

WOLF MOON

Bud Simpson

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WOLF MOON

A NOVEL



By Bud Simpson

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Bud Simpson

This book is dedicated to my loving and much loved
wife, Margo Elizabeth Simpson (1936-2022)
and to my daughter, Denise Marie Simpson who
has always been a helpmate and loving daughter.

Also, once more, to that little Werewolf named Lupita,
"Little Lupe", whom I met at the old Los Angeles Zoo.
I certainly hope she is still communicating

Whether you're a Vampire or a Werewolf,
love is still love. Betrayal is still betrayal.

Nathan Parsons

I was a wolf . . . and she, my moon.

Moon in Love

A Werewolf is a wolf to the eye.
A true thing of nature.
It is the human within
that can make it evil.

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INTRODUCTION: WOLF MOON

THE YOUNG WOMAN stared intently out the back window as the morning mists wafted slowly across the back meadow. Her name was Celene Faolan (Fwail-awn). Her mother had wanted to anglicize the surname, Faolan, to Phalon or Fallon, but Celene wouldn't hear of it.

It irked her a bit to have to tell everyone who saw it written how to pronounce it. But her love for her dead father prevented that from happening. She felt it would dishonor his memory.

Celene was not what you would call a real beauty or even pretty. She wasn't *homely* or *ugly*, nothing that drastic. She was ... well, a "striking" woman. She had what you might call an "interesting" face. It was well proportioned. Her eyes were so dark that you couldn't tell if they were brown or black. But, when she looked at you, you knew you had been looked at. They missed nothing about you. Those eyes could make some people a bit nervous. She had a sharp, intuitive mind that stored those details away as if taken with a camera.

She had an almost uncanny talent. She could "read people" as if they were one of her books. She could tell very quickly if you were honest or a crook, dangerous or benign, sick, or well. It scared her sometimes, but a few times it had saved someone's life.

At thirty years of age, she had salt and pepper hair, and that seemed to make people take her seriously. More so than if she had been a redhead or blond. She had thought once that she was beginning to turn gray, but it had never progressed beyond the stage it was now. She liked it.

Even without fantastic looks, she would draw your attention. She was rather tall, five feet eleven inches in height, and slender in build and weighed in at about a hundred and sixty pounds or so. What caught your attention more than anything, was her smile. When it beamed on you, it was

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magical, she turned into a true beauty before your very eyes.

She had an athletic look about her and moved as a dancer might. Some said she almost glided around. And coming with that grace was her intelligence. Her mother had informed her that her *mind* was her greatest asset, not her ample bosom. "Keep it sharp and well honed, and it will carry you through life with the least problems, young lady."

She did just that. Not because her mother told her to, but because, she loved the written word and what an intelligent person could craft from them.

She had a bachelor's degree from the University of Maine in Library Science and topped it off with a Master of Science Degree in Information from the University of Michigan. She honed the knowledge gained from these two accomplishments with the sharp edges of spoken and written words.

She had never married, not because no one had ever pursued her, but because most men bored her. She liked men but had never been drawn to any particular one. Most men were fun to be around she thought, but dogs were fun to be around too. However, she had never taken either one home with her. Both were, to *her* at least, a responsibility she could do without. She liked being free and not bound to people, animals, or the earth.

She could do, or pursue, any adventure she wanted to take on. She wasn't exactly an outdoorswoman, but she liked outdoor activities such as running, hunting, fishing, and canoeing. She was, also, an avid reader of many subjects, and wrote poetry or articles for magazines and other publications. If something gained her interest, she read on that subject as if it were a university course.

She didn't seek adventure but didn't shy from it. To her, life itself was an adventure, if you are in love with life as she was. She knew that life was a gift, and she wasn't about to look it in the mouth. She lived it on her own terms as much as was possible. Her mother had died at the young age of forty-

two from a cancer. That told her that life should not be wasted on trivialities. Her personal motto was this: 'The past is gone forever. The present is so fleeting, it barely exists. The moment you perceive anything, it is already in the past., and an unknown future is all you have left in your living life.

Even though she was somewhat suspicious of the future, she didn't know, at that time, what an unbelievable future was awaiting her beyond the morning mists she was admiring from her kitchen window.

It would start in two hours at the library where she worked in Barton, Maine.

February 2, 2024
Groundhog Day

CHAPTER 1

CELENE BEGAN HER morning as she usually did. After she woke up and had lain awake in bed for about ten minutes, thinking and getting in some mental "Me" time, she would arise and do a few stretch exercises.

Then, into her running clothes, out the front door, and five miles later, back to the house. The first two-and-a-half miles, she ran as fast as she was able to. On the last mile back, she slowed down to about half speed, jogging the rest of the way home except for the last few hundred yards. She walked to her door.

For all that distance, her mind was in gear to the point that sometimes she might miss one of her "mile markers", such as the gas station at the one-mile mark; the ice cream parlor at the two-mile mark; but never the intersection of Pine Road, at the two-and-a-half-mile mark where she turned and headed back.

There were always people who yelled good morning to her or just waved a friendly hand. Those five miles made her feel alive and ready for the rest of the day.

After she arrived home, she did a few more light stretches and headed to the shower for a nice long hot to cold shower. Now she was ready to prepare her breakfast and get ready for a day at the library.

She loved her job. A librarian must love their work, because there is no librarian on earth who ever got rich because of their job. She earned extra money with her poetry, which didn't pay much, either. Sometimes she sold a short piece to a magazine or newspaper.

But she didn't care. Her job and the small amount of writing she did, she considered pleasure, not work. Words were her true love.

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She never cared about her former schoolmates having high paying jobs and putting in fifty plus hours a week behind a desk and ruled over by a demanding boss. Those really were jobs. No true pleasure for them!

After she had devoured a breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon, toast, and tea, she eagerly left the house and walked ten blocks to the library.

Even after a workday, she sometimes felt a bit sad that she had to leave this world of words and head for home.

She had been behind her desk for only fifteen minutes when her phone rang. She picked it up and said, "Barton Public Library. This is Celene. How may I help you?"

"Hello, Celene. This is Peter Lukas. I was asked to give a few copies of my book to you to put in your stacks. When would be a good time for that?"

"Any time at all, Mr. Lukas. I can always fit a famous author into my very busy schedule."

She heard him laugh and then he said, "In that case, I'll be right over. Thanks for fitting me in, Celene. I appreciate it."

"Okay, Pete. I'll be here for certain. Thanks. See you."

She hung up and smiled. She had met Pete several times and liked him. Always pleasant, always courteous, and fun to converse with. His fame hadn't gone to his head. He was still just another ordinary human being on planet earth. She hoped he would stay that way if his success continued.

She was in the stacks putting books away when he arrived. She yelled, "I'll be out in a few minutes, Pete. Grab a chair by the desk."

Pete walked over to the desk and sat down. He put a box with books in it on her desk. He turned to her as she walked across the room. He returned her smile as she sat down.

"My God, Pete. All we needed were a couple of copies. How many are in that box?"

"I put six in it. I've signed them all except two. You can sell the others at your annual fundraiser if you want."

"That's wonderful, Pete. You are so thoughtful. How's your gal Lupe doing?"

"Running my life, as usual. It's always good to have a woman at the helm, you know. It lets me have a lot of time to write. She's a wonderful woman. I'm so happy to have her in my life."

Celene laughed. "At least you know that, Pete. Some guys get a woman, so they don't have to cook, wash dishes and do the laundry."

"Oh no! Not me! She'd beat me severely about the head and shoulders if I tried pulling that on her. We share the full load of everything. Sometimes it's about 60-40 hers and at other times it might be that my way. Especially when I'm writing."

Celene looked him up and down with her piercing, dark eyes. A strange sensation went through her body. There was something about Pete that made her think.

Pete noticed her stare, even if it only lasted a few seconds. He was about to ask her about it but thought better of it. He had a feeling that she might not appreciate any humor at that moment.

He didn't have to ask. She tented her fingertips, put her elbows on the desk, stared at him again, and said, "Forgive me, but I don't think you are just an ordinary guy, Pete."

"Darn! I thought I had fooled you. Celene. Actually, I hate housework. I try to get out of it whenever I can. Lupe lets me get away with it, though. I think she kinda likes me."

Celene leaned back and smiled. "I think Lupe loves you to death, Pete. And I think it's the same with you towards her. That's not what I meant. Believe me or not, I can see auras over some people. Not just anyone, but special people."

"There is something I can see about you. It's totally different with you. I've never seen it before. You must be special, Pete."

Pete tried to play it down with his usual humor. "Of course I'm special! I'm a handsome, successful writer. I'll bet

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old Steve King has an aura you can see for miles. In the winter, he probably looks like the northern lights are shining from his dome."

She laughed heartily. "You don't take too much seriously, do you?"

"Only my writing. I consider it a gift and treat it with care. I wouldn't want to sprain my forefinger and not be able to type anymore."

"I'm sorry if I embarrassed you or anything, Pete. But I just had the urge to tell you that."

"No problem, Celene. Oh, do you have a copy of my book? If you want one, I'll sign one of these to you."

"I've read it, but I don't own a copy of it. I'd be proud to have an autographed copy from you. I'd treasure it."

Pete reached into the box and pulled one out. "Okay! No sooner said than done."

He opened the book and wrote in it, then handed it to her. She looked inside at his writing and smiled. "*From one wordsmith to another, happy writing, Celene. Peter Lukas. May your light shine as bright as your smile one day.*"

"Thank you, Pete. That's lovely. As I said, I'll treasure this."

"Whether you know it or not, Celene, you *are* a treasure, too. I can see something special in you also. I wish I could see your aura, but I'm not gifted in that direction. By the way, what color is my aura?"

She hesitated, wondering if Steve was making fun of her, but she saw the serious look on his face and answered truthfully. "Yours runs the entire length of the spectrum. It changes as I watch it. I can't see it all the time, but it's there."

"Can you see your own aura?"

"Sometimes in my peripheral vision I can catch it. It's usually a faint gold in color."

Pete smiled. "Aha! See? I told you that you're special!"

CHAPTER 2

"WHAT A FACINATING woman!" he said to Lupe. Have you ever sensed anything different about her?"

"Yes, I have. I thought it was only me, but you saw it, too. Do I have anything to worry about, Pete?"

Pete laughed. "No way, Jose! Excuse my French. I'm bonded to you like with Gorilla Glue. There's no one on earth I'd trade you in on. You and I are a special couple. And so are our close friends in Montana. There's no one on earth like us, is there?"

"Hey, Lukas, baby! That was Spanish. At least, one word of it was. As far as we know there isn't. Would you like to find anyone else like us?"

"I'm not sure. What if they were all like our benefactor, Roman? That would be scary, wouldn't it?"

"Aye yai yai! Gracias, no! Don't even think about it!"

"Okay. It's out of my mind. We were talking about people's auras. She had given me a sort of once over with her beautiful, dark eyes, and said that my aura went the length of the spectrum."

Lupe frowned. "With her 'beautiful, dark eyes' you say? Are you sure I don't have anything to worry about?"

"Ha! Gotcha! I just wanted to be sure you were paying attention, Lupe. Can *you* see auras around people?"

"Only when I'm drunk as a skunk on tequila. Then, I see auras around everything. Including my glass."

"Do you like Celene?"

"Yeah, I do. There's something about her that I can't figure out. But I like her no-bullshit attitude. I think she's a very honest person. If her boobs were a little smaller, I'd probably like her better, though."

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"Really? I never noticed. Next time I see her, I'll check them out." "Ha!" said Lupe. "You do and you die! Don't get her pissed off. I think she could take you."

"You might be right. She's in great shape. I see her running sometimes. She's good at that. Next time I see her while I'm out there running, I might check her out. You know, see what color her aura is."

The newspaper hit Pete on his forehead. He laughed as Lupe said, "Check *her* out, and you might be checking yourself out, little guy."

"Hey! I'm as tall as she is. We might be evenly matched. You never know."

"It's not her you have to worry about, big guy. I'm only five two and I think I could take you."

"Yeah, maybe. But you wouldn't fight fair."

"Ha! They say that all's fair in love and war. I'd have *both* of them going for me. You wouldn't stand a chance, mister."

Pete smiled and winked at her. He pointed at the bedroom door. "I challenge you to a no-holds-barred wrestling match. That's one we *both* could win, Little Lupe."

CHAPTER 3

"HEY, PETE! ALF just called. He wonders if you might be able to take some time off from, as he called it, 'friggin' around with your damn typewriter' and take them up to Chesuncook Lake and do some trout fishing. He's got that detective from Los Angeles, Chuck Goodwin, with him. You got time?" asked Lupe.

"They lucked out. I've got some research to do on this thing I'm writing. I might be able to squeeze them into my busy schedule. When do they want to come?"

"If it's a go, they'll be here in two weeks. Okay?"

"Yep. Call Alf and tell him to come over."

"Come on over? In case you didn't know, he lives in Montana, and we live in Maine."

"Oh, *now* you tell me. He got here so quickly the last time; I thought he lived in Portland."

Lupe connected with Alf and a few minutes later said, "Alf wants to talk to you."

She handed her phone to Pete. "Hey, Alf. Getting tired of the Big Sky Country?"

"Nope. Never will.. It's just that Chuck took me up on that invite we extended to him the last time you were out here. Remember?"

"Yup, sure do. Did you happen to think of scheduling him here when there's no full moon happening? It would be embarrassing for you and would scare hell out of him if you turned into a wolf while paddling around on the lake."

"Oh, yeah! I thought of that. The full moon will be come and gone before we get there. So, is it okay then?"

"Sure is. We owe him so bring him over. I'm sure he'll think he's still in Montana and will think the sky is still pretty big here in the north country. It'll be good to see him again."

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"Okay, Pete. You and Little Lupe take care, now. See you in a couple of weeks."

Pete disconnected and handed the phone back to Lupe.

"It'll be good to see Chuck again when there's no official business bugging us. I hope we can put him onto some good fishing. It would be really embarrassing if he didn't catch a thing."

Lupe asked, "Is Louis coming with him?"

"No. He said that Louis and Fredi went to Hawaii last week. They won't be back for a month. It's just Alf and Chuck."

"Why don't you give Johnny Reagan a call? I think he knows that country. He might be able to show you around."

"Not a bad idea at all," replied Pete. "I haven't seen him for quite a while. We owe him, too. Might be a way to pay him back. Will you give him a call, too, my little Sweetheart?"

"Don't you know how to use a phone anymore? I know I'm your unofficial secretary, but if this keeps up, I'm gonna ask for a raise."

"From who ... or is that 'whom'? I can never remember."

"Okay, famous writer, I'll see if Alf will give me one. I've always wanted a villa on the French Riviera."

"Yeah! Good idea. I hear all the women go topless on the beaches over there. Look into that for me, too, will ya?"

"I give up! Johnny it is."

She got his number and entered it. It was picked up after the first ring. "Johnny Reagan here. Who can I find for you?"

Johnny Reagan was now in the private eye business after leaving the Barton Police Force. "Well, Johnny, I'm looking for a raise from my cheap husband. Can you help me with that?"

Johnny laughed. "How much is he paying you right now?"

"Not a thing. Nada. Zip."

"Okay, then. I can offer you a paying job right here it pays a dollar an hour more than minimum wage. How does that strike you?"

"Ha! I don't want to be a secretary with benefits though. Pete might not let me take the job."

"Nothing like that, Oh Gorgeous One. But, since there are no more secretaries in the world, except in government, I'll have to offer you a job as executive assistant. Of course, then I'd need the benefits. How's that sound."

Lupe laughed. "You're beginning to sound like my significant other. The reason I called is that Alf and that detective friend are going up to Chesuncook Lake fishing in a couple of weeks. Pete will be going with them. How would you like to be a fourth member of that expedition?"

"My God! You are a mind reader! I've been thinking of taking a week or two off and doing some fishing. Count me in. Let me look at my busy schedule to see if it's possible. There! Okay, it's possible."

"You're a fast looker, Johnny. Okay, young fella. I'll tell him it's on. He'll be happy. Look ... do me a favor. When you all get into that inevitable poker game, take it easy on Pete. You know what a lousy player he is."

"Yes, I do. But I'm disappointed. He's the only reason we'd be playing poker. It's the way we finance the trips."

"Don't worry about that, you nut. This will all be on Alf. He's a quadrillionaire, you know. Maybe more. Is there anything called a quintillionaire? He may have that much money."

"I know he's got money, but I don't care. All I'll want is filet mignon for breakfast each day. But I'll settle for sausage patties."

She laughed and said, "I'll pass that info along. They'll probably all meet here. See you then. Take care and don't get lost on the way here."

"Thanks for including me in the group. I know it's gonna be a lot of fun. See ya!"

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She hung up and looked at Pete. "It's all set, Lover Boy. They'll all be here right on schedule."

Pete walked over and squeezed her in a bear hug. He looked into her eyes and said, "You are one hell of a secretary, Lover Girl."

"Alf said there are no longer any secretaries. Only executive assistants. Do I get that raise now?"

CHAPTER 4

THE TWO WEEKS had dragged for Pete. He was anxious to get to Chesuncook. It had been over a year since his last visit there. Not that long since he had seen his friends, but with them being so far away, he truly missed them. Lupe felt the same way.

The first day they arrived, Lupe had a catered dinner ready for them that evening. On an impulse, Pete had invited Celene to join them. He felt that his friends were very interesting people, outside of their similarities, and she might enjoy their company.

Lupe had a slightly different reason for Celene being there. She felt that Alf might enjoy her company. She had sensed that Celene, so different from all their other so-called *normal* friends, might be a good fit for this group, despite their Lupine differences.

After all, their closer friends were still their friends even though none of them had an inkling of knowledge about what they really were. Besides, she liked Celene, *because* of her differences.

She had never thought of Celene as a loner, but rather, as a discriminating person, as far as friends went. She felt a sort of kinship with her. Lupe couldn't stand phony people, either.

Celene was running a little late. She had wanted to look her best for Pete's friends and had spent too much time staring at her face in the mirror, something she didn't normally do.

She had driven her car over and was now sitting in it in their driveway. She felt a little bit of trepidation now that she was here. She gave herself an inner pep talk and then got out of the car. As she walked to the house, she felt a sudden warmth

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filling her body. *That's strange* she thought. She was now almost in a hurry to get inside. All her unease had left her. She felt her self-confidence coming back. What had happened? Why had it happened?

She rang the bell and heard the guests quiet down a little at the sound. Lupe opened the door, looked up and held her arms out to Celene. Celene stooped a tiny bit and gave Lupe a firm hug.

"I'm so glad you were able to come, Celene. Get in here and I'll introduce you to everyone."

"Thank you, Lupe. It was so nice of you to invite me."

"Ha! Not nice of me at all." She spoke louder now and continued, "I just wanted to raise the I.Q. Level in this room, that's all."

Celene looked about and her eyes landed on Alf. A sudden strangeness came over her. *What a handsome man*, she thought.

Alf was three inches taller than Celene and was wearing dark clothes, sort of western in flavor. He had longer than usual black hair that came to his shoulders with a mustache and goatee to accompany them.

He had a confident, cool air about him, that matched Celene's. She couldn't take her eyes off him. Lupe noticed this and smiled.

"I see you've met Alf already. Come on. I'll do the real honors."

As they walked around the room, Lupe introduced her to all, deliberately leaving Alf for the last. Celene shook hands with Chuck Goodwin and with Johnny Reagan.

"Johnny, we've never met but I've read of some of your exploits." she said. "Your life is a little bit more exciting than mine, I'm afraid."

"Not anymore. I'm more careful about who I take on as clients nowadays. Don't sell yourself short. I have a hunch that you have a sense of adventure in you, also."

She smiled at him and said, "A sense, only. I don't know how I'd handle a real adventure. Reading or writing about them is as far as I've gone so far."

"I'm glad you said, 'so far.' That leaves you open for something a bit stronger. I think you might be able to handle yourself in an emergency."

"Maybe I'll find out some day. I hope you're correct."

Lupe led her to where Alf was standing. "Alf, this is Celene Faolan. She's a strong Irish lady and vice-president of all the books in town. She's our librarian."

Celene felt the world slowing down as she took Alf's hand in hers for a handshake. You would call them 'vibes' but to Celene, it seemed a cosmic happening. She was unable to respond to his saying the simple sentence, "I'm pleased to meet you, Celene."

She just nodded to him as Lupe walked away. Alf looked down at her and said, "Maybe we could go over and sit on the couch, Celene. I'm a bit tired after that flight from Montana. Shall we?"

Celene nodded again and he took her arm and they walked to the couch. They sat down together. Not too close, but not too far apart, either.

Celene took a deep breath and eased it out. She looked up at him and almost whispered the words, "What just happened, Alf? Could you feel it?"

Alf looked down into her dark eyes and said, "I don't know what it was, Celene, but it was wondrous."

She nodded once more and said, "Indeed it was. Indeed, it was."

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CHAPTER 5

THEY FINALLY WERE able to feel somewhat normal again, and their conversation appeared, to the rest of the guests, as ordinary. It was filled with laughter and smiles, and they acted as if they had been friends all their lives.

Lupe had, surreptitiously, observed them all evening long. At first, she was gladdened by their behavior. She could tell they were smitten with each other, but was that good? After all, Alf was something that most of an unknowing world feared, a Werewolf.

She walked over to Pete and said, "Pete? Can we have a private conversation for a moment, please?"

She took his arm and steered him out onto the front porch. Pete said, "Is this about Celene and Alf?"

"You noticed them too, didn't you?"

"Noticed them? Lupe, I could positively feel their emotions. How about you?"

"Yeah, I could." She paused for a moment and added, "I wanted her here tonight because I thought Alf might like her. You know, maybe become pen pals, or something. But I think he was struck by a lightning bolt instead. Did I do the right thing, Pete? It worries me now. What problems have I created?"

Pete laughed. "That's funny! Remember a couple of weeks ago and you and me joking about her and me? In the back of my mind, I had the same idea. I thought, if she were a Werewolf, they'd make a perfect couple"

"What do you mean, joking? I was dead serious, Wolf man." She giggled and said, "I'm joking now, Pete. I know that we would never do something like that. I mean, you and her. But, now with her and Alf, I have very serious doubts that I did the right thing."

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"Look. Alf is a very intelligent guy. What if he had run into her without your help. Would we be having this talk? No, we wouldn't. I know how lonely Alf is at times. I can feel it. Our best course of action is to leave it be. Let Fearless Leader Alf handle this. We'll put our two-cents worth in if he asks us. Then we can be totally honest with ourselves ... and him. He wouldn't want us to sugarcoat our opinions."

"I know you're right, Pete. But I'm thinking of Celene, too. If this becomes more serious than this, how is Alf going to explain anything at all to her? How do you explain the totally impossible to a very intelligent person? Especially, a very intelligent woman?"

"You had to get that sexist statement in, didn't you?"

"It's not sexist, Fearless Wolf Man. It's just the truth."

Pete laughed and shook his head. "I totally agree with you, Little Wolf Girl. Now I'm ready for some after-dinner snacks and a beer or two. How about you.?"

"You really know the way to a Wolf Girl's heart, Pete. I'm with you on that. Let's go back in before they come looking for us."

They walked back in casually, as if all were well. And who was to say it wasn't? The two thunderstruck people were up and eating again and talking to Chuck. It looked as if they had regained their equilibrium.

Lupe thought, for a moment anyway, that all her concerns were unjustified. Johnny was sitting back in his chair sipping a beer, munching on pretzels, and watching the news on TV. He had it turned down low, though.

Lupe walked over to Celene and casually asked, "What do you think. Celene? Are these guys interesting or not?"

Celene seemed to be playing it cool, hoping no one had seen her reaction to Alf. "They're all interesting people, Lupe. You're lucky to have these guys in your circle of friends. Not a dull knife in the crowd."

Lupe giggled. "That's a great way to put it, Celene. They really are a sharp group. And each one is a true

individual. Different personalities, different interests, and different occupations but they still meld. It's great for me to have them as friends."

Celene hesitated but asked the question anyway. "How do I fit in here, Lupe? Would I meld, too?"

"You already have, Celene. It's as if you were always here. We all like you as a good, intelligent person, plus, you are your own individual, too. I can't imagine anyone making you do something you wouldn't ordinarily do. You're one of a kind, Kid! Consider yourself melded."

Celene fought back a tear at hearing this appraisal of herself. "Thank you, Little Lupe. Can I call you that? I felt right at home the moment I walked through that front door. Before that moment, I wasn't sure what to expect. Thank you, again."

"Good!" said Lupe. "Little Lupe it is. Does that mean you'll be dropping in at times for coffee or tea?"

"I don't usually 'drop in' on people. I like to warn them first. But that would be nice."

"You don't have to warn me. A knock on the door is okay with me. As long as you're not trying to sell me insurance or something."

"Oh darn! No insurance, but I do have this little bridge in Brooklyn that just came on the market, if you're interested."

Lupe giggled. "See? I knew you'd fit right in."

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