just touched the floor.

"I know you are awake Liath so you might as well open your eyes."

Keeping her eyes shut Liath knew that this was the voice of Laignech Fáelad, the werewolf who fathered her son Anluan. The once kind and loving man, who as the beast had grown stronger in him became crueller turning Liath's love to hate. Within her was not only a strong hatred but also a steely determination that he would not raise their child in his own image.

"Come on slut, you might as well see your fate," the cruel mocking voice snarled, "Or are you too afraid to look?"

Opening her eyes Liath stared into the wild bloodshot eyes of her ex-husband and remained calm despite the fact that the room was crowded with at least 50 werewolves. Many were still mainly in their human form, but some were starting to change so they appeared like some form of weird zoo exhibits showing the stages of werewolf evolution. The room was a cavernous great hall with large rafters in a high ceiling and the walls draped in heavy but faded cloth.

The spittle flew from his jaws and his eyes blazed red as angrily Laignech roared, "Look around, this is what is left of a once-proud race. Decimated by the hounds that you turned our son into rather than letting him grow to become the most powerful leader this pack would have ever known."

Liath said nothing though inside she was smiling as he continued, his voice became lower and crueller. "Thinking of our son I have told my brothers here about how sweet it was when he was made. About a willing whore who was happy, nay eager, to enjoy the love of a werewolf."

Liath couldn't resist a wry smile as the memory of his powerful lovemaking came back to her like it was yesterday rather than thousands of years ago. Indeed, it had been that raw animal lust that had ruined her taste for mere human males, which was why she had turned to her own gender for sexual release.

Laignech continued, "So in the spirit of sharing I have agreed with my brothers that they should all sample the pleasures I enjoyed all those years ago. This time it will be different... this time we will fuck this bitch until she is dead.

Before Liath could open her mouth to protest or curse an almost human werewolf stepped forward and plunged a needle into her arm, injecting a green liquid into her body.

"This is the most wonderful drug," the creature said, smiling to show his teeth that had started to become canine. "Not only does it reduce inhibitions it increases the sexual desire to a fever pitch."

Liath could feel the drug starting to take effect as her eyes became fixated on the cocks of nearby werewolves that were in various states of arousal. She could feel herself getting wetter and when one of them pulled her legs apart and thrust a hairy finger inside she couldn't help the moan of pleasure that escaped her lips. The werewolf stared into her eyes as the rope holding her arms aloft was released a little allowing her to stand on the soles of her feet. Like a crazed animal, she began to ride the finger inside her, lifting herself up and down in a sexual frenzy.

The werewolf removed the finger with a howl of derision, "She is ready my brothers, like a peach ready for plucking, she is a slut ready for fucking." His manic chuckle rang out as he laughed at his own joke.

The rope was released allowing Liath to collapse onto her back and she opened her legs and arms

pleading with the werewolf towering above her.

"Fuck me, please I beg you. Fuck me with your wonderful cock."

The werewolf went to mount her when he was cuffed away with a roar from Laignech, "No, get on all fours like the bitch you are and take each cock like an animal."

The crowd pushed closer to watch as Liath rolled onto all fours and lifted her ass in the air looking back over her shoulder. Splaying her cunt lips with her fingers from the hand between her thighs she groaned, "Take me, fuck my cunt like the bitch in heat I am."

The werewolf needed no second invitation and mounted Liath forcing his cock deep in one powerful thrust. His nails had become claws as he rode her without mercy until he shot his seed deep inside with a loud howl.

The noise of squabbles filled the air as the werewolves fought for the position of who would be next. The next in line would almost drag off the one who had just finished to take his place. After half a dozen or so had filled Liath, Laignech stepped forward and lifted her head by her hair looking into her lust-filled eyes. Roaring to the crowd he shouted, "Use her ass as well, she would love that," then dropping his voice he spoke directly to her, "Wouldn't you Liath?"

With the lust coursing through her veins like a raging bush fire Liath had no control over her words, just the overwhelming desire to be fucked.

"Yes fuck my ass," she shouted, pulling her ass cheeks apart in an invitation to the next in line.

Letting out a cruel cackle the next werewolf wiped his cock over the seed oozing from her battered pussy, before driving it hard into her ass.

Liath's scream pierced the air as Laignech laughed, "See now the slut is starting to sound like a proper werewolf bitch."

Liath's brain was spinning as she tried to fight off the effects of the drug. Part of her wanted to surrender to the desire for never-ending sex, whilst another part was relaying the pain stabbing through her body. As she felt the werewolf in her ass finish another took his place using the previous seed as lube.

The werewolves continued taking turns and Liath had lost count of the number of times she had been penetrated. Suddenly she found herself dragged to her feet and lifted until she was staring into Laignech's crazy bloodshot eyes.

"This will take too long brothers, I think this bitch is slacking. She had two holes, so both should be filled at all times."

Two werewolves positioned themselves at the front and rear of Liath, their cocks sticking bolt upright and ready for action. Liath needed little encouragement as she wrapped herself around the werewolf in front, lifting herself up and then sliding down onto his shaft. The second werewolf stepped forward and bending his legs, thrust up and into Liath's open ass.

Despite having been fucked in both holes at least ten times, the act of two cocks inside drew a loud groan from Liath's parched lips. The pair laughed as they bought a hand each above Liath's head in the act of giving a high five.

"This is what is known as 'going to Paris'" one of them said as he kept the palm of his hand pressed

to his partner's. Their hands had almost become paw-like, and the trio formed a bizarre human effigy of the Eiffel Tower, hence the name of the sexual act.

"And this is known as a Hiroshima," Liath laughed and as she looked at the confused face in front of her she went on, "You are truly fucked."

Before they could react she moved her head sharply forward and then back breaking the noses of both werewolves in turn. Their howls of pain were drowned out by the louder howls of agony coming from the audience who had packed closely around Liath waiting their turn. Liath felt herself torn off the pair of cocks inside her and whisked high into the air, wrapped safely in a strong pair of arms.

"You took your time, or was that the part of the plan you never told me about?" Liath said, looking into the face of the king of the vampires.

"Perhaps I just wanted my daughter to enjoy herself first." he laughed without warmth.

Perched high in the rafters and looking down on the carnage below Liath snuggled into her father's arms, content for the moment to simply feel safe. The battle below was very one-sided as the vampires, aided by a large pack of Irish wolfhounds, surrounded the werewolves and picked them, off one by one.

"Will you kill them all Father?" Liath enquired in the same tone one might use when enquiring what was for dinner.

"No that can never happen, as without the werewolves we cannot exist. There is no yang without ying." The vampire king paused for a moment then went on, "We will keep one in his wolf form in a zoo somewhere."

"Just one?" Liath said, "Isn't that a little dangerous to have all your eggs in one basket?"

"Oh don't worry there is a backup plan as well," He said patting his daughter's belly and smiling like the cat who had eaten the canary, but also with the pride of someone about to become a grandfather again.