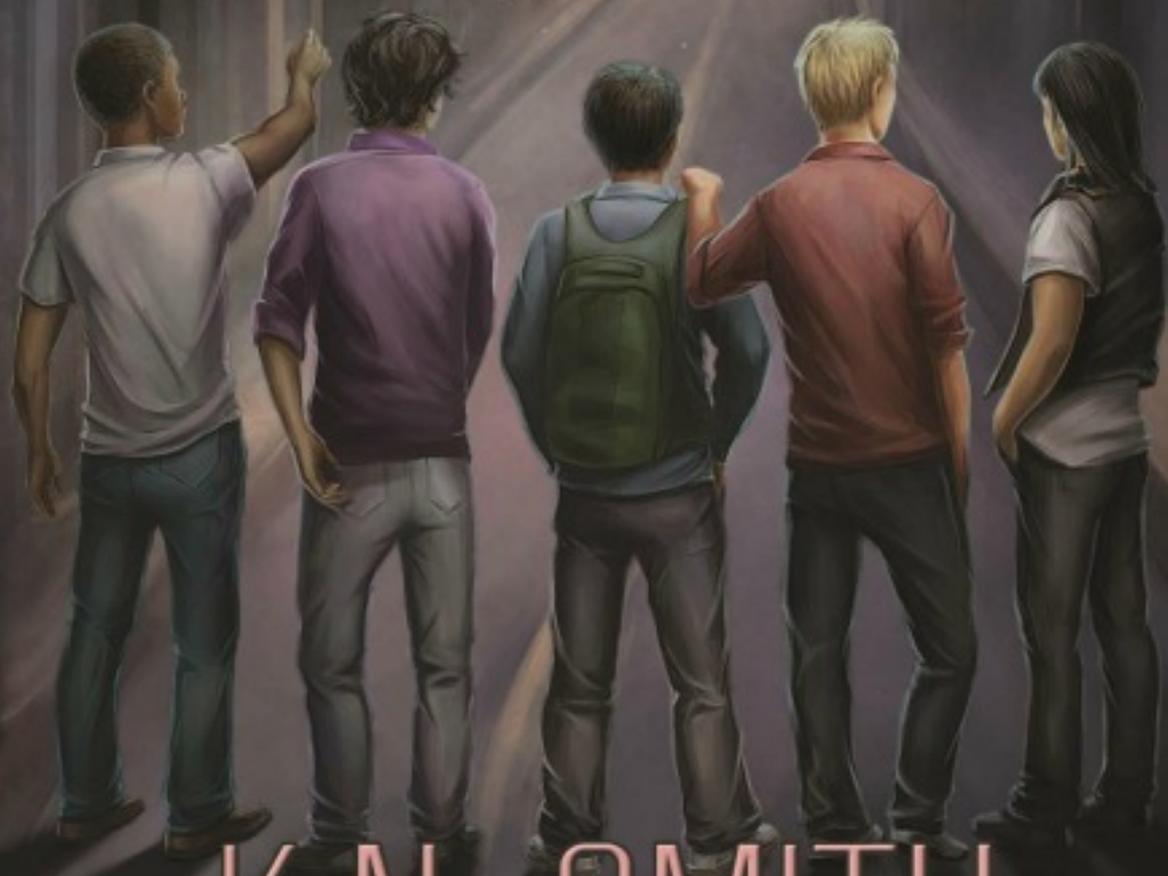


THE
URBAN BOYS

Discovery of the Five Senses



K.N. SMITH

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Chapter Fourteen

Out at Night

A BLANKET OF DEEP CHARCOAL MOVED ABOUT LIKE A SPRAWLING, SMOGGY MASS high above Sandry Lake bringing with it gloom and despair for all to see. As a town that had fallen into a desperate state of disrepair, it was still amazingly contained, and unfortunately not as far from Danville Heights as one would prefer. The approximate eight mile span between the two towns was actually very close.

Sandry Lake was contained in the sense that it now had as few citizens as when it was first established, considering that most of its residents had abandoned ship in the name of self-preservation and fear of evil. Its small police force and body of elected officials had all but disappeared. Crime and corruption expressed itself in dark and evil ways.

Coming up from beneath the shadows in unexpected moments of terror, something or someone had assumed control of the entire town and twisted the meaning of what it was to be a community. There were two factions at hand: the last of the committed citizens who would hang-on to the end, and a cruel, dark, malicious force. Fighting what they largely could not

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see made for a very unpleasant battle, but these faithful citizens were not giving up. Their hearts were embedded in memories of better times when Sandry Lake served as a model community within the region. The citizens had used their very own hands to build the city, and to have what was rightfully theirs stolen from them was an atrocity none could fathom. The problem was that their manpower had waned. So what began as a counterattack became a waiting game, and they struggled to survive.



Living in squalid, makeshift quarters, a dirty band of goons who were all given free range as connivers, thieves, and thugs, roamed around at all hours looking for whatever they wanted to steal. If they encountered a citizen, they simply took what they wanted and beat them to the ground. The goons had been uncaged and even a trace of any rule had simply vanished into thin air.

He orchestrated their moves, lavishing upon them promises of riches and power if they would only align with his grand scheme. By dispensing such promises to the lost, his following had amassed, and they were ready to strike at any given time.

The goons referred to him as "*he*," likely not even knowing his name. In fact, the mind washing was so elaborate that they had even forgotten their own

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names. So far away from the truth were their lives that it would be impossible to salvage any one of them. Intent to rule, this boisterous atrocity displayed itself as the lowest band of hooligans on a totem pole built entirely out of filth and lies. Unlikely to have been an overnight foray, *he* obviously had been present for some time. *He* often dreamed of his long-range plans to dominate this once beautiful and established town.



As a loud altercation between a citizen and a wild ruffian unfolded in the background, the depth of a shadow revealed a nasty episode in an otherwise unfortunate, yet common day. With its desperate hunger aired out in the open, a meandering chicken ruffled its brown and green feathers. It walked and pecked for any scrap that would kindly spare itself.

In a place unfriendly to a lonely bird, it would take mountains of hope for a meal to be realized. Unfortunately, *he* had the same on his mind and wildly snatched the chicken, which sent feathers flying up and about. And with a quick snap of its neck, *he* brought it all to an end. Void of hesitation, he bit into the chicken spitting out blood and feathers in a most expressionless manner. In *his* mind, dinner was what it was, and if another bird approached, it would most certainly meet the same fate. Chewing and grinding away, his eyes

glazed over, he cared less how this came to be and continued to spit in all directions while wiping his bloody chin with his filthy rags.

Like a fallen angel, he wanted power. He worked for evil and fought against good. Only he could orchestrate the details of these crimes so expertly executed as a way to run folks out so he could command the stage. Tall, slender, and disheveled looking, he'd been surviving in the depths for quite some time. The comfort associated with his brand of chaos led him to the loneliest of places, and there he reveled.

Not understanding his own emotional insecurities, he chose evil as a basis from which to operate. He had settled into a routine of madness, which was now in the director's chair of Sandry Lake.

And from where did this emerge?

As his eyes revealed a sliver of perceived childhood trauma, feeling lonely and unloved, second and not first, feeling left out perhaps, his internal emptiness spilled over, and he hung his head momentarily. Once happy, he somehow became willing to trade his hand for the dark side, surely to gain attention and a sense of power that would fill an enormous void. Perceived or imagined, his hurt was real. But it would not slow him down on his journey to destruction.



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Compared to Sandry Lake, nightfall in Danville Heights had quite the opposite effect. Children's eyes fluttered as they winked themselves to sleep, quieted down, and settled-in for the night. For these were the common routines of the peaceful valley.

There was only one thing aside its normal during this particular twilight: *five boys lay wide awake sensing each other*. They responded to instincts that they did not question, but also did not understand. The day had been long and rest would normally be embraced, but this evening had a tale to be told.

Jordan found himself ruffling through his black sweat clothes, and he got dressed, opened his window, and jumped outside. Every single one of the boys followed suit, all dressed in black athletic gear, and three in hoodies. They briskly walked toward the preserve deep into the night. They were transfixed on the north and not speaking to each other, but occasionally traded glances as their respective senses burned away.

By way of mystery, the incident with the floating light balls had caused a hypersensitive reaction with their senses, and Jordan could literally hear the altercation between the citizen and the goon unfolding. Alex licked his lips, his tongue protruded, and then it went back in and out again. Kinsu's vision sharpened like a razor's edge, and he led the way. And as they

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picked up the pace, they gained incredible speed. From calm to chaotic, their worlds would change in a flash.

As if to run off to save our very own lives, the boys charged ahead and never looked back, although uncertain of the path they were on. Enveloped by the night, they felt strangely at home moving into dark shadows. They felt a certain power as allies on this journey, which was now quite a ways from home.



The boys' actions brought an anticipated interruption to the Dark Stranger who was resting, knowing fully that this day would come. Aware of the infancy of the situation, he quickly sprung to his feet, but decided to use reservation in measuring the boys. He could sense them, feel them, even being able to see them running toward Sandry Lake.

He shared similar instincts and sensations to the boys, but these connections had yet to be made. Sensing their urgency, he followed them to this dark place, his black hood wrapped tightly while his cape-like covering embraced the wind and advanced his commanding presence.



Akin to an alarm clock from hell, these new, powerful instincts coupled with nightfall would prove to

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be bolder than ever in the history of Danville Heights. The boys could have ignored this calling, fought its beckon, but this would prove to be out of alignment with fate. As they tore into Sandry Lake, whipped air encircled a crooked, dangling sign that ironically read: *Welcome to Sandry Lake*. It swung left to right in a squeaky and unwelcoming manner.

They stopped in their tracks taking view of this evil domain, which loomed large above them. Underfoot, filthy trash served as their greeter, while broken glass and coarse rubble served as their guide. Moving forward slowly, they surveyed the area leading to the altercation. Rhee could smell the goon while pinpointing his exact location.

Filthy or not, Chase stooped down and put his hands on the ground to feel for human vibrations that may have been surrounding them. Kinsu remained laser focused on his target, leading the way with Jordan next to him taking in every harsh word spit out by the goon, who then slapped the citizen causing him to crash to the ground. He grabbed at the citizen's back pocket, ripping his pants in an effort to steal his wallet because he had refused to hand it over. With his makeshift weapon knocked away, the citizen had become defenseless. He flipped over on his back to use his legs as a last, self-protective resort.

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Now upon the scene, Alex rushed toward the goon, and out of nowhere, handled him with finesse in a style of martial arts for which he had never been trained. Every single one of the boys had the same skill. Coupled with their newfound instincts, they made for serious human weapons against which the thug could not prevail.

Taking him down was one thing, but when three more came out of the shadows armed with sharp, spiked weapons, the brewing battle took a turn. The boys quickly and strategically synchronized to whip and outsmart these thuggish creatures. A furious fight ensued with two-on-one, one-on-one, one-on-three, and all in between. The boys realized they were pitted against a vicious band of cruelty accustomed to roaming in dark places and causing mayhem at will.

Mean and muscular, the goons fought back with precision, punching and slapping into eternity. But the boys' sudden martial arts mastery was unleashed upon these dreadful hooligans, and their detailed, accurate moves dazzled in the twilight.

“Two more, left,” said Chase as two more thugs joined the fracas. Their uninvited presence agitated the boys.

With the Dark Stranger witnessing it all, he allowed the boys to handle themselves, and he remained

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reserved. The night wind moved in and out of his black hood and framed his handsome face and his long hair.

Spinning, punching, kicking, and calculating every move, the boys ripped into the thugs with fury knocking each one unconscious, sprawled out for all to see. Like a mound of sorry, soggy laundry, the goons were piled high and left for their maker, whoever that might be hiding in the shadows.

And with the same laser sharp vision afforded to Kinsu, *he* saw what happened and could not believe his eyes. Members of his own army defeated, representative of weakness and a pathetic emptiness? *He* stood up boldly with the dead chicken dangling in his hand, blood dripping to the ground, realizing he had no conceivable idea of who these boys were. Their prowess struck him, for he knew he would need to assemble quickly in order to defend his perch.

With that blanket of deep charcoal hanging over his head, he could do nothing besides keep his feet planted right where they were. Somehow, *he* too could sense them, and he knew he would need to go deep in order to prevail. But the night sky offered zero comfort to anyone involved, and a new chapter had emerged. But how it would unfold remained as cloaked in darkness as *he* himself.

Inside the Book

Additional Chapter Intros ...

Chapter 4

As they walked toward Danville Heights High School, the tranquility of their surroundings stood out amongst them, which framed them like subjects tangled in a luscious piece of art.

Chapter 8

The preserve seemed to sparkle underneath the moonlight and the on-off-on of tiny, blinking actions bore excitement in the twilight like melodic offerings from creative beings seeking new friends.

Chapter 9

The little being also contributed to the amazing glow ricocheting from sprawling fronds to soaring trees to fallen leaves as its creativity advanced in a display of twirls and spins that astonished the boys. And they followed their little friend further and further into the forest.

Chapter 14

They referred to him as “he,” likely not even knowing his name. In fact, the mind washing was so elaborate that they had even forgotten their own names. So far away from the truth were their lives that it would be impossible to salvage any one of them.

Chapter 20

Their martial arts excellence could not be denied as kicking, punching, and blocking moved to new levels. With an inherent need to clear things out, they charged forward to finish their business in anticipation of getting to the big one.

Chapter 22

Appearing sound asleep, Kinsu never moved when Juson entered his room. Either way, when the window slammed down and the can fell to the floor, Juson and Della heard it. And thus, a fraction of a mishap had forthrightly revealed itself.

Chapter 26

She reached behind her back and pulled out slender, black nunchucks and simply invited them to come get her. Their eyes could barely follow the chucks as they circled around her shoulders and torso slapping back and forth, and up and under, while she remained focused and composed with her eastern, tomboy flair.

Chapter 27

Jordan took a deep breath and faced the hallway realizing he was on a death march to the kitchen where Russell and Mason were deep in toast and eggs. "Morning," said Russell. Jordan did not answer back, and Russell gave him an intimidating stare through the thick silence.

Chapter 32

And it took only a few steps for their senses to flare as they saw numerous thugs running behind them. Practically tripping over one another to get to the boys, they advanced with Olympic-level speed, and swarmed like ants upon the group.

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Five boys, a Dark Stranger, a fearless girl, vicious thugs, and the evil Druth. A suspenseful incident in a forbidden preserve where a mysterious energy source heightens the boys' senses to extreme levels. Sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell become hypersensitive gifts that forever change the world. Despite tension and furious battles, will their boyhood bonds carry them through to embrace their fate? Brace yourself and get prepared for the twisting and grinding of this surreal, edge-of-your-seat, science-fiction, action-adventure thriller that awakens the possibilities within us all!

