

## Author Interview



Willa Okati is made of many things: imagination, passion for manlove, creativity and a lifelong love of storytelling. Quirky and quixotic, she's rather pleased to have the new astrological sign of [Ophiuchus](#). It seems somehow validating.

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[http://groups.google.com/group/lovers\\_and\\_dreamers](http://groups.google.com/group/lovers_and_dreamers)

The Writer:

1) What is the best thing about being a writer? The worst?

The best thing? Freedom! Being able to let these crazy ideas and stories from the heart fall into place on the page. Being able to lose myself for hours on end in the world that I'm making. Being able to stare out the window and truthfully tell anyone who asks that I'm actually working.

And being able to go to work in my PJ's isn't half bad either.

The worst? Neuroses. I think a great many creative people tend to drive themselves a little battier than others. If I'm not careful to balance my writing life with some other focuses, I'll start to mumble to myself while developing a thousand-yard-stare, and then there's no help for it but the judicious use of a straitjacket. Or a flamethrower.

2) What is your method of breaking through writer's block?

"Never, never, never give up."

3) Do you bring your own life experiences to your writing? Your own personality? If so how?

I think everyone has a core story that reflects their life experiences. Whether or not that comes out in what they write is also individual. My stories seem to be equally split between nutbar comedy and hero/rescue pairings. I'm not entirely sure what that says about me. Possibly that I imprinted on Remy Zero as a teenager.

4) What fuels you as an author to continue to write?

I've been telling stories since I was too young to write them down. Being able to do this for a living -- even if it's a slender living -- is a dream come true.

5) Can you tell us a bit about what book(s) you have coming out next and what you're working on now?

I've got a novella coming soon from Changeling -- "Black Swan". It's the story of a black swan shifter who lost his wings and the tattoo artist who helps him create a new pair of sorts.

<http://changelingpress.com/product.php?&upt=book&ubid=1551>

I'm also working on a few projects for Loose Id but those are under wraps as yet.

### The Person:

1) Which season do you prefer? Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter?

Winter, absolutely. I'm a shameless enthusiast of fireplaces and flannel sheets and fluffy blankets, candles and cider and watching snow fall.

2) What is your favorite Holiday?

Festivus.

3) Do you like Comedy, Drama, Romance, Foreign Language, Indie or Mystery movies?

All of the above -- but in a photo finish, comedy and romance would likely win by a hair.

4) When you get a chance to read, what books do you love to read?

Depends on what kind of mood I'm in, really. I have a little bit of everything on the shelves. Right now I'm reading [Mark del Franco's "Unperfect Souls"](#).

5) What bores you as a reader?

I'm a firm believer in every book having its time. I've grown bored with some books in the middle, put them back on the shelf, and come back to them a couple years later to

discover they're fantastic. Or I put them back and come back a year after that. Every book has its time. That time just has to match up with my mood.

6) What is your favorite food and what is your guilty pleasure food?

Favorite food is... hmm... sushi. Favorite guilty pleasure, peanut butter and honey on a bagel. Guiltiest of all guilty pleasures: raw cookie dough, health warnings be (temporarily) damned.

7) If you could go anywhere on a vacation where would you go?

London. I spent three days there on a high school tour. I won't date myself by saying how long ago that was, but suffice it to say it's over half my life. And I still want to go back as much as I did the day I left. In the lower 48, I'd like to visit Seattle, Portland, Denver, NYC and Chicago. I like "wandering" vacations where I can poke about and wander a city at leisure.

8) What is your favorite feature on a person?

Hands. They say that the eyes are the window to the soul, but I think that the clearer picture lies in a person's hands. Are they soft and smooth, or scarred? Plump or lean? Thick-knuckled or slender?

9) Do you have a secret talent?

I am a cat whisperer.

(Not really.)

10) What is your favorite time of day?

When the first sip of coffee passes my lips after a good night's sleep.

11) What do you think is romantic? What does the word Romance mean to you?

To me, romantic means cozy. Lazing away a day in bed with someone you love. It also means intimate. Swimming naked at night with no one else around. Whispering a secret. And it means work. Whether that's building a house or a home, or repairing a truck or vacuuming up his muddy boot prints, the willingness to get hands-on is very romantic in my eyes.

12) What type of music gets you dancing?

Jazz, swing, or techno.

13) Who would you go out on a date with if you could?

Oof, there's a tough question. I'd say John Barrowman and Neil Patrick Harris and Jane Lynch if they weren't already happy with partners of their own. I think the real person I'd want to go out on a date with is someone I'll meet soon. That'd be lovely for the New Year.

14) You're having a dinner party, what five people would you invite?

Oh gosh, who wouldn't I? Let's say Amanda Palmer, Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, Josh Holloway and Sendhil Ramamurthy. I'd be in aural heaven with bonus wittiness.

Random Questions:

1) Aliens have landed on the planet. What are the three things you would tell them that are great about this planet?

The persistence of the human spirit. The eternal mystery that is the feline mind. The unexplored depths of the ocean.

If I were allowed a fourth thing, I would have to tell them about Tim Tams.

2) If you could create your own drink what would go in it and what would you call it?

Coffee. (If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Though I have tried and do love espresso martinis.)

3) You have been locked in a mall and told you can get anything you want and when they open in the morning you won't have to pay a single cent. What stores would you hit? Better question how would you haul away all your loot?

I'd want to hit the coffee, candle and tech stores...but I'd probably take as much as I could from the jewelry stores, stuffed into the pockets of a pair of M.C. Hammer-esque cargo pants. Then I'd sell the sparklers and enjoy little indulgences and small whims for years to come.

4) If your life were turned into a cartoon, what cartoon character would you want playing you?

I think the only one who could would be Daria.

5) If you were a pirate what would your booty consist of? What would your pirate name be?

I've already got quite a lot of junk in my trunk...

6) Okay I have to include a crazy question so here goes: He-Man, GI- Joe, The

Thundercats, The Transformers and Jem are all in a battle to decide who is the best 80s cartoon, who do you think will win? I told you it was a crazy question. No one said I was sane. :-p

Totally Jem. (And now I have the theme song stuck in my head.)

7) You've been given the honor of naming a planet, what would you name it?

Rock Candy Mountain.

8) If you were in a rock band what would the name of your band be? What would your rocker name be?

I don't think I would be in a rock band. I could see myself as a singer-songwriter. And then I'd just be Willa, quixotic as always. :)

If you'd like, you can include excerpts from your latest work. Please include the 'Buy' link if it is available. Thank you for participating in this interview.