

KEITH INTO KIMBERLEY

By Susan Hulbert



ILLUSTRATED BY MISTY MALVEAUX

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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KEITH INTO KIMBERLEY

By Susan Hulbert.

A Partnership is Formed.

Carole was a professional. She had been singing in the clubs for more years than she could care to remember. Not that she was old, she was not yet forty, it was just that she started young. She began when she was way under age, but with a combination of raw talent, and cosmetic skill, she managed over and over again to convince agents that she was old enough.

She had never quite made it big, and realized that now her chances were in the past, but still, the stage was in her blood and without it, she might as well give up now and apply for a place in the old folks home. She had sung in groups, she had fronted groups, and then managed and run groups of her own. Now the fashion was changing, and she had gone solo, firstly with lavishly produced backing tapes, but that seemed too artificial and lonely for her, so she changed direction and started to direct her considerably energies towards managing talent, and becoming an agent in her own right.

But it was still not enough ...she needed and wanted to be out there herself, just to feel the thrill of being in front of an audience. Being there was everything — and it was better than ever, now that she was able to throw away the tapes and employ her own accompanist, Keith. Yes, in this she knew she had been very fortunate.

Keith had come to audition with a 'no hope' girl singer, whom Carole had taken pity upon and given a couple of bookings. When the girl had failed to show up for the last of the shows, Keith had telephoned her, and Carole had gone out herself to sing.

Carole had done so for two reasons. Her agency was new and she could not afford to let down one of the few clubs who had been kind enough to take her services. But to be truthful, she was also glad for the opportunity to perform. ...And with Keith playing the piano and organ to accompany her, the actual performance had been a pleasure — her best in years.

It was not just that Keith was a good instrumentalist. It was more. Technically, he was competent — rather than inspired — but he seemed to have the knack of playing just how she wanted him to. He allowed her the space to perform to her best, and filled in with less than complex patterns, keeping the audience with him, rather than showing off a virtuosity that would deafen or bore them.

She never heard from the girl again, neither as far as she knew did Keith, but she kept him in employment thereafter. By day he worked in the agency with her, in between some teaching. At night, when she had an engagement, he would accompany her, otherwise he would sometimes share the evening with her, or go off on his own, following his ambition to write great, or at least popular songs which would allow him to indulge some of his more materialistic ambitions.

In this way, they supported each other. The relationship was loose and intermittent at first, but they soon realized that they were a good team. Thus the bookings became reasonably regular, and the venues settled into a routine of pleasant, clubs and restaurants.

Keith was younger than Carole, but dressed in an older style which seemed to match the role of a serious accompanist. He was slender, about five feet seven inches tall, and presented a reassuring presence on stage.

At one time they might have become lovers, but the moment passed. They both knew and accepted this reality.

Carole still hankered for the big break — not for herself now, but if she could break one of her artists in a big way then all her own ambitions would be sublimated and fulfilled.

She was still attractive. She stood five feet four inches tall in her bare feet, and was as slim and shapely as any twenty two year old. Her hair was streaked blonde, and fell over her shoulders when she wore it loose. She had always been excited by the latest look, and still was, so she constantly changed her image to be the most fashionable, and well made up lady in the business.

If Keith had great ambitions, on the other hand, he did not give them away. The music was the thing which kept him going, just to be able to play and earn sufficient for his needs seemed to be enough for now. He seemed content to let things just drift.

In this way, they spent almost eighteen months as a partnership, coming close to each other, but not so close as to be more than good friends. That this was to change was the result of a simple coincidence.

* * *

It was approaching Christmas, and was 'pantomime' time. Carole hated the season, and avoided getting herself involved in anything too vulgar. It was not that she was aloof — far from it — but she was afraid of the spontaneity of it all. She was not equipped to react to comedy situations on stage, preferring to stick to a script. With great reluctance, although she did not let her clients know, she agreed to appear at a charity show, 'to do something different', before telling Keith anything about it.

To say Keith was less than enthusiastic was an understatement. He clearly disliked any disruption of their routine, and was downright obstructive when it came to making suggestions as to their act. So as the day drew near, they were no further with their preparations that they had been on the day she announced the booking.

"Right, that's it," said Carole in exasperation, "I've had it, you can be me and make the decisions, I'll be you and just sit back, and let it all happen around me."

She threw down the sheaf of music on the table, and walked out of the rehearsal rooms into her office, leaving Keith in stunned silence at the piano.

As she struggled to calm herself, she heard him playing a few bars of 'Lady be Good' as if to chide her. And that was the exact moment when the idea came to her.

"Keith, I've got it!" she exclaimed, returning to the rehearsal room. "Nothing fancy at all, you'll be me, and I'll be you. You'll be me, at the piano that is, and I'll be you, but singing as usual. Don't you see? We'll dress up as each other. It'll be a novelty ...something they don't expect from us. It'll work, trust me." Carole laughed. *It seemed so simple.*

Keith looked at her, slowly allowing himself to smile.

"All right," he sighed, "let's try it — it'll get us out of this obligation anyway."

And so it was agreed. It seemed so simple and easy, *no problems in just dressing up.*

Changing Partners.

Carole set about making the arrangements. Keith was a different size, was taller and did not curve in the right places, but Carole insisted that they prepare thoroughly. And when Keith finally got into the spirit of things, he joined in quite happily, and they spent some hours together working out how they should look to the audience, making sure that they did it right.

Carole's costume was not much trouble at all. A dinner suit was rented from the theatrical costumers, and with little alteration was suitable. She purchased some items easily. Shirt, tie, shoes were all easy, and the look was soon complete. Keith had to admit she looked as like him as it was possible for her to do. It was easy, he pointed out, because her curves were hidden under the loose fitting suit.

Keith's costume was much more problematic. Carole did not want to have too many try outs, she knew his patience was limited, and so she set about accumulating everything before even asking him to come to a dress rehearsal.

She went shopping and bought everything new. As the idea had crystallized in her mind, she determined that this performance was going to be right. More than that, Keith was going to be as perfect, and as feminine, as she could make him.

The more Carole thought about it, the more she liked the idea. Nothing was left to improvisation, absolutely everything had to be there, ready for the big occasion.

She bought quality too — the most feminine materials — the most lacy designs. As she got more involved with the preparations, she was more and more taken with the idea, and more determined that it was going to be good, very good, not tacky or crass. Keith had become such a close friend in the past months ...he was *almost* like a girlfriend, anyway.

Carole often thought how wonderful it would be to have a close girlfriend, and this subtly affected the decisions she was making, although she hardly realized it at the time. In truth, Carole was becoming more fascinated with the idea of taking Keith and turning him into something else — a creature of *her* making: *Not* Keith, yet still the essence of him, not male, but transformed. The essence of Keith, yet *female*, not just in appearance for one night, but feminine in every respect. She was going to turn him into an attractive woman. She *knew* that. And Keith was not going to be consulted. He was going to have no choice but to go along with her decision. And so she set about

her arrangements for him. Nothing was to be left to chance. Once she got him to be female for this performance, he was never going to be allowed to be male again. Not ever.

Then the day before the show arrived. They both knew the music and the songs, that was easy, they had done them many times before. Carole dressed for the part, and presented herself to Keith for approval. She wore only light makeup for the stage, to darken her complexion into a more manly hue. She walked and turned, wearing the shirt, tie and suit rented for the occasion. Keith approved with a laugh.

"Quite the lounge lizard appearance then," he joked as she put on a masculine walk to impress him.

"Now it's your turn," Carole giggled. "I'll just get out of these clothes so that I don't mess anything up. You get undressed quickly, and we'll see how you look. It had better be good, I've spent all week designing your new look."

Keith muttered something under his breath as he complied. Carole took this for reluctance, but good-humored reluctance, and she wanted his good humor. The idea of dressing him up was getting to be more exciting for her as it approached. Still, she dare not show too much enthusiasm — not *yet*. There was a long way to go, and he had little idea of just what was in store for him.

Dressed in a robe, she quickly checked through the clothing she had accumulated. She did not intend to do anything more than see how it fitted today. The full transformation would only be done on the day of the performance, so that he would not have time to object. All that she wanted today, was to get him used to the idea of wearing the clothes.

Carole wanted to give him some shoes with a higher heel to practice upon as well. He was going to get some stilettos with a four inch heel on the day, but for now she contented herself with getting him to try some lower ones, 'just to get the feel of them.' The rest that went with the clothes would only be introduced on the big day.

She heard a cough and turned to find Keith standing behind her, dressed only in a robe similar to hers. He looked vulnerable like that, ...and so trusting, she thought. He did not know what was coming.

"Right, lets get started then," she said, "You'll have to bear with me, this is just a first attempt."

As she said it, she knew exactly what she was going to do on the next day. She knew she had left nothing to chance. Keith's remaining days as a male were now down to single figures.

She eyed him up and down, making a final calculation. She had got all the sizes right and knew the clothes would fit. She had bought all the cosmetics she would need, even down to a new perfume. She had false eyelashes for top and bottom lids. She had arranged a nail technician to come and fix acrylic nails — permanent acrylic nails in an extravagant length and dark crimson color. And she had arranged for the wig rental people to deliver three extravagant wigs so that she could make the final choice when everything else was done, and he was dressed ready for that final item to be completed. Then Keith would be female forever, *whatever* he thought.

She struggled to hide the excitement in her voice as she handed him a pair of black panties, high cut on the leg, with laced edges. As he stooped to put them on, she realized that she had never seen him *naked* before, and marveled at the boldness of her intentions. Deftly, she fastened a suspender belt around his waist and sat him down as she gathered black stockings in her hand and then unrolled them over his legs. This done, she got him to stand while she fastened them to the dangling suspenders.

She turned, hardly daring to look at him. She feared that at any moment he may object, halting her experiment before she had full time to enjoy it, but no protest came yet. She lifted a black brassiere from its packaging and held it out to him. Obediently, Keith reached out his arms and allowed her to slip it over them, and then walk behind him to fasten it at the back. Quickly, she placed breast forms into the cups and turned to face him, her cheeks burning with excitement.

Keith offered no resistance. He could sense that she was charged with excitement as the rehearsal progressed and he did not want to spoil it for her and allowed himself to be inspected at this stage. He watched as Carole removed a black dress of a silky material from its hangar, and moved round as she held the skirt open for him to step into.

He stood still as she pulled it up, and over his arms. It felt cool and quite unlike anything he had experienced before. It was not as bad as he expected it to be, and when she had fastened the zipper, he turned to look in the mirror.

Keith saw himself looking back over his shoulder at a different person in the mirror. The clothes seemed to have changed something more about him than just the superficial. He had no time to think about this before Carole was asking him to sit on the desk as she held out the shoes for him. They were different from any he had worn before, black and high heeled. Keith thought they would be quite dangerous, but then he remembered Carole wore high heels as she sang with him. If she could balance on them, then so could he. After all, there was nothing too difficult about it - was there?

The shoes fitted, he stood and again turned to the mirror. Now he could see so many things were different about his stance, his posture, even the way he held his head. Carole allowed him little time to take this in, before she took the clothes off him. She had seen enough and did not want to spoil the full effect which she had planned for the day of the show. The less he knew about that at this stage, the better.

Quickly, she undressed him, and returned everything to its packaging, chattering about everything but the day itself as she did so. She arranged that they would meet at two in the afternoon before the show, so that they would be dressed, and made-up in time. If Keith thought this early, he did not say so.

Keith undressed and excused himself, muttering something about the piano. He walked to the instrument and sat, idly allowing his fingers to wander over the keys as he thought. He had not expected to have feelings of excitement at this stage. In fact, he had been dreading the exhibition he would be making of himself. But now his emotions seemed to be changing. He was excited at the prospect of being female, even if it was only for the one performance. It would be *different*. He found he had really enjoyed being dressed-up, and was looking forward to the makeup, the wig, and everything else which went with being female.