

Title: *In Love With The Night*

Author: **Liz Torlée**

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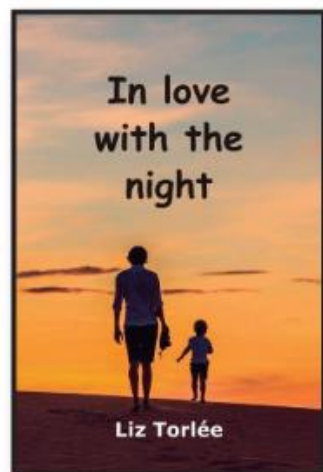
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Reviewed by: **Felicity Sidnell Reid**

*In Love With The Night*, Torlée's second novel includes several characters from her first book, *The Way Things Fall*: antique dealers and partners from Toronto, Nigel and Philippe; the now successful painter Steven Farrow; and Lukas, the young son of the two central characters, Karl Gustav and Rachel Covelli. Several years after the conclusion of *The Way Things Fall*, these characters are brought together by the complicated relationships they had with the now dead Rachel and the fallout from her relationship with her Svengalian lover, astronomer, astrologist, and Egyptologist, Karl Gustav. Old secrets are disclosed as the beggar, Amina Gamel, learns of her beloved father's behavior after an incident brings her, as a valued and loved employee, into the family of Hadir and Dominic El Hassan, wealthy owners of a boutique hotel in Fez, Morocco and who are about to expand their business by opening a new hotel in Toronto.

Despite the connections, Torlée's two novels are very different in mood; the first story is frequently dark and ends tragically. *In Love With The Night* however is a bildungsroman, tracing Amina's maturation, her growing affection for the little boy Lukas, and the blossoming of her relationship with the man she has always loved.

Though questions of fate and coincidence underlie the plot of *In Love With The Night*—for example, bringing together Amina, the El Hassan family, the artist Steven Farrow, Nigel, and Lukas—Amina's challenges arise primarily from her search for the truth about her father, his actions and motivation, and her desire to behave in a moral and principled way. She has to come to terms with what she discovers and make difficult decisions when she becomes involved with a group of people who plan to defraud her of money her father left her when he died.



*In Love With The Night*'s large cast of characters come alive as their relationships, like that between Amina and Sophie El Hassan, deepen. The El Hassans emerge as a close affectionate family dealing with inevitable family tensions in their individual ways. Steven Farrow's old friend Nigel's abiding love for Rachel and his anxiety about the future of her son pull him into the centre of the plot.

Torlée's skill at description enables her to conjure up the sights, sounds, tastes, and ambience of the story's locales, allowing the reader to travel with the characters to the Moroccan city of Fez and its bustling *souk*, into the El Hassan family hotel, across the desert to the pyramids of Egypt, as well as to Niagara Falls, and, through the eyes of Amina, to the city of Toronto in the summer.

The novel has engaging characters, a twisty plot, and plenty of secrets and surprises to keep a reader turning the pages.



**Liz Torlée** lived and worked in England and Germany before emigrating to Canada. She has always been fascinated by the idea of fate and the way it makes all our lives intersect in strange and far-reaching ways. She and her husband are avid travellers, especially through the Middle East ... or any country with a desert! They live in mid-town Toronto. *In Love with the Night* is Liz's second novel.

**Felicity Sidnell Reid** is the author of a book for teachers, a series of textbooks for language learners, a novel: *Alone: A Winter in the Woods* (Hidden Brook Press, 2015, e-book in 2020), and poetry collections: *The Yellow Magnolia* (Glentula Press, 2021) and *The Many Faces* (Aeolus House, 2022). She is the co-producer and co-host of the weekly literary radio series, *Word on the Hills*. She chaired two Spirit of the Hills Arts Festivals in 2017 and 2019 and is a director and secretary of the rebranded Northumberland Festival of the Arts.