

65,000 words – Upmarket Commercial Novel

FINAL REQUEST

By: Carl D. Lord

Synopsis

Ethan David, a college senior from Kentucky with a promising baseball future, struggles to emotionally move on after a painful breakup with Amber, his longtime college sweetheart. As Ethan tries to distance himself from her memory, he travels to Ireland during Spring Break to reconnect with his Irish ancestry. In the magical setting of Bunratty Castle, he meets Maura Dougall, a talented Irish folk singer who performs there. Immediately attracted to her, Maura is guarded when it comes to love. Despite their differences, Ethan and Maura quickly and intensely fall for each other, and she follows him to America to pursue his professional baseball career. Just before their planned wedding, Maura discovers she is pregnant and has been diagnosed with an incurable disease. Devastated and not wanting to jeopardize Ethan's baseball dreams, she ends their relationship and secretly returns to Ireland.

Over the next decade, Ethan experiences stardom as a major-league pitcher for the Cincinnati Reds. Briefly married, he then became a full-time single father to Christopher, his now eight-year-old son. After a career-ending injury forces him into early retirement, Ethan is offered to become his former team's pitching coach; his dream job. Because of his parenting duties, Ethan is torn about the offer and given a short window of time to decide.

After being asked to represent the Reds at a baseball conference in Dublin, Ireland, Ethan receives an urgent message from Maura asking him to meet her. Still bitter, he refuses to see her until she shows up at his conference. Maura explains that she has a terminal illness and wants to make amends for how she hurt Ethan before she dies. She also reveals that they have a 10-year-old daughter, Nora, whom she wants

him to raise. Stunned, Ethan must consider whether he can raise two children alone while pursuing the Reds coaching opportunity.

Extending his trip, Ethan and Maura renew their past while Christopher and Nora become inseparable. As Maura's health declines, Kiara MacKenna, Maura's best friend and neighbor, is introduced, providing emotional support to Ethan while helping to care for the children.

Now under pressure to join the Reds' pitching staff, Ethan feels overwhelmed by the career-defining coaching opportunity and the possibility of raising another child alone. Choosing family over fame, Ethan welcomes Nora into his and Christopher's lives and rejects the coaching position. Detecting a spark of romance between Ethan and Kiara, Maura, now at peace, gives them her blessing to love again, with marriage as a possibility.

With Maura's demise fast-approaching, Ethan sets out to create a series of memorable moments that provide a heartfelt reminder of how much he cares for Maura. After Maura's death, and with Ethan and Kiara's newfound love in full bloom, Maura makes her presence known at Ethan and Kiara's wedding in a surprising way that confirms her approval of their marriage.

Now that Ethan has honored Maura's final wish, he, Kiara, and the children return to Kentucky to begin their future together.