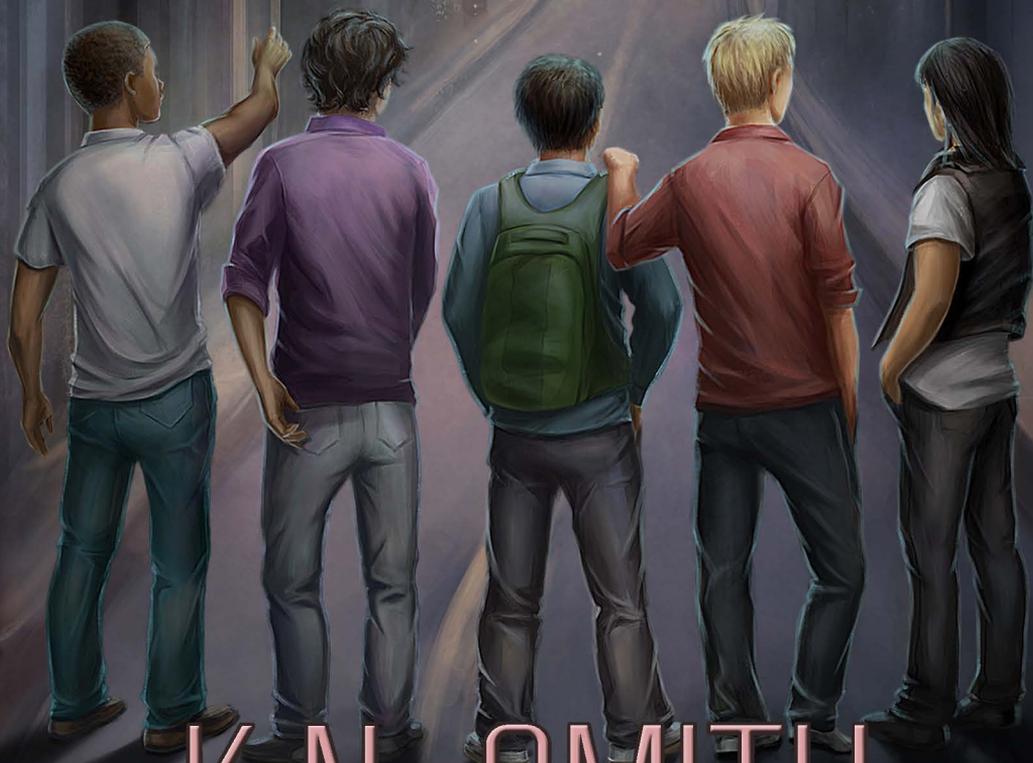


THE
URBAN BOYS
DISCOVERY OF THE FIVE SENSES



K.N. SMITH

Praise for:

The Urban Boys: *Discovery of the Five Senses*

"An energetic YA adventure debut with stellar action sequences. Smith's writing is intelligent and often lyrical. Her exuberant prose never fails to dazzle."

- ***Kirkus Reviews***

"Beautifully mesmerizing and wonderfully addicting!"

- ***Sam Ryan, Indie Book Reviewers (4.5 stars)***

"Author K.N. Smith uses her mastery of the written word to weave an entrancing, yet powerful tale of adventure that keeps you turning pages in an unquenchable desire to find out what happens next."

- ***Publishers Daily Reviews (5 stars)***

"Well written and very creative, 'The Urban Boys' is an absolute must-read for fans of novels such as Percy Jackson, Harry Potter, etc." – ***Anabella Johnson, Indie Book Reviewers (4 stars)***

"Holey moley, this book was terrific! Once I started reading I didn't want to stop until I'd finished the whole thing!" – ***G. Hancock, Indie Book Reviewers (4 stars)***

"Forget spellbound. This novel will have you transfixed. Not wanting, but needing more. Remarkably, K.N. Smith's articulate word imagery is all that is needed to transport readers to a mysterious paranormal world. Make the time to connect with this piece of literary prowess. You will not regret it." - ***V. McDermott, Educator, English Teachers Association of Queensland, Australia (5 stars)***

"An unforgettable and ultimately fulfilling rollercoaster ride that I won't soon forget!" - ***Sophia Renee, Indie Book Reviewers (5 stars)***

"Author K.N. Smith has at her disposal a lyrical prose that describes the environment and the characters in such fine (and magical) detail that you can't help but fall in love with the world she has created."
- ***Moterwriter Reviews (4 stars)***

"Wow, what a crazy, mind-bending novel! K.N. Smith writes very descriptively and with great passion."
- ***Jhonnι Parker, Indie Book Reviewers (5 stars)***

"K.N. Smith has an incredible way with words; her descriptions are vivid; you see what the characters are seeing, you feel what they are feeling; you feel like you are there." - ***Cody Brighton, Indie Book Reviewers (4.5 stars)***

"A wonderful and deeply written emotional adventure."
- ***Self Publishing Review (4 stars)***

"Brilliantly crafted and written!" - ***Megan King, Indie Book Reviewers (4.5 stars)***

"The Urban Boys by K.N. Smith is the most entertaining, deep, and interesting book I have read in a very long time!" - ***J. Thackery, Indie Book Reviewers (5 stars)***

"An emotional journey not soon forgotten, full of danger, conflict, tension and drama!" - ***John Goldman, Indie Book Reviewers (4 stars)***

PROLOGUE

Twenty Years Ago ...

HUGE, CURVY LEAVES BEAUTIFULLY ARRANGED WITHIN THE PRESERVE offered the perfect backdrop for a midnight encounter between two friends who happened to be unequal in their mindsets as well as in their needs to control. Curiously, a beautiful, black midnight lent air and mystery to the setting of which each was familiar. But almost immediately the conversation went awry, and perhaps on purpose.

“You don’t think I’m capable of leading us in the right direction, do you? We can’t stay here going nowhere, and I’ve chosen you to go with me. We need to stay together!” said an imposing Joaquin Grayson, as he squeezed the life out of Ross Dawson’s arm. “We’ve been doing fine for almost a year. Why you want to cut out now?”

“We’ve been going back and forth from here to there and everything’s alright, I guess,” said eighteen-year-old Ross. “But you’ve changed. You’re not the same. It’s like I don’t even know you anymore. Man, why do you need so much power?”

For the first time, the mellow, demure Ross trusted himself to speak up, to question the mounting dissension clouding their friendship. He remembered that only a short time ago a youthful adventure took place in this forbidden milieu. A place from where tales of strange happenings, mysterious noises, and unsolved disappearances emerged, or so it was said.

And during that youthful adventure within the preserve, when confronted by that mysterious accident, they all changed, and then *he* changed.

Somehow, the misunderstood, glowing energy that dripped from those huge leaves caused a solo ambition. And it had only gotten started on a dangerous course that would be littered with intense brutality, checkered with misguided emotion and overtones of force and power - a deadly combination anxiously waiting in the wings.

As a result of this line of questioning, and while wondering what would happen to Ross' gift, Joaquin set his intention. Only nineteen years old, yet extremely demanding, he knew he would not be able to turn back. He let go of Ross' arm, turned away, and ran his slender fingers through his thick, shoulder-length, medium brown hair.

At just under six feet, his lean yet muscular frame worked diligently to contain the rising tension within,

Discovery of the Five Senses

being careful not to give any indication of his next move. A black tank top tightly hugged his chest to reveal lightly tanned skin that perfectly harmonized with his long, uneven hair.

And with his hair still clutched in his hand, he closed his eyes and breathed deeply as he listened for Ross' movements. Pacing a little, he rationalized that he was the only adequate soul who could orchestrate and command a new way of life. Surely, a concoction of domination that would ultimately gratify only himself.

And in the absence of even a hint of an exchange, Joaquin spun around and lunged at Ross, grabbed him by the throat, and knocked him down. With dry, brittle leaves and debris suddenly thrust upward, the two were covered in a dark, hazy hell as they pursued a violent struggle for what seemed like an eternity.

As he gained his footing, Ross shot back with a punch to Joaquin's head followed by several body punches. Joaquin stumbled backward and fell giving Ross those precious few seconds required for his escape.

With speed as the distinguishing factor that thrust him from walking to running, the shorter, 5-foot-8 Ross frantically stretched his quivering legs through any physical or mental process he could assemble. His rich, brown skin absorbed a rush of pulsating adrenaline. He

tried to ignore his thunderous heartbeat, which was now thumping clear to his ears, to concentrate on any and every path that would lead him out of the preserve and as far away as possible.

With his baseball cap blown to the wind, his short, curly hair openly embraced the moment, which was littered with deep panic and a singular appreciation for survival.

The unfortunate turn of events that took place only minutes earlier were actually the accumulation of countless episodes in which Joaquin expressed his need to control any and everything. This sudden, violent spree was simply the smoky glow at the end of a dark tunnel, and they had ventured across the breaking point inside this familiar, gloriously lush landscape.



At that very same moment on the other side of the preserve, out where they were not supposed to be, Della Sato and Juson Yamada, both in their early twenties, examined the stars on what would be the defining night of their young lives.

Although somewhat disturbing tales had surrounded the mystery of the forest for generations, it offered a secret privacy unavailable in their everyday lives. They set foot within looking for the perfect place to nestle.

Discovery of the Five Senses

Walking and talking, all was quiet and peaceful, just as they had imagined.



Now heavy on his heels, Joaquin gained speed and caught up with Ross, running up from behind, and wrapped his arm tightly around Ross' neck. His long, brown hair whipped and swung, practically covering both of them. Unable to break free, Ross elbowed him in the ribs and Joaquin finally let go. They exchanged a flurry of punches, jabs, and kicks that set the bruising process in motion.

Although fatigue was setting in, Ross somehow found the strength to jump high, circling backward. He landed a ferocious blow to Joaquin's back that knocked him down yet again. He frantically resumed his search for a way out, but Joaquin took only moments to compose his expressionless self, and the pursuit had fallen hopelessly back on track, and with furious traction.



With an assist from the moonlight, the curvaceous appeal of those big, wavy, round leaves with their lime, jade, and avocado tones mesmerized Della and Juson. Now resting in a shallow place, Juson looked deep into

Della's almond eyes as he stroked her straight black hair, and told her what she meant to him.

"You know we'll be married someday. It's in the cards," he laughed. "No, seriously, I really love you."

"I love you, too," said Della.

His solid, athletic frame meshed with her delicate figure. And being completely hidden behind a massive, beautiful leaf, their passion spilled over in total privacy.

They drew in close and kissed with animated fervor.

But suddenly, the sickening roar of the brawl between the two friends inched closer and closer to Della and Juson. He put his hand over Della's mouth and listened cautiously to determine the source of the fracas. He squinted his eyes and shook his head to signal the need for silence as they waited it out.

With no verbal exchange between the unseen individuals, it was impossible to conclude the situation. Juson peeked out for a split second and saw a brutal fight taking place between what looked like two men.

Joaquin landed multiple blows upon Ross' head and took a few in return, and they continued fighting without pause. As Joaquin charged forward, Ross was pushed into a tree where a low, dry, brittle branch met his torso. The branch crashed to the ground leaving Ross with a serious wound.

Discovery of the Five Senses

The thunderous thud whipped the leaf covering Della and Juson, but it quickly snapped back into place. And when it did, Ross could be heard stumbling backward and over the branch. He tripped and fell to the ground landing only inches from Della and Juson. Joaquin pounced upon Ross choking him as he punched him in the face.

Still hidden, and with that huge, curvy leaf now pressing against Della and Juson, Joaquin wrapped his hands tightly around Ross' neck. He pressed his full weight into the evil action and waited for the end to arrive. He was entirely exhausted, and when it was over, he fell beside Ross and stayed there for a few minutes while the forest absorbed this malicious, vile act intentionally choreographed by Joaquin.

Ross' empty, wide open eyes expressed the fear of the moment, or perhaps the horror of what he feared he was destined to face. Joaquin stood up and let out painful moans as he rubbed his eyes, which were suddenly burning. Unable to see clearly, he stumbled out of the forest and into the night, going anywhere it would take him. With his eyes burning under a furious, deep red, he would remain in this agonizing condition for three, long days.

Completely terrified, Della and Juson were clear on what just happened, but had no choice but to exact

more patience than they could have imagined would ever be needed in their lifetimes. As though they were totally blindfolded, and not knowing who it was, there was no reference point for this deadly, vicious act.

And as the night progressed, they found the moment to make their move. In disbelief, they ran home and enshrined this secret in their hearts under that striking, glowing moonlight on the most fateful night of their young lives.

Author

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K.N. Smith is an American author and passionate advocate of childhood and family literacy programs throughout the world. She continues to inspire students of all ages to reach their highest potential in their literary, educational, and life pursuits. She lives in California with her family. Please visit K.N. Smith online at www.knsmith.com.

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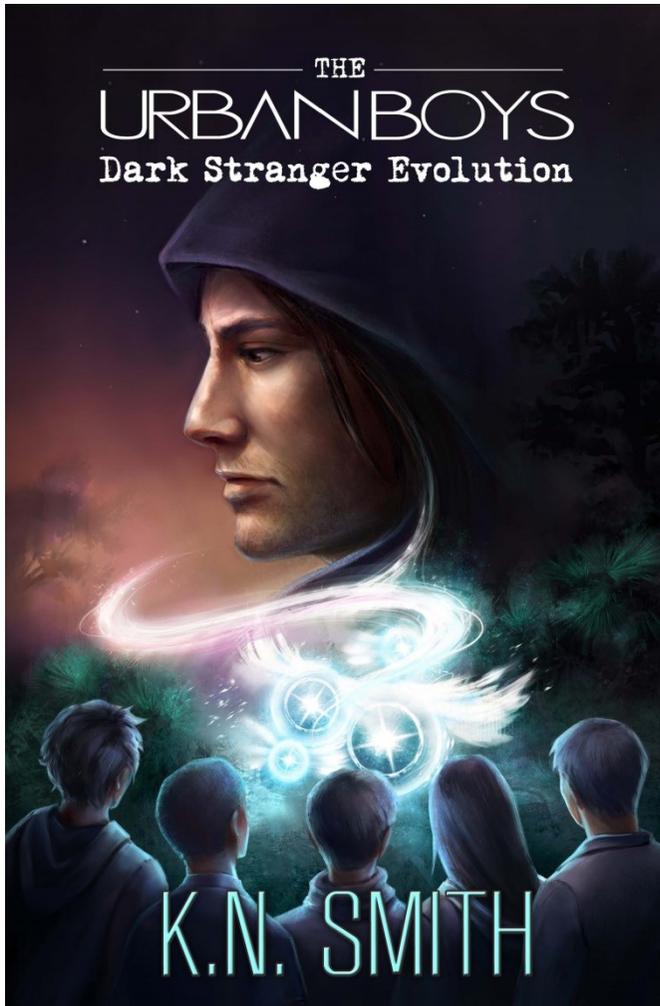
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