

A movie poster for 'The Beast Within'. The background is a dark, blue-toned forest scene. On the right, a man with a mustache and short dark hair is shown from the chest up, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. In the center-left, a large, dark, scaly monster with glowing red eyes and small horns is crouching. The title 'THE BEAST WITHIN' is written in large, metallic, 3D block letters across the middle of the image.

# THE BEAST WITHIN

DANA LITTLEJOHN

# **The Beast Within**

**By**

**Dana Littlejohn**

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Printed in the United States of America

First printing, 2019

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**The Fun House\***

**The Seven Year Switch\***

**The Right Choice\***

**Indian Blood Moon**

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**Ivy's Hot Shots\***

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**Daughters of the Cosmos\***

**\* = available in book and print**

**THE BEAST WITHIN**

Cursed for a crime he did not commit; Keith Turner had given up on love. Even after making that decision, he still spent every night being tortured mentally and physically. His twin brother Kevin was confident that they could find a way to break the curse, but it wasn't until Keith met Marcella that he began to take Kevin's ideas to heart.



## **PROLOGUE**

Salem, NC-1758

A prominent soft glow of moonlight lit the way as a woman glided smoothly through the trees toward the clearing. In the small space between the foliage, the seven cloaked and hooded people stood close in an incomplete circle around the fire.

One person stepped away from the rest and removed the hood to acknowledge the newcomer's presence. The softened features of an aged woman were revealed. The crackling blaze lent its radiance to light up her well-preserved beauty. "Thank you for bringing our sisters together on my behalf, Veronica," the woman said as she bowed her head.

"We have come together many times to intervene where justice for women was needed, but it has been a long time since we have gathered. What is your reason for us to call upon the powers of darkness, Olivia?"

"My granddaughter, Sarah, has been treated unfairly by her betrothed. I seek to punish this man."

"Please explain?"

"Dominic McNeal is a fisherman with a shop on Carolina Beach. He claimed he would be away at sea for months and promised to marry her upon his return. Sarah spent months getting everything together for their wedding day.

Dominic predicted he'd be gone for six months, but it has been over eight months since he left. He returned last week to his home and didn't even come to fetch her."

Veronica batted wide eyes. "How did she know he was back?"

"Sarah had been maintaining his house while he was gone. She went over there to clean and walked in on him and another woman in an intimate embrace on the furniture. He told her the woman was his wife! He had married another while he was away," Olivia explained choking on her words.

Shocked gasps spread through the circle along with murmurs and disapproving sounds. Veronica sighed and shook her head.

"Yes. His only explanation to her was he forgot about his promise and fell in love with another while he was away."

"While he was away at sea?" Veronica asked with a raised brow.

Olivia wiped her eyes. "It is an obvious lie, and that is why I seek your help. My poor Sarah is devastated. This man should not be able to treat her or any other woman that way."

Veronica nodded and took her hand. "Leave it to me, sister. I know what to do."

Someone offered Olivia a cloak to don before she stepped into the opened spot to close the circle. Veronica raised her arms. The coven members did the same and clasped their hands together. Veronica hummed, and the rest mimicked her actions. As their combined voices rose in crescendo, the flames burned brighter. The small inferno went from bright yellow to pale red as the droning continued. Veronica didn't speak again until sparks jumped violently into the air.

"As we call upon the powers of darkness seeking justice for one of our own, we offer a sacrifice of blood."

Veronica paused. One of the other cloaked figures passed a knife down the line. Olivia took the blade, stepped forward and extended her arm over the heat. Without hesitation, she quickly slid the serrated edge across her left wrist. Olivia's tightly pressed lips muffled a painful grunt, but she did not pull away from the fire.

The murmurs increased around her again. Bright red drops of blood slid in a steady stream into the blaze making it rise and sparkle even more. The flames licked at her arm. Her wrist healed, and the dripping stopped on contact. Olivia exhaled and returned to her place within the circle.

"We ask that you condemn this man, Dominic McNeal, for dishonoring our sister's family," Veronica continued. "Not only must he pay, but those that come from him should pay as well. Surely, his seed will be as bad as he as they follow his example! For humiliating one of ours, the first son born of his bloodline will be a creature of the night! Let his inner behavior be seen on the outside. He doesn't deserve the touch or happiness that a good woman can bring into his life. That is our wish! Knowing that they will never experience happiness with a woman he pursues will be our revenge!"

As Veronica grew silent, the humming ended, and the small congregation exploded with a loud popping sound disintegrating into a dying campfire. Veronica lowered her arms and turned a smile to Olivia.

"It is done, sister. Go in peace, until we meet again."





## **CHAPTER ONE**

Winston-Salem, NC- 2018

Keith Turner yawned again as he drove his black jeep down Liberty Street toward East Winston. He struggled to keep his eyes open. Exhaustion was not a regular carpooling companion for him. Because of the nightly change to his body, he was usually asleep seconds after his head hit the pillow. This morning, however, that was not the case. It was his birthday and though he should be happy and ready to celebrate, worry kept him awake. Major changes were expected to come to his already complicated life.

The story his mother once told him and his twin brother always plagued him on his birthday. To a fourteen-year-old boy, it sounded like something out of a movie. It was a crazy tale about a curse put on the firstborn descendants because a man once dogged some woman. He wasn't even sure if his mother believed what she was sharing with them, but she felt like they should know about it nonetheless.

Keith stopped at the light and sighed. Twelve years had gone by since then, and Kevin still hadn't shown any signs of transforming at all. It was obvious those two minutes he had on his brother made a difference when it came to curses. Moments later, he parked next to his brother's truck and entered the building hiding his exhaustion with his best smile in place.

"Good morning, Dr. Keith," came the greetings from everyone he passed.

He nodded at their good wishes and went directly to his office. Sitting at the desk, he dropped his head down with a thud. Almost instantly, a soft knock interrupted his quiet. He lifted his head just as a woman walked in.

"Morning, Dr. Keith. Here's your espresso."

Keith smiled at the manna from heaven accompanied by his guardian angel. Belinda plugged in a ceramic pot leaving it on his desk beside the coffee mug.

"It will be a quick day, are you ready?" she told him taking a seat pulling a pad from her pocket.

Keith poured himself a drink and took a deep sniff. The aroma filled his nostrils

waking his senses. His secretary was always on time with his boost. Leaning back in his chair, his body warmed as the heated liquid entered his system.

"Mmm, thanks, Belinda. I needed this for real today. It's great, as usual. Whatever the female equivalent of a scholar and a gentleman is, that's you for sure."

Belinda chuckled. "Thank you, sir."

He took two more sips and nodded. "Okay, I'm ready."

"Cindy and I collaborated on your calendars. We wanted to make sure that your patients weren't overlapping. This way you and Dr. Kevin could do your birthday thing, and he would have time with Rachel as well." Belinda flipped over a page and continued. "I scheduled two new patients and a few returns for today. Everyone else I rescheduled for next week. I gave you four patients in the morning, and then you had lunch. This afternoon I only planned three patients so that you can leave early, alright?"

"Mmm," Keith answered.

"Your first patient is Mr. Boxer, he will be here at nine thirty," Belinda added, rising to her feet. "Let me know if you need anything else."

Keith watched her leave as he finished his first mug. Once alone, the thoughts of what would transpire that evening occupied his mind. He poured himself another cup and rocked his chair back. Kevin had always maintained that what affected him affected them both because they were twins. However, that wasn't necessarily true.

Being directly affected by the curse turned Keith into an introvert. He had no friends, no one special in his life so he spent most of his time with Kevin and his fiancée. While Kevin was almost his, total opposite being outgoing, practical with close friends and a beautiful woman at his side.

Keith smiled when thinking of his twin. There was no jealousy toward him. Kevin was Keith's biggest supporter. They spent a lot of time together trying to come up with ideas on how to break the curse. Tonight, he would learn what new scheme his brother had in mind. That notion made getting through the day a little easier. Keith raised the mug to his mouth again, taking another long gulp. He pushed the empty cup to the side of his desk before he rose to start his day.

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It was just before his lunch hour when Keith finished with his last client of the morning. Instead of waiting in his office, as usual, he went in search of his brother. Kevin's office was on the other end of the building. As he walked the long corridor, his leisurely gait slowed to a stop. Something out of the ordinary caught his attention. He inhaled deeply

then turned slowly to look up and down the hall.

*What is that?*

He gave the air a few more quick sniffs.

*Fire? No. Smoke?* He shook his head. His brow crinkled. *Burnt popcorn? No...something else.* He took another slow breath in, filling his nose and lungs. Floral, woodsy, and some tangy scents swirled around his consciousness making his head spin and his cock hard. The shiver that slid down his back made his nipples hard. Goose bumps suddenly rose on his skin.

“Oh my God. *What is that?*” he wondered with hushed urgency.

Keith stood still for a moment then shook off his anxiety to continue down the hall. The scent grew stronger as he walked. The effects were increasing as he went. He popped his head into Kevin’s office.

“Kev?”

Keith closed the door and continued to look for his brother. He stopped just outside of exam room one. A sudden burst of heat surged through his body. The unknown aroma wrapped itself around his senses overwhelming him. His cock throbbed mercilessly pressing uncomfortably against the inside of his pants. The sound of his own breathing loudly filled his ears. Beads of sweat formed on his forehead and rolled down his temple. Keith gripped the doorframe to steady himself. His lab coat felt tight on his back and his tie constricting. He yanked at the knot gasping for air. The intoxicating fragrance was something Keith had never experienced before. His perception was on high alert.

What the hell is going on?

The smell came from inside the room. He was positive of it. His brother was in the room, but he was not alone. The scent had to be from whoever was with him. The smell was so strong that he could almost taste this person. He was salivating at the thought of savoring her.

Her?

Never before could he perceive the scent of another person without being in his other form. His awareness had not been so precise during the day.

Why could he smell this woman now?

The question floated through his consciousness leaving him stunned and more confused, but no answer followed it.

Oh my God! What if I’m changing now? During the day!

Fear and adrenaline added to the lust that already surged through his body. It took a huge effort on his part to calm his breathing and will his coursing blood to slow. Success left him wet with perspiration and the doorframe splintered beneath his fingers. Once he

regained his composure, Keith fixed his clothes and straightened his tie before finally knocking on the door. There was a slight pause before a reply came.

"Yeah, come in."

Hearing his brother's voice calmed somewhat, but when he opened the door, he was struck with a wave of consciousness from the unknown woman. The sensation was as if he had stepped into a sauna. The scent that pulled him down the hall assailed his nose once again. Kevin had his back to him as he kneeled before his patient. Keith's breathing accelerated immediately as he looked at the patient's face.

A lovely Latino woman with more black than light brown in her short-cropped hair sat on the examination table. Although pain filled her large brown eyes, Keith could see sparks of intelligence. Her skin, darkened even more from the sun looked soft and smooth. Differently shaped tan lines were easily seen on her biceps and around her shoulders from the tank top that she wore. The muscles beneath were defined and toned from obvious manual labor.

The patient gripped the edge of the exam table, making low grunting sounds as Kevin moved one of her legs up and down. Keith stared transfixed by the hand identical to his own as it massaged the knee, and then push her jean shorts up further. Keith easily imagined the hand was his. The thought made his nostrils flare again. His eyes closed and let the scent saturate his entire body. A visual of flipping and bending the woman over the table formed in his mind.

"Hey, bro, I'm almost done here. Have you met Ms. Torres?"

Keith's eyes popped open, and the vision vanished.

"Uh, no, I haven't. Hi, I'm Dr. Keith."

"Marcella."

Her heavily accented voice vibrated through the air. Keith sighed softly as it filtered into his ears and locked itself into his memory. A slight electric shock shot up his arm when Marcella gripped his hand in a firm handshake. The sensation left the hairs on the back of his neck standing on end. Keith stared at their hands for what seemed like an eternity before lifting his eyes to hers.

Wonder seemed to replace the mix of pain and confusion for just a moment when she looked at him. He could tell that whatever just happened she had felt it too. On instinct, he retracted his arm to pull Marcella off the table into his arms, but his brother stood and broke their intense connection. Keith snatched his hand back and turned to him.

"Okay, Marcella. I think that's enough for today. You're doing very well."

"Thanks, Doc, it's all because of you, you know."

"Nah, physical therapy only works if the patient participates by doing the exercises

we give them when they leave the office, too,” Kevin responded modestly.

Marcella slowly lowered herself to the floor using the table to gain her balance. She used a small towel to wipe the sweat from his face and chest.

“I knew that your brother shared your practice with you, Doc, but I did not know that you were twins,” Marcella mentioned leaning against the table.

“Yeah, it shocks people when they first come to us. We decided to drop the Dr Turner thing and just go by our first names. It helps the secretaries and the clients distinguish between the two of us,” Kevin explained opening his laptop.

“That makes sense. I guess it would be a little confusing to send someone to see Dr Turner at Turner Therapy. Then come to find out that you don’t know which doctor you’re supposed to see because they’re at the same place, with the same name and look just alike, too,” Marcella said with a soft chuckle.

Marcella reached for the cane that leaned against the table. She looked at Kevin and then turned a scrutinizing gaze upon Keith before turning back to her doctor.

“You may be twins, Dr. Kevin, but I see a few differences in you.”

Keith’s eyebrow rose. People always had difficulty telling them apart when they were growing up. He and his brother had a lot of fun because of that.

“Is that right?” Kevin said as he typed.

“What differences do you see, Ms. Torres?” Keith asked.

She turned to look at Keith again and smiled. “Please, Dr. Keith, call me Marcella.”

Keith’s cock jumped in his pants as his name rolled off Marcella’s full lips. He couldn’t put any words together to confirm comprehension of her request, so he just nodded.

“Well, since I’ve been coming here I noticed a scar over Dr. Kevin’s lip, one on his cheek and another on the top of his left hand. While you, Dr. Keith,” she paused to scan his face again, “seem to be scar less. Of course, I didn’t know those were differences until seeing you. Now that I have met you, Dr. Keith, I also notice Dr. Kevin wears glasses, and you don’t. Are you wearing contacts or did you opt for that Lasik surgery?” she inquired.

Marcella’s astuteness impressed him. All the scars he had acquired in his youth disappeared years ago along with his bad vision after his first change. His overall health had greatly improved. He was no longer allergic to pollen, he never got sick again nor did he get another scar. No matter how bad a cut was, it healed over perfectly in a short amount of time. He would never mention that to anyone but Keith, of course.

“I, um, wear contacts,” Keith answered.

Marcella used her cane to help turn her body then she took a few steps closer to Keith.

“Ahh, so was it vanity that prompted that decision or the urge to be different from your brother?” she asked bringing a mischievous grin close to Keith’s face.

Keith couldn't speak. Marcella's prolonged proximity was overwhelming. The room began to spin, and his knees buckled.

"Whoa! Hey Doc, a little help here!"

Keith heard Marcella shout as he felt his body guided slowly to the floor. The clash of her cane as it hit the floor and the squeaking wheels on his brother's chair sounded as if they came from a distance as everything around him started to fade.

"What the hell happened? Keith, are you all right?"

"Better get a wet cloth or something, Doc. He's sweating like crazy."

A finger trailed gently down the side of his face as he heard his brother move away to do what Marcella asked. He felt like he was in an oven, and his heart pounded wildly in his chest.

"I just want to let you know that keeping my leg straight like this on this hard floor hurts like hell," Marcella murmured.

"I'm sorry, Marcella. I—" Keith muttered.

"Shh, I'm just messing with you. It'll be fine."

Keith opened his mouth to say something else, but the finger moved from his temple to press against his lips.

"Your brother went to get a cool cloth for your head. Just relax until he returns."

The sultry tone of Marcella's accented voice caressed his ears just as the finger traced his lips.

"Lying in my lap isn't that bad, is it?" Marcella asked with a soft chuckle.

"No, in fact, it feels great," he muttered. "I'm just sorry I'm hurting your leg."

"Perhaps you could make it up to me sometime. You could massage my bad leg and then, well... I could let you move on to my good leg and a few other body parts if you wanted to."

The implications of Marcella's words were clear. When Keith opened his eyes, her beautiful face stared down at him. Letting his senses guide him, Keith reached up and pulled Marcella's head down without hesitation. Marcella seemed receptive to his advancement, but Kevin's returning footsteps stopped her. Keith shifted in Marcella's lap turning to his brother.

"Here man, are you okay?" Kevin asked, placing the cloth on his forehead.

Keith grabbed his brother's arm and pulled him close, whispering urgently.

"We have to go...*now!*"

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"Don't worry about it, man. Marcella wasn't angry at all. She called later because she was concerned about you," Kevin said, flicking twigs into the small fire pit with a stick.

Keith sat up on the large boulder and lifted his arm off his face. "Don't worry about it? How can you say that? I fucking passed out in your office! I fell on top of your patient, Kevin! A patient who had a bad leg, for Pete's sake!"

Kevin chuckled. "Yeah, that was messed up, but I told you it's cool. No harm was done."

Keith took a long drink from the bottle he held. "You wouldn't be saying that if it were you on the damn floor looking crazy."

"You're probably right, but that wouldn't have happened to me."

Keith stopped the bottle halfway to his mouth. "Oh yeah, why not?" he asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Because I'm the normal one. Crazy shit like that only happens to you," Kevin told him with a laughing grin.

He and Kevin may have been just horsing around, but his brother was right. Crazy stuff did only happen to him, and all because of the curse. It had been plaguing for years now.

He looked across at his twin. Kevin was the epitome of a ladies man. Women always complimented him on his good looks, how his short hair complimented his high cheekbones and round brown eyes. His ears weren't too large and how sexy his lips were. Kevin kept his face clean-shaven just to show off the dimple in his chin that women fell over themselves to tell him was so cute. Even when they were young boys, Kevin never had a problem getting girlfriends.

The thing that Keith found frustrating was he looked just like his brother and yet his connection with women was the absolute opposite. He sighed and finally took a drink. A stone abruptly sailed into his vicinity, getting his attention. He turned narrowed eyes to his brother.

"I'm cracking some serious jokes over here, dude, and you're missing them."

Keith threw the pebble back. "Whatever, man, pass me another beer."

"Alright, alright. So tell me what happened this afternoon, bro." Kevin dug into the cooler and tossed him another bottle. "That was the first time anything happened during the day, wasn't it?"

Keith nodded. "Yeah, man. It was crazy."

"Well, what happened? What was different about today?"

Keith pulled his legs close to him and crossed them. "I don't know; I can't explain it. I mean, it's almost dark now so I can feel the differences in my body, but this afternoon it



was on me so fast I could barely catch it and calm myself down.”

Kevin twisted the top off his beer and nodded. “You know, I’ve been thinking about that. We should be using your changes not ignoring them.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean maybe we’re going about this the wrong way. Over the years we have tried to find a way to break the curse because all the relationships you’ve had sucked because of it. Right?”

“Yup,” Keith agreed before taking a swig.

“I know women have left you unsatisfied, but you were always going after them. Did any ever pursue you?”

“Yeah. I mean, one time a while ago back in college. A girl was super aggressive. She wanted to go places together, do stuff and be with me all the time, but I couldn’t have a relationship with her either.”

“Why not?”

Keith scoffed. “Because, Kev, what would I say? ‘Gee, lover of mine, I’d like to share my life with you, but I should mention this tiny thing that happens to me at night. I kind of turn into this beast like creature after dark. Don’t worry; I’m sure over time you’ll get used to it if you don’t have some kind of psychotic episode first.’ Yeah, that would have gone over well on the honeymoon.” He rolled his eyes.

Kevin beat the ground, laughing. “Well, I think we need to try a different approach,” he said once he composed himself. “You’ve been alone for too long.”

Keith nodded. “I’m all for new tactics, Kev. What did you have in mind?”

“It’s time you got back into the game.” Kevin reached into the cooler and held another beer out.

Keith took the bottle, and Kevin continued.

“Look, the curse says every woman you seek out you won’t find joy with, right? Maybe you need to wait until a woman actually seeks you out.”

Keith scratched his chin. “Hmm.”

“Look, I know Marcella Torres. I’ve been working with her twice a week for the last nine weeks. She’s not manly, but she sure am not your dainty, delicate flower type of woman, for sure.”

Keith snickered. “Yeah, I definitely got that impression when she invited me to massage her bad leg, then her good and whatever else I wanted to massage.”

Kevin laughed. “Yeah, she doesn’t hesitate to ask for what she wants, and she has no problem speaking her mind either. Does that kind of woman bother you?”

“I’ve never really thought about it.”

“Well, maybe you should think about it. That could be why your heightened senses or whatever turned on during the day.”

Keith straightened his legs and leaned back against the boulder. “What are you saying?”

Kevin ripped open a bag of chips. “Okay, you know how male animals can sniff out their mates when the female is in heat?”

Keith nodded, and his brother munched for a while then shrugged.

“Maybe it’s the same for you. I mean, you did sniff her out and then fell all to pieces knocking her on the floor when you got near her,” Kevin concluded on a laugh.

Keith rolled his eyes. “Okay, so now you got jokes.”

“That shit’s funny as hell when you think about it, man.”

Keith scoffed. “It’s only funny because it wasn’t you and you’re drunk.”

Kevin laughed. “That may be true, but if you think on it, you’ll find that I am right. None of your changes ever happened before during the day, right?”

Keith shook his head. “No, it hasn’t. The only time someone’s scent ever made my dick hard was today when I encountered Marcella.”

“See, I’m a genius.”

“Okay, Mr. Genius, how do I know if that happened because I was attracted to the woman or because of some new manifestations happening to me?”

Kevin shook the bag over his mouth emptying the contents into his mouth then shrugged. “Shit, I don’t know. Use the Force, Luke,” he said falling over laughing.

Keith rolled his eyes. He opened his mouth to question Kevin further, but the first pangs of morphing seized him stopping the words. His beer fell from his hand spilling on the ground. He rolled over onto his hands and knees grunting in pain. Kevin appeared at his side immediately.

“Is it starting?”

“Yes, but something...is different.”

Keith let out an animalistic growl. Kevin move closer to him holding him around the waist, but pushed him away roughly.

“Keith, what—”

Keith couldn’t explain what was different and he didn’t want to hurt his brother inadvertently. He groaned in agony as his shirt began to rip down the back.

“Holy shit,” Kevin said.

Keith heard Kevin scoot across the ground away from him. His heart rate accelerated and his breathing quickened as he grabbed handfuls of grass and dirt with newly elongated nails. The shirt fell away from his body as something burst free from his back.

Mentally he followed the familiar mutations and was keenly aware of new ones. Each of his senses came to life one by one, sharper than what most considered human. His body felt stronger. Hearing the leaf that fell into the water on the other side of the lake was not new to him, but feeling his ears lengthen was. The change was swift, harsh and involuntary.

"Keith, are you alright?" Kevin asked hesitantly after a while.

Keith lay on the ground breathing heavily, covered in what felt like a long black cloak conscious of every noise, every scent and every little nuance of sensation in his immediate area. Finally, he pushed himself up into a sitting position. The pain was gone, and he felt exhilarated.

His perpetual exhaustion was also gone, and he smiled. Keith realized that he felt better than he had physically in a long time. As he rose to his feet, the 'cloak' relaxed about him, wrapping around his shoulders and rising against his head slightly concealing his face like a hood.

Kevin stood before him wide-eyed with his jaw agape. He swallowed loudly.

"They're— they're wings. You've got wings, bro," Kevin said astonished. "Can I touch them?" he asked putting his hand forward cautiously.

"Sure, I guess," Keith answered with a shrug.

Kevin's hand slid from tip to end then he chuckled disbelievingly. "Dude, this is so cool. They feel something like leather, but not, you know? Can you move them?"

Keith flexed the wings as if they were always there. He glanced to his left and right at them. They were smooth and pliable, black as coal. He stretched them out as far as he could. They expanded to about five feet on both sides of him before he brought them back to a resting state.

"These could help you find your girl, bro," his brother told him excitedly.

"How can they do that?"

"Think of the possibilities, Keith! You can go anywhere now. You've got wings, man. You can fly! Over the years your body has done some weird things, but I never saw something like this coming. Mom never mentioned anything like this could even happen."

Keith leaned on the rock he had sat against earlier. "I'm sure this wasn't part of the normal dinner conversation for the one it was happening to, Kev. If I didn't have you, I wouldn't tell anyone what was going on. I can see why the oldest brothers in our family tree went crazy and died lonely men," he said sadly. Keith felt his brother's hand on his shoulder and looked up.

"Well, you do have me, bro, and together we will beat this thing. We are twenty-first century men. We're not about to let some nineteenth-century curse beat us. Now get up."

Keith stood before his brother.

“Remember what we said? New tactics!” Kevin said holding a finger in the air.

“Okay, so what should I do?”

Kevin extended Keith’s left wing playing with it. “Well, do you think Marcella could be into you?”

“Yeah, I think we had an instant connection.”

“Well, why not just use those fancy heightened senses of yours to your advantage.” Kevin moved over to swing the right wing back and forth. “Do you remember what she smells like?”

Keith smiled. “Oh yes. I don’t think I could forget it.”

“Then sniff her out, bro. Maybe she’ll talk to you, and you guys can work things out,” Kevin suggested with a shrug. “Now give these wings some practice moves and go. I have to go find my girl and spend some time with her on my birthday before she strangles me.”

Keith spread his wings and pumped them up and down. Tiny whirlwinds appeared in the immediate area blowing dirt, leaves, and small rocks blew away from them.

Kevin turned away from him to block the debris that came his way.

Keith put a little extra effort into his movements and finally lifted into the air. When he reached the treetops, he could hear his brother’s final words before he flew away.

“Damn that’s cool.”

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Keith picked up Marcella’s scent at his office. The faint trail led to her home. Hiding in a tree close to the house, Keith found Marcella in the living room watching T.V. Marcella reclined in a large leather chair wearing only a pink tank and polka dot pajama pants. Her hair, slick and shiny, laid combed backwards on her head. Keith growled low in his throat as her scent reached his nose, water and spicy musk.

Hours passed as Keith observed her going back and forth to the kitchen, the restroom or doing other things prior to returning to his chair. The grimace on her face as she moved made him want to rush in and help her, but he knew that was not possible.

Finally, Marcella stood, reached for the ceiling leisurely and turned off the T.V. Keith watched her go into the bedroom and remove her bottoms. Marcella showed off a small rose dangling from her belly and her taut lower body as she stretched for the ceiling again.

Keith’s arousal rose within him as he Marcella moved closer to him to crack the window open. Gently she rubbed at a healing incision on her right leg, before she pulled the covers back to lay in bed. Keith waited until Marcella’s breathing calmed to an even rhythm

before he flew away with a sigh.

## CHAPTER TWO

Keith raised his head off the desk when his office door opened. His brother came in and took the seat in front of the desk.

"I know she's here. I can smell her, Kev."

Kevin nodded. "Yup, she's waiting in my office. She asks about you every time she comes in. Are you going to talk to her this time?"

"I don't know, Kev. The last time I was near her I passed out on the damn floor."

"Come on, bro. Quit being so hard on yourself. That was before you knew what was going on. It's been two weeks since then. You've been practicing, and you've got better control when she comes up here now. Besides, you can't keep stalking the woman. You're sitting in her tree watching her every night for God's sake. People get arrested for shit like that."

Keith nodded. "I know, Kev. I know."

"Stop being such a punk-ass and talk to the woman."

He sighed as Kevin exited the room. Suddenly the door reopened, and his brother's head appeared

"By the way, if you don't come and talk to her by the time our session is over I'm gonna send her down here," he added.

Keith cringed when the door slammed. He dropped his head back down on his desk. Kevin was right. He had to man up and just talk to her. Every night since his birthday, he'd gone to watch Marcella. Even when he realized he was crossing the line into stalker territory, he couldn't bring himself to stop. The night he witnessed Marcella masturbating, before she went to sleep sealed it for him. At first, he didn't know what she was doing, but then the smell of her arousal wrapped itself around his nose.

He stared through the window unable to breathe as her hand moved up and down beneath the covers and her beautiful face twisted in ecstasy. The moan she released when her orgasm hit her set his senses on fire. He almost fell out of the tree and came himself! Now, whenever he masturbated the memory came back to him making him come hard

and fast.

Keith wanted to hold her and kiss her so bad. He wanted to be the one to make her feel as good as she did that night. Never had he felt like this with anyone in his past. He found women attractive and sensual, but none of them ever got his dick hard on sight or had him masturbate to completion thinking of them. The women he messed around with were attractive and made him feel good, but no one ever affected him the way Marcella had.

The curse said he would never find joy with the women he pursued, and he never had. He didn't find sex with them especially joyful unless booty calls were considered joyful. He assumed it was because of the curse too, but now he wasn't so sure. His response to Marcella made him consider otherwise. Could Kevin be right?

Marcella...

The name fluttered through Keith's mind, and he couldn't help but smile. He leaned back in his chair with a sigh. Sex with Marcella would be different. Not only different but also exquisite. Like nothing, he'd ever felt before. Every nerve in his body told him so. On many nights, Keith had to fight the urge to glide into her window, snatch the sheet from her and slide his hard-on into her delicious looking body all night.

The memory of Marcella in her bed appeared in Keith's mind, and his hand slipped into his pants. He gripped his growing erection, as the image sharpened. The arms that had stopped Keith from falling to the floor embraced a pillow fiercely as she lay on her stomach. The muscles on her shoulders flexed beautifully as her body twisted. The sheet that covered her lay across her waist in disarray. It did nothing to hide the contours of her well-shaped hips and rounded butt.

He didn't make a habit of stroking his cock at work, but damn, how would he get through the rest of his day if he didn't? He continued to pull on his cock bringing himself closer to orgasm. The thought of freeing his cock completely threatened to overwhelm him.

*Fuck it!*

He reached for his zipper just as an abrupt knock at the door made him jump. The daydream faded and his eyes popped open.

*Damn.*

Quickly he snatched his hands from his pants, fixed himself and sat up. "Yes, come in."

To Keith's amazement and delight, the object of his affection poked her head in. Keith rose to his feet as Marcella stepped in and closed the door behind her.

"I'm not disturbing you am I, Dr. Keith?"

Keith was silent for a moment as he willed his heart to slow down. "No, I don't have a patient until after lunch. Come in."

Marcella smiled and slowly made her way to the chair.



“Dr. Keith--”

Keith held a hand up. “Please, I’m not your therapist, Kevin is. If you don’t mind us being friends, I’d like you to call me Keith.”

Marcella smiled. “Thanks, Keith, I’d like that.”

Keith returned to his seat and adjusted his cock, but Marcella’s strong scent kept it uncomfortably hard.

“Well, I see your therapy is going very well. You don’t lean on your cane as much.”

Marcella nodded. “Yes, it is. Dr. Kevin thinks I’m doing well. It still hurts like hell when I have to be on it all day, that’s to be expected.”

“That makes sense. You don’t want to overdo it. Just be sure to take your time with and without the cane, so you don’t re-damage anything.”

Marcella saluted him. “Yes sir. I always follow my doctor’s orders.”

Keith chuckled. “Sorry. I just said you weren’t my patient and here I am—”

Marcella laughed, and the sound made Keith feel warm all over.

“Relax, Keith, I’m just teasing you.”

“Oh. So, Marcella, can I ask what happened to you? How’d you hurt your leg?”

“Well, it’s ludicrous and completely my fault,” she said with a wave.

“Uh oh, what happened?”

“Well, I wanted to redo the backyard, turn it more garden-like. I was trying to build a place of zen and relaxation.”

“Uh-huh, and things didn’t quite go your way.”

“Nope, I put up this archway and started to decorate it. It was turning out beautifully, as lovely as it was, it wasn’t too sturdy. I was on the ladder trying to tie down a flower on the top, next thing I knew... boom... broken femur, broken tibia.”

“Ouch. So are you still into decorating?”

“Oh yes. I love it, but now I pay people to do it for me,” she said with a wink.

Marcella started to laugh and he smiled. “Yes, that seems the way to go.”

“Okay, do you think that covers the small talk?”

Keith stiffened. “Excuse me?”

“Well I came in to talk to you, but mainly to ask you something, but I thought a little small talk which might break the ice. What can I do for you?”

Keith’s eyes widened as he remembered what his brother had said. He hadn’t noticed the time passing while engrossed within his daydream. Now that the woman was in front of him, Keith had lost the power of speech. He pushed himself under the desk to help stop himself from jumping across and taking Marcella right in his office.

“Oh, umm, well, I--” He swallowed as if something thick was stuck in his throat.

Marcella smiled and reached across the desk to touch his hand. "Do you remember that day you fell on me?"

Keith swallowed a groan. "Uh-huh."

"So, then you remember knocking me over and me telling you that you can make it up to me?" she asked with a playful grin.

Keith's heart began to race as his knee jumped under the table. "Uh, yeah, I do."

"Great, then you won't mind taking me out to lunch to make it up to me."

Keith exhaled and smiled. "I would love that, Marcella."

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Soon as Keith walked into the restaurant, he saw Marcella. With a quick scan of the room, Keith found that even if he couldn't smell her, he would have still been able to spot her easily. Marcella's exotic beauty was superior to everyone there.

The simple white button-down shirt and khaki shorts she wore fit her curvaceous body perfectly adding to her attractiveness. Marcella stood and opened her arms when she saw Keith approaching.

All Keith's thoughts ceased when he walked into her embrace, accepting the invitation. When Marcella released him, he joined her at the small table.

"You look great, Keith."

"So do you, but then you always look good, Marcella."

Marcella sat back openly looking him over. "You know, I like it when we meet on the weekends," she mentioned leisurely. "I mean, don't get me wrong, you look good in your shirt and tie get up, but I like seeing you in a t-shirt and shorts much better. You look more relaxed and sexier in everyday clothes."

"Thanks, Marcella."

"So did you have trouble finding the place?" Marcella asked picking up her glass.

"No, your directions were perfect. I've never heard of this place. Do you come here often?"

"Yeah, I do. Café Flambé has great food, it's not too expensive, and they are friendly to everyone that came here."

Just after the noon hour, the brightly lit restaurant was near capacity. The atmosphere was almost intimate with tables that only sat two or four people. As he scrutinized his surroundings more a couple across the room caught his attention. They chatted softly, touching each other on the hands and face, laughing at something the other was saying. It was clear they were a couple by their open fondness for one another. When

the waitress came by with their order, she didn't seem disturbed by their blatant public display of affection.

"Yes, I see," he said finally.

Marcella reached across the table laying her hand on top of his. "Good. I really like this place and would love it if you come here with me more often. Since we haven't been to dinner yet, maybe we could come here one night. They make a grilled porterhouse that would melt in your mouth."

Keith looked down at their hands. Marcella was different from the other women he had known. They had been seeing each other for a little while. His instincts told him she could be trusted although his situation made him very untrusting. Kevin was always getting on him about making friends—at least one anyway. Perhaps she was a good person to share his secret with. Taking a deep breath, he steeled himself for what he would say.

Marcella looked at him expectedly, but before he could speak, a waitress appeared at their table.

"Is this the friend you were waiting for, Marcella?"

"Yes, Becky, this is Keith. Keith this is my favorite waitress in the whole wide world, Becky," Marcella said dramatically.

"Hi, Becky."

Becky giggled pushing Marcella playfully as she took Keith's outstretched hand. "Ooo, Marcella, he is a cutie," she said in a loud whisper.

Marcella smiled and winked at Keith. "Yes, he is."

Keith felt Marcella's foot slid along his leg and up the bottom of his jean shorts. Goosebumps traveled rapidly over his leg sending electric currents to his cock. Marcella's foot remained in motion as she spoke.

"We're just going to do these two appetizers, for now, Becky," he said pointing to the menu. "Is that alright with you, Keith? I wanted to let you taste my favorites."

Keith couldn't speak. Marcella's other foot pushed between his legs to play with his hardening cock. His only reply was a nod. The combination of the feet rubbing against his balls and sliding along his thigh almost took away his ability even to think. The talented foot massaged the bulge in his pants so well he didn't realize the waitress had gone and returned with the food.

"The food is here, Keith," Marcella said warmly. "I got you something to drink, too."

Marcella's voice pierced the sensual fog the foot massage had him in. Keith hadn't realized that his eyes had closed until they reopened. Different color ribbons with a lightly deep-fried coating lay on one plate before him. Beside it, a plate with three small bows of sauces. Marcella put her feet down and grasped a green ribbon dipping it into a white

sauce. He followed Marcella's lead and tasted the same food.

"That is good? What is it?"

"Fried zucchini and ranch dressing."

Keith dipped another. "I really like that," he said licking the sauce from his finger.

"What's the rest of this?"

"This is calamari, and the orange ones are carrot ribbons. The sauces are pesto and some kind of horseradish ranch blend, so it's not so hot," she explained pointing to each in turn.

Keith took the time to try each one, mixing and matching to try different flavors.

"Wow, I can see why these are your favorites."

"You like it?"

"Yeah, I do. I think my favorite combination is the calamari in the pesto," he said grabbing another. "I've never had either before."

"I'm glad you like it."

They continued to eat silently for a while before Marcella pushed a glass toward him.

"So Keith," she started picking up her on drink.

"Yeah."

"Is the rest of your body hairy like your legs, Keith?" Marcella asked abruptly.

"Huh?"

"I was just thinking I would love to feel it not just with my foot but my hands, my chest, or whatever body part you'll let me slide across," she explained with a shrug.

Marcella's words stopped his cup in midair. An erotic shudder surged through Keith's body settling in his crotch. His cock throbbed cruelly taunting him with the need that Marcella built up within him. Marcella's words and smell intensified that feeling tenfold. He tried to regain his composure and continued to eat.

Marcella wiped her mouth and leaned on the table toward him. "You know, Keith, we have seen each other twice sometimes three times a week over this last month. I like that we haven't hurried things between us. Not many people take the time to get to know each other anymore before jumping into bed. With that said, I think we have waited long enough. You're a great guy and I like you a lot, so I want you to come home with me today."

Keith's eyes widened as he met the lustful gaze in Marcella's eyes.

"You--you want me to come home with you?"

"Yes, and when we get there I want you to fuck me," Marcella confirmed bluntly.

Marcella's brazen invitation was exactly what Keith wanted too. His desire paralyzed him. She looked confused as her head tilted.

"Do you have any objections to that?"

“No!” he said a little louder than he wanted.  
Marcella smiled and took his hand. “Then let’s go.”

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Marcella pushed Keith against the door, and it fell open. She snatched the key from the lock before kicking the door shut. He and Marcella were locked in a lovers embrace, kissing, hugging, and tugging at each other’s clothes. Marcella pulled him backwards leading the way into the house.

Being with Marcella like this was everything he imagined. Kissing her was indescribable, and she tasted incredible. After wanting and watching her for so long, Keith prayed that he wouldn’t come before they got naked, marring the memory of their first time. He recognized the room they entered as Marcella’s bedroom from the times he spied it from the tree. Marcella spun him and shoved his body roughly to the bed. As Keith sat up, Marcella quickly kneeled before him.

“God, I can’t tell you how many times I wanted you to come home with me so I could do this.” Marcella panted, pawing at Keith’s body. “I can’t wait to make you hard so you can drive your cock into me all night long.”

Keith helped pull the shirt over his head. Marcella opened his pants finally freeing his straining cock. Marcella’s gasp of appreciation reached his ears just before the molten heat of her mouth engulfed his hardness.

“Oh!” Keith moaned and fell back again.

It had been way too long since he had taken a lover. Keith wanted the exquisite feeling Marcella was giving him to last forever, but her expert skill would not let that happen. Marcella’s groans gave him the impression that she was enjoying what she was doing as much as Keith was.

“Oh my God, I’ve wanted to taste you since that first day when I held your head in my lap,” Marcella murmured breathlessly. She gave Keith’s nuts long leisurely licks before returning to suck on the head. “Those damn dress pants you wear with your suits do nothing to conceal how thick your cock is. Neither do the shorts you wear. It’s such sweet torture to see your dick pressed against the material begging to be sucked.”

Shivers moved along Keith’s spine at Marcella’s words. She dropped her mouth over his erection once again. Her hands glided over Keith’s chest and abdomen heating his skin intensifying the glorious feelings. He didn’t know if his heightened reaction was from lack of attention or the fact that Marcella was so damn good. The only thing Keith knew for sure was that the sensation was magnificent and he didn’t want it to stop. Luckily, for him,

Marcella showed no signs of stopping until he erupted in ecstasy.

Keith moaned his approval shamelessly, and his own hands found their place on both sides of Marcella's head. Marcella's muffled groans reached Keith's ears again. The sound turned him on greatly. Marcella's naughty hands continued exploring his body.

A staggered groan left Keith's lips, and his fingers tangled themselves in Marcella's hair. Marcella gripped his cock with exquisite pressure with one hand while the other danced gently along the inside of his thigh. The anticipation of where those wicked fingers might go drove Keith into a frenzy.

His heart hammered inside his chest at the accidental brush of her chin against his nuts. The playful torture threatened to push him over the edge. His grip on Marcella's hair increased as she moved him faster over his erection. When the elusive appendages gave deliberate pressure to his balls, Keith let out a sound that even he didn't recognize.

One finger pushed gently at first, but when the constant stroking to his sac accompanied the increasing sucking on the head of his cock, Keith was propelled to a level of pleasure he had never experienced before. It was more than he could handle. His mind and body exploded in ecstasy. Keith screamed his joy as he continually slammed Marcella's head over his erupting cock.

Keith's breathing was haggard as he ran his fingers through Marcella's hair, soothing her scalp. Marcella continued sucking on him until his flaccid cock popped out of his mouth. When Keith dropped the silky strands, Marcella crawled up his body.

"Now that's what I'm talking about," Marcella praised, tenderly kissing his chin. "You taste delicious, and that was definitely worth the wait."

Keith had trouble catching his breath. He could barely keep his eyes open.

"You seem very tired, Keith. Close your eyes. Let the afterglow take over. I will wake you after a while, and we will continue what we've started."

His mind questioned the offer briefly, but because it was, still the afternoon he did as he was told. He closed his eyes and let the wonderful feeling that covered his body guide him into a peaceful sleep.

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Keith woke with a start. He looked about wondering where he was at first, but Marcella's sleeping form next to him swiftly brought back the events of the day. The reflection made his cock grow hard again. He moved closer to her pressing his blatant erection against his ass. Marcella wore a pair of soft grey panties that brought back decadent memories as she went about his nightly routine. Keith let his hand fall gently on

her naked shoulder.

Marcella stirred. "Mmm, you're awake," she muttered rubbing her ass against the hardness behind her. "Both of you," she added with a soft laugh.

"Yes, and I feel incredible thanks to you."

Marcella turned to face him. "I wanted to wake you up, but I had to ask myself two questions before I could do that."

Keith adjusted himself to lay with his head in his hand. "What was that?"

Marcella chuckled. "Well, I could have sucked you off, savoring the taste of you again, which you probably would have enjoyed it."

"Yup, that is true."

"Or I could let you get the rest you needed, then suck your cock until you got hard enough to fuck me like I wanted you to do in the first place."

Keith closed his eyes. His cock throbbed in agreement to the second statement.

"Mmm, so you decided to let me rest?"

Marcella smiled. "I know, it was incredibly selfish of me, but I didn't think you would mind my choice."

Marcella gripped the pliable skin on Keith's shaft to move it back and forth over the sensitive head quickly changing it from a semi-hard state to rock solid.

"Was I wrong?" she added with a devilish grin.

"Uh-uh, you were absolutely right. I don't mind at all."

"Good. I left a towel for you in the bathroom. I'll set up something for us to eat. Why don't you go take a quick shower? When you get out, we can eat before we come back in here and get to know each other even better."

Marcella pulled him into a sultry kiss. The kiss promised many things, and he couldn't wait to experience them.

"I will be right back."

Keith slid off the bed, taking his clothes with him. In the bathroom, he turned on the shower and glanced at his watch. His eyes widened.

"Shit! What the hell am I thinking?" he exclaimed in hushed tones. "It's too close to dusk for me to stay any longer with Marcella. Dammit!"

With a groan, he reluctantly turned off the water. It was the last thing he wanted to do. Knowing he may be blowing his only chance with Marcella, Keith dressed and then moved hastily through the house and out the front door.

"Keith, wait! Where are you going? What's wrong?"

He heard Marcella calling out to him, but he dared not turn. He jumped in his Jeep and sped off, feeling worse the further he drove away.



## CHAPTER THREE

Keith once again sat in the tree riddled with guilt as he watched her sleep. The last thing he wanted to do was hurt her, and he was sure that was exactly what his behavior had done. He was positive that he wanted to be with Marcella, but that couldn't happen until he faced his fears. Marcella could be trusted with his secret...he just knew it! He just had to suck it up and tell her so they could get past this.

The time had come to tell his would-be lover the whole truth. It was now or never. Landing silently on the roof, Keith settled his wings in their resting place and reached over the edge, to push the window open. He hung his head low enough to peer inside. Marcella continued to sleep peacefully unaware of his presence.

Keith sniffed the air, and his blood began to surge through his veins. He gripped the window frame and flipped his body inside the room hitting the floor beside the bed. A faint streetlight streaked across the floor, but the room could have been pitch black, and he would have been able to see as if it were noon.

A cool breeze flowed freely through the window bringing the soft scents of the violets that trimmed the house. Marcella stirred slightly when the air reached her. Keith moved to her like a moth to a flame sliding across the bed beside her. Marcella's usual habit of wearing nothing to bed was plain to see as only a sheet bunched at different spots on her naked torso. Slowly he pulled the cover away to view Marcella's body unobstructed. Marcella moaned but settled again. Keith lowered his lips to her ear.

"Marcella, I'm back."

Marcella turned his head toward the soft voice. "Keith? How did you—"

Keith pressed his forehead to Marcella's hair and let his hand glide over the contours of her back and butt being careful not to scratch him. "

Forgive me. I came through the window."

Marcella stretched languorously. "You're forgiven. I'm glad you came back."

"I couldn't stay away."

"You sound a little different. Is your throat sore? Are you feeling okay?"

Marcella attempted to turn over, but Keith stopped her with a firm hand on her lower back. "I'm fine, but there is something I need to tell you. It's something we really need to talk about."

Marcella pushed his arm away and tried to roll over again. "We can talk later. Let's continue what we started earlier."

Keith slid on top of her body to hold her in place. He extended his wings out and away from his body as his cock pushed against the tightness of Marcella's ass. Marcella pushed up against him enticing him even more.

"I can tell you want me as much as I want you, Keith?" she said grinding against him.

Keith pressed his head to hers. "Oh Marcella, I can't even put into words how bad I want you."

"Then we will talk later," she urged.

Keith groaned. "I really think we should talk first, Marcella."

"Just do it, Keith. I wanted you to do it earlier, but you left. Don't leave me hanging again," Marcella pleaded over her shoulder.

"I'm sorry I left. I didn't want to, but there's something..."

His words trailed off under Marcella's relentless teasing. With each upward thrust, his cock slid further between Marcella's cheeks. Keith groaned loudly, pushing back. Keith abruptly fell forward against Marcella's back when she pulled his arms under his shoulders.

"Please Marcella. You're making this hard to—"

"Mmm, yes, I can see how hard I'm making it," Marcella responded lustfully.

"No, Marcella, that's not what I—"

"Just fuck me, Keith," she demanded. "Whatever you have to say can wait until later."

The undeniable need in Marcella's words along with her constant moving brought Keith back to his former height of excitement. He leaned up to snatch his pants off. Marcella used the time to raise up on her knees lifting her ass in the air.

Keith knew what she wanted and quickly moved into place. He pushed down on Marcella's shoulders to hold her in place and entered her pussy from behind with a firm driving thrust.

"Oh!"

Keith almost lost it. The shiver that accompanied Marcella's moan vibrated over his whole body. He was afraid to move at first scared that he may hurt her with his claws. Pulling the sheet over her hips, he held onto her and began to move with strong firm strokes.

The hot, slick tunnel that surrounded his dick felt incredible. Every nerve ending in his body was alive and on high alert. He propelled himself forward, pushed onward by

Marcella's moans of pleasure. It was unlike anything he had ever experienced. Keith gripped his lover's hips roughly burying himself even more.

"Damn, Keith, this is everything I thought it would be."

Keith barely heard her but slowed his efforts when he felt Marcella starting to rise. Marcella's backwards thrust became more insistent. Keith stopped moving to let Marcella do all the work and bring his pleasure to another level.

"Ahh, shit, yes! Slap my ass, Keith. Slap my ass!" Marcella yelled.

Keith accommodated her request with a sharp rap on her left cheek and then the right as he slammed into her pussy again. In a frenzy, Keith reached forward and grabbed a handful of Marcella's hair jerking her head back.

"Oh shit! I love that shit!" Marcella screamed bucking back faster. "Come on, Keith. Come for me! I'm almost there!"

Keith's grip tightened on Marcella's hair as he reached for his shoulder. He growled, pounding into her with all his strength. His orgasm was building at an accelerated rate.

"Oh shit, here it comes, Keith! I'm going to come!"

Marcella continued to moan with repetitive 'oh's' as she bounced on his cock. A shudder rippled through his lover's body, as did a moan of elation. The heady vibrations and sound pierced Keith's heart. It was all he needed to follow Marcella over the edge to ecstasy.

Keith forcefully pushed Marcella forward, smashing her to the bed without dislodging himself. He drove into her with all the strength his pent-up frustrations could give him. A sound akin to a howl came from deep inside his chest as he shot his load deep inside her. He couldn't get enough of his cock into his new lover, as he pushed into her more, pressing her forward on the bed. Soon the frenzied surge that had overtaken him passed and he collapsed onto Marcella's back. His wings spread out wide to cover them both as a sense of peace engulfed him, the likes of which hadn't happened since his childhood.

"Oh my God, Marcella, that was incredible. I have waited my whole life for that. I thought I was doomed to a life of meaningless sex," he panted out. "But I knew it would be different with you," he added with a soft kiss on her shoulder. "You are amazing."

Marcella's body lay stiff beneath him.

"I'm sorry, am I too heavy?" Keith readjusted to lighten himself.

She still didn't answer.

Keith leaned down to look at the side of his face. "Marcella? Are you all right? I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"Keith...what the hell is around us?" Marcella asked in a low, shaky voice.

He twisted his head to see his wings draped over them. Keith pulled them back as he

rose to hold himself up on his arms. Marcella's body had stiffened beneath him, and he sensed his discomfort.

"Oh. Marcella, that was what I—"

"Get off me, Keith."

The passion and lust that filled Marcella's voice only moments ago were gone. The cold, harsh tones in its place told Keith to move fast. Marcella crawled to the top of the bed pulling the covers to her chest. Surprise and horror merged across Marcella's face marring her lovely features. The smell of his fear filled Keith's nostrils and broke his heart.

"What was that, Keith? What the hell are you?" she asked in a horrified whisper.

"Marcella, please. Let me explain."

"You're some kind of monster, aren't you?"

"No, no, please, let me—"

"Is that why we always met during the day? This is what happens to you at night?"

"Yes, Marcella, but just let—"

"Your eyes are so...dark," Marcella said, squinting. "They don't even look like eyes...more like two...black...holes. You've got wings and your hands—" She gasped and pointed at him. "And look at your nails."

The look of disgust on Marcella's face was heart wrenching.

"Marcella, please—"

"You were going to fuck me and then kill me, weren't you?" she shouted.

"What? No! Oh God no! I don't kill. I could never..." Keith stopped to take a slow breath. "Marcella, I would never hurt you. Let me explain. It's a curse, an old curse on my family that—"

Marcella squeezed her eyes together and shook her head. "Get out, Keith."

"Marcella..." Keith pleaded.

"Get out!"

Keith winced at Marcella's violent order. He crawled across the bed quickly falling off the side to dodge the pillow thrown at him.

"Get out! Get out!"

He backed away across the floor as Marcella continued to drive him from the room tossing objects his way. Finally, he stood and gave his wings a sharp snap. Marcella jumped back with a yelp.

Slowly Keith relaxed his wings around him like a hooded cloak and then walked toward the window. He crouched on the sill to give Marcella one last look before taking off into the night.



## CHAPTER FOUR

Devastated by the turn of events, Keith went to the only person who would empathize with him. He slipped through the window with the same stealth movements he used to enter Marcella's home.

"Kevin, wake up," he said urgently in his brother's ear.

Kevin's eyes popped open. When his lips parted, Keith used his hand to cover them quickly, stifling the noise that escaped.

"Shh, I need to talk to you."

Kevin looked over his shoulder. The sleeping form beside him was undisturbed. He nodded, and Keith left the bedroom quietly.

"Keith, why are you here so late? What's happened?" he asked walking into the living room.

Keith turned to face his twin. "I tried to tell her, Kev. Marcella completely freaked. She was so afraid of me she threw stuff at me to chase me out her room. You should have seen the look on his face," he added in a pained voice.

Kevin sat on the couch and shook his head. "Damn, bro, I'm sorry. I thought you guys had something going."

Keith sighed. "Yeah, so did I"

"Maybe she just needs a minute. I didn't tell Rachel about all of this until we were together for over two years, remember? She's kinda freaked at first, too, but once she had a little time to roll it over her brain she accepted it and us," Kevin explained. "That's why I'm going to marry her, man. Anyone who can accept all of what we go through is worth keeping," he added with a chuckle.

"Yeah, I envy you so much sometimes, Kev. You get to have a normal life."

Kevin closed the distance between them and gripped his shoulders. "You're going to get that life too, bro. We're going to beat this thing. I know it.

"Sweetheart, it's late, why are you out of bed?"

Kevin swung around. Rachel in the doorway. Instinctively he stepped in front of Keith.

“Honey, I was, umm—I was just coming back to, uh—”

Rachel gasped and rushed forward.

Kevin held a hand up. “Baby please...”

Rachel took Kevin’s hand pressing it to her chest. “Keith, is that you?” Her voice was low, filled with a combination of fear and wonder. “Please don’t hide from me, Keith.”

“Rachel, I don’t want you to—”

Rachel pulled Kevin out of the way and palmed both sides of his face.

“Keith, you’re Kevin’s brother, and you’re like a brother to me. It’s long past time I saw you like this. You can trust me.”

Keith raised his head slowly. Rachel’s words were sincere and held the caring tone he was used to. He turned slightly, his gaze landing on his brother. The trust and devotion that was always there stared back on him. Keith shifted back to Rachel. With a deep breath, he spread his wings wide for her to see. Another soft sound left her mouth, but Rachel’s hands did not move. She caressed his face lovingly. Then Keith saw a tender smile appear on her pretty features.

“You look so frightened. Relax, Keith, I’m not afraid. You don’t look so different to me.” She stroked his face and spoke tenderly. “I still see the strong jaw, sexy mouth and handsome dark skin that you and Kevin share.” She lifted his hand and inspected it running her fingers over the clawed tips.

“Your eyes are what seems truly different to me. They’re more slanted and sharper on the sides than their usual round shape,” Rachel said bringing her attention back to his face. “They appear to be darker, black as coal, but I can still see you within them,” she added with a smile.

“But I’m a monster, Rachel.”

“Keith, you could never be a monster to me. You’re my brother,” she told him squeezing his hand.

Ever since Keith found out that Rachel knew about his condition, he dodged her at night. He loved her like a sister. The last thing he wanted was to see repulsion in her eyes, but to his surprise—he didn’t. Relief assailed him upon her affectionate reaction Keith hadn’t realized he was holding his breath until he exhaled. Rachel let her hands fall away from his face and opened her arms. He walked into them without hesitation. Moments later, he felt Kevin arms around his fiancée reaching over to his arms. He embraced them both within his wings. Keith held them for as long as he needed, and then pulled his wings back into place and stepped back.

“Now, tell me why you’re here,” she insisted.



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"Did you need something, Dr. Keith?"

"Yes, come in, Brenda." Keith waited for her to take her usual seat before he continued, "I'm going to take some vacation time...effective immediately."

Brenda looked up from her pad with her eyebrows high on her forehead. "Effective immediately?" she repeated blankly. "Is everything alright?"

Keith scoffed and sat back in his chair. "Come on, Brenda, you've had to notice I haven't been all here lately. It's obvious something's got to give."

Brenda nodded knowingly. "You have been a little," she paused, as if searching for the right word, "preoccupied. I didn't want to pry so I didn't ask. I just figured it would pass."

"Thanks for that, Brenda. Yes, I believe it will, but I need some time to myself to help that come about. Since I have just one more patient before lunch, I'll leave for the day when I'm done. It's just a consultation."

"Will Dr. Kevin pickup your patients while you're gone?"

"No. I have already spoken to Dr. Silas over at Winston General. He has agreed to cover my patients. He will be here bright and early Monday morning."

"How long will you be gone?"

Keith stared at his secretary for long moments. He really hadn't thought that far ahead.

"Let's say a week for now. If I need more time, I will call you and Dr. Silas to let you know if I need more."

"Okay, I will let the staff know," Brenda said rising. "I hope you feel better, Dr. Keith."

"Me too, Brenda," he said as she left the room.

Keith cleared his desk putting his files in his top draw and filing cabinet across the room. As he rearranged some folders to make them more visible to his replacement, there was a small knock.

"Rachel!" he exclaimed swinging the door open.

"Hey, Keith." She gave him a quick hug and walked by him to sit at his desk.

"Hi. Look, it's great to see you, Rach, but I have a patient coming in a little bit. I—"

"Relax Keith; I'm your consultation. I made the appointment to make sure we weren't disturbed."

Keith closed the door and returned to his chair. "Why? What's up?"

"I just couldn't stand looking at your sad face anymore, Keith. You've been going through these last few weeks on autopilot."

He sighed. "Yeah, I know Rach. It's been kinda rough since the last night I saw

Marcella.”

“Yeah, I can imagine. Do you miss her?”

He nodded holding his temples. “I can’t get her out of my head. It’s like pleasure and torture at the same time.”

Rachel reached across the desk to touch his hand. “Well, I think four weeks is long enough to be tortured. Too long, in fact. You deserve some happiness. After you told me what happened between you and Marcella, I started looking for some help. I’ve been doing some research, and I’ve spoken to a genealogist, too.”

Keith’s head tilted. “A geni- what?”

She chuckled. “A genealogist. That’s someone who looks up your family history. I found him on the internet. I had one look into your family history and mine. Here is what he gave me.” Rachel handed him a large manila envelope. “I’ve already shown Kevin what the guy found. He’s out getting stuff ready for tonight.”

“Tonight? What’s happening tonight?”

Rachel stood and walked around the desk to kiss Keith on the forehead. “Read over the stuff in there,” she said pointing to the packet. “Trust me, Keith. Together we’re going to end this thing once and for all.”

Rachel left his office, and he turned his attention back to the envelope. Dumping the contents on his desk, he sifted through the pages. A picture of a family tree dating back over two hundred years along with other documents he didn’t recognize spilt out. He gathered the pile back together to start reading from the top.

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Keith the rest of the day at home nervously awaiting nightfall. It was the first time since his changes began that he wanted the sun to set. He knew Rachel’s plan and hoped it would work. To pass the time, Keith picked up the papers and scanned them again. When he first read through them in his office, he had no idea what he was looking at. As he scrutinized the picture of a family tree, following it to him and his brother, he knew he needed to inspect all the other papers more closely.

According to the documents, Winston and Salem were two separate towns separated only by a wide cluster of trees and a small lake, but industrialization removed the foliage making them one larger town. With the records Rachel had acquired, he could almost pinpoint the exact time the curse took hold and shook his head.

When darkness finally came, Keith welcomed the changes hoping it would be the last

time. He hurried through the moonlit sky anxious to meet up with his family. Perching in a tree near the lake, he waited. It wasn't long before he got the impression of someone coming near. Soon the soft breeze carried a familiar smell through the air. Stunned, he watched intently for the person to step into his line of sight.

The beating in his chest quickened as the figure came into view verifying what he already knew. Marcella looked incredible. He had not seen her in weeks and ached to touch her. The blue jeans and dark pink sweater hugged her body seductively. It was torture not being with her after having had the pleasure of her body.

Keith's eyes were locked on Marcella's every move. She was on the other side of the lake walking along the edge looking around. Keith could hear leaves crunching as Marcella walked and her grunts of frustration as she peeped behind bushes and looked up at different trees. Soon she stood still with her arms crossed over her chest. Keith could hear her foot tapping the ground. He adjusted himself on the branch shaking some leaves loose as he looked down at her.

Suddenly Marcella took in a sharp breath and stared across the lake. Keith looked about wondering what had stunned her. He saw nothing out of the ordinary so brought his attention back to Marcella.

"Keith? Is that you? Are you over there?" she asked.

Shock almost made Keith lose his grip on the branch.

Shit!

Marcella leaned over the water staring directly at him.

"Can you hear me? Rachel says you have exceptional hearing."

Keith hesitated for a moment then he moved from tree to tree until he reached the one nearest to her.

"Keith?"

"I'm here."

Marcella let out a sigh then spun around. "Where are you?"

"Up here."

Marcella followed his voice and gripped the base of the tree. "Please come down. I'd like to talk to you."

Keith wanted to honor that request more than anything, but the fear mingled with Marcella's natural scent kept him in the tree.

"Keith, please. Rachel came to see me last week. We talked for a while, and she shared your family history with me. I'm so sorry for what I did and for what I said. I was— Well, I was afraid...but I'm not anymore," she added swiftly. "Keith, please come down. I feel very foolish. Talking to a tree is making it worse."

Rachel went to see her? Did she tell her about the curse? Now she wanted to talk?

He looked down again. The sincerity in Marcella's eyes demolished the willpower that held him in place. Keith left the tree and glided to the ground silently landing a few feet away from her.

"How did you know I would be here, Marcella?" Keith asked quietly.

Marcella swallowed loudly. "Rachel told me you would be here waiting for er and your brother."

"I was unaware that you even knew Rachel?"

"I didn't until last week. She left a message for me at Dr. Kevin's office when I went for my last appointment. I called her, and we met up."

"I see."

"I like her a lot. Rachel loves you and your brother very much, you know."

"Yes, I do know. We love her too. Two different kinds of love, but we love her."

"Rachel explained your family history to me."

"And after all that you decided to come? Why is that?"

Slowly Marcella let out a slow breath and took a step forward before she spoke.

"Because I wanted to see you. I miss you."

Keith took a step back. "I find that hard to believe. The last time you saw me I got the impression you never wanted to see me again."

Marcella pressed her lips together. "I know, and I'm sorry. Keith, I was afraid."

"You're still afraid of me, Marcella. I can smell your fear."

Marcella's eyes widened. "You can see—" She stopped abruptly, amazement tinting his voice. "Okay, you're right. I am... a little, but it doesn't matter. I miss you."

Keith was silent as he searched Marcella's eyes again.

"Let me see you, Keith. Open your wings."

"I don't know, Marcella."

"Keith, I'm here. I want to make it work between us. I want to see you."

Keith hesitated for a moment then slowly pulled his wings away from his body to full extension. He closed his eyes and waited. Marcella moved toward him. When her hand touched his face, a shiver went down his spine. He gasped at the connection. Her palm, soft, almost loving, cradled his cheek.

"Marcella—"

"Keith. I really am sorry. I was afraid and totally caught off guard, but I should have never treated you so harshly. I should have known you wouldn't hurt me. Please forgive me. Give me a chance to make it right with you."

Keith opened his eyes to meet her gaze.

"I will admit that it's a little scary seeing you like this. Your voice sounds different, and God knows you look different." She scrutinized him closely. "Your eyes, your skin, the fangs, the claws...but, the Keith I fell for is still in there, isn't he?"

Keith nodded. "Yes, I am. My senses are enhanced, and I have the physical changes, but I'm still me. My mind, my thoughts and my feelings for you are all still there." He covered Marcella's hands with his own and closed his eyes again. "I want this to work between us, too, Marcella. We were meant to be together. I know it. I can feel it. I—I love you. Rachel says she can help me. I trust her, and I want you to trust her, too."

"If you have faith in her, Keith, I will, too."

Keith followed as Marcella pulled him closer.

"Marcella, you've made me feel like nobody has ever before. I long for you to touch me again. I want you so bad, I—"

Marcella pressed her lips to his stopping his words. The contact was more than he could bear. He grabbed Marcella's face with his clawed fingers, deepening the kiss. Keith sighed with a mix of pleasure and relief as he moved Marcella moved forward pressing him against the tree. She lifted her arms as if to embrace him, but they abruptly pushed back instead.

"Wait, wait, what am I thinking. We can't. I mean, I want to, believe me, but your brother and sister-in-law are on their way here, remember?"

Keith muffled a disappointed groan, but nodded in agreement. "Yes, yes, you're right." He sniffed the air. "They're close by."

Marcella held out her hand. "Will you stay down here with me until they come?"

Keith smiled. "Yes."

"Marcella, I'm so glad you came," Kevin greeted a short while later her with an extended hand. "When Rachel told me she talked to you, I was a little worried that you wouldn't."

Marcella smiled. "I found I couldn't stay away, Dr. Kevin."

"I'm not your doctor anymore, Marcella. It's been weeks since you've been out of my care. Besides, under the circumstances I think it would be fine for you to call me Kevin," he recommended with a chuckle.

Marcella nodded in agreement.

"Are you alright, bro?" Kevin turned to address his brother.

Keith squeezed Marcella's hand. "I'm good, Kev."

"Good, then let's begin," Rachel suggested from behind them holding a backpack out before her.



## CHAPTER FIVE

Keith and Marcella stood to the side as Rachel and Kevin readied their supplies. Rachel pulled two small pouches of yellow powder and several dark robes from the backpack.

"Baby, the fire is ready," Kevin announced, returning to them.

"Excellent. Hand this to Marcella, Kevin." She passed him one of the robes. "Put that on, and both of you stand by the fire," she added to Keith.

Keith and Marcella did as she requested. Rachel and Kevin joined them, wearing robes of their own. She stood at Keith's left, and Kevin took his place on her other side of her.

"Okay, as you all know I had the genealogist look up my family while he looked up yours. It would seem that Winston and Salem were two separate towns and this lake and a bunch more trees separated them," she said with a quick nod to the lake. "The genealogist found evidence that some of my family members were witches along with lots of other families.

Apparently, that was a thing way back when. So, of course, there were good ones and bad ones. The bad ones got burned up, and the good ones were smart enough to keep their gift secret and only used their powers to heal," Rachel explained. "So, even though I'm like a couple of greats down the line, I'm still a part of them. My idea is to try to tap into that deep down family tree power to remove the curse placed on the Turner family."

Keith let out a breath and nodded. "Okay."

"I think we should spread out more around the fire. Hold your hands up, don't clasp them, but make sure your fingers are touching," Rachel suggested. "I found a few incantations online and tweaked them so they would fit the situation." She turned to look at Keith. "Are you ready, Keith?"

"I am so ready. Let's do it."

She nodded and turned back to the glowing pit. Murmuring under her breath, Rachel spoke the words of the spell. A swift wind picked up as she spoke louder. Keith's wings started to flutter. Thunder rumbled in the sky. Marcella jumped beside him.

“We call upon the powers of the light.”

Rachel dropped one of the bags of dust into the burning wood. Its flames flashed brightly shooting skyward. The air heated up considerably.

“Keith Turner has suffered long enough for an injustice he did not commit! We seek the removal of a curse for an offense that was not his own! We offer a sacrifice of blood for payment of your services.”

Rachel paused, and Keith stepped forward. Rachel had explained in her notes what was expected of him. She handed him a small pocketknife. He raised his sleeve and put the blade to his wrist. Before he made a cut, he saw his brother step up and copy his movements.

“Kevin, what are you doing?”

“Your blood is my blood. I told you, bro. We’re in this together. On three, okay?”

Keith nodded. “One, two, and three...” He made a long even slit across his wrist.

“Shit!” Kevin cried from across the fire.

Only a few drops of blood dripped from the cut before the opening started to heal. He looked over at his brother. Kevin struggled to bandage the wound on his forearm. Keith moved to help him, but Rachel put a hand on his chest, holding him back.

“Accept our offering, spirits, and release this man and his family from this heinous curse!” she cried dousing the flames with the final little sack.

The blaze burned brighter, rising higher than any normal campfire could. The flames turned bright red making loud crackling sounds then abruptly exploded. The violent blast pushed the four of them backwards to the ground. Dense smoke filled the area fast, choking them. The smell of soot, wood and something akin to burning skin inundated Keith’s nose and throat. When the smoke started to disperse the sounds of painful moans took the place of their harsh coughing.

“Oh my head,” Keith groaned. He tried to rise and rest on his elbows, but Marcella placed a hand on his shoulder.

“Don’t move, Keith,” Marcella warned. “Your head is bleeding. You must have hit it when you landed.”

“I’m bleeding?” he asked confused. He reached up to feel the blood running down the back of his head. “Oh my God, I am bleeding! I’ve haven’t bled for more than a few seconds since I was a kid. And my head hurts, too!” he exclaimed. He looked at his hands and touched his face frantically. “Marcella, look at my hands! What do I look like? Did it work? Am I normal? Tell me I’m normal!”

Marcella stroked his face lovingly. “Yes! It worked! You look as handsome now as you do at noon,” she confirmed.



Joy spread through Keith's very being. Inside he felt the same as he did when he was his normal self during the day. No heightened senses, no wings, no claws. They were all gone. Keith turned to his brother and Rachel to see tears in their eyes.

"Rachel, how can I ever thank you?" Keith asked reaching for her.

"No thanks necessary, Keith. I love you guys." She kissed his cheek then turned to kiss his brother.

"Thank you," Keith repeated before turning his attention to Marcella. "And thank you for being here with me, for believing and giving us another chance."

"No thanks necessary, Keith," she said mimicking Rachel's words. "I find that I love you, too."

Keith leaned over to kiss Marcella but fell forward into Marcella's waiting arms.

"Are you making this a habit, Keith? Falling into my arms at will?" Marcella asked in a teasing tone.

Keith's chuckle couldn't muffle his painful moan. "As long as you are there to catch me, I'll consider it."

"I think now that you're you again, we should get you to the hospital, so we don't lose you to a concussion," Kevin suggested.

Keith let his brother and Marcella hoist him to his feet. Each slipped one of his arms over their shoulders to hold him up. Marcella wrapped a stabilizing arm around his waist, too.

"Thanks, guys," Keith said, as they followed Rachel from the clearing.

"Don't worry about that now, Keith. You can express your gratitude by showing me if some of the beasts are still inside you when we make love again," Marcella whispered lustfully into his ear.

Keith turned a painful, but happy grin to her.

"You can count on that."

**THE END**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

I am Dana Littlejohn, author of sensual erotic romance. You will find that I write contemporary romances with just a hint of another genre to take it away from the ordinary. My stories will touch your heart and your soul and make your body feel like its being touched, too.

Imagination will take you places your money cannot. I invite you into my world with open arms to see my imagination run wild...

Come along for the ride as I go on an imaginary trip into my world. You'll enjoy every minute of this wild ride.