



# ANGEL DELIGHT: An Interview with LA Weatherly

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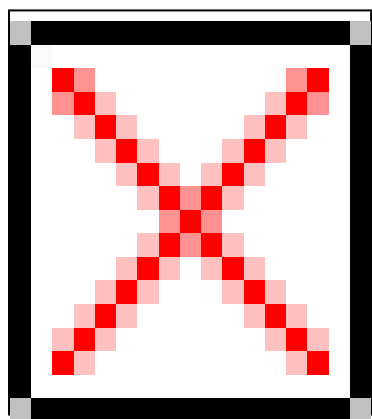
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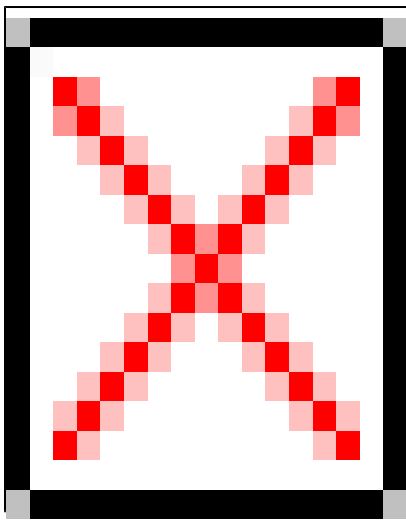
**Angel** author LA Weatherly interviewed by Caroline Sanderson

It's three years since the first book in LA Weatherly's **Angel** series was published. Almost immediately it became a must-read for teens, its mix of romance and drama, angels v humans, putting **Twilight** in the shade for many. On publication of the long-awaited third and final book in the trilogy, Caroline Sanderson interviews LA Weatherly for **Books for Keeps**.



The reactions to Seb really surprised me because I was madly in love with him. But a lot of my readers are very firmly Team Alex. I even saw a tweet which said: 'I've hated Seb from the moment I heard about him!' Which is lovely in a way because it shows how strongly people feel about the romance between Alex and Willow.

LA Weatherly is talking about reader responses to book two of her **Angel** trilogy, **Angel Fire** in which she introduced the handsome character of Seb, and with him, a sense of confusion in Willow's feelings for Alex. Seb 'sauntered' (as Weatherly puts it) into the book after she had typed a note to herself: 'Is Willow the only half-angel? I just sort of stopped and stared at the words and got this prickle all along my spine'. Now with the publication of book three **Angel Fever**, readers will finally be able to discover how the love triangle is resolved. Not to mention the small matter of whether the human world survives, or suffers extinction by angels.



Much as she loves him, Weatherly says Seb is also her 'problem child'. 'He's the character who did things I didn't expect. But you have to go with them because the characters always know best'. LA Weatherly certainly knows her characters. Whilst Seb is a fairly new kid on the block, his love rival Alex has, she says, been living in 'the wardrobe of my mind' for a very long time. 'Probably from my early 20s' (she is now 45). 'The first book I wrote was a sort of **Dungeons and Dragons** type fantasy and Alex was a thief who lived on the boundaries of society. And Willow was sort of in it as well'.

Before being published, Weatherly had long cherished aspirations to be a professional writer. Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, she grew up in a house filled with books. 'Both my parents were huge readers and both of them had a sneaky desire to be writers but it hadn't happened for them: my mum taught drama, my dad was a psychiatrist. But both of them were very into writing and so when I started showing talent for it from a very early age, they were thrilled'.

Weatherly has a clear early memory of trying to write a story at about the age of 4. 'I was very serious about it. I had this little desk in my room. I don't recall the story except that there was a horse and a fox in it. But I remember turning it over and writing in all the copyright information because I knew it had to have that if it was going to get published'. Encouraged by her parents, Weatherly's yearning to be a writer continued throughout her childhood and adolescence.

When LA Weatherly was 18, the future paranormal romance writer met the man who was to become her husband. 'When I was a teenager in the 1980s I had a lot of penfriends. Most of them fell by the wayside but one of the ones I kept in touch with was a boy from England, and we fell in love just through writing letters to one another. And I was really determined I was going to come here and meet him. So I took a part-time job in high school and I earned the money for the trip. My parents were not thrilled, but I was very stubborn and you really couldn't tell me anything because I was 18. I got to England, but the romance didn't work out. I think both of us were more in love with the idea of being in love'. Don't be disappointed by this ending, for Reader, she married his best friend.

The course of true love still had a few years to run however. Back in the US after her thwarted transatlantic romance, Weatherly completed her first book - in which both Alex and Willow made their early appearance. 'I'd always had a talent for writing. I could put the words on the page, I was good at character and dialogue, but I knew nothing about story structure. I just threw things in. Looking back, I'm amazed that anyone was interested'. However, the book showed enough promise to secure Weatherly her first agent. Meanwhile she worked at a 'hotch-potch' of jobs and lived in various US states, including Oregon and Arizona, storing up the settings in her head.

She and Pete 'the best friend - finally got together when she was 27, and Weatherly moved to the UK. Though still writing, Weatherly had by this time become 'self-conscious' about the fact that she hadn't yet been published. And then she got a job at literary agents David Higham Associates, and it dawned on her that what she was writing was as good as some of the books being accepted for publication. 'I realised that I did have the talent to do it if I tried. Word leaked out that I was writing a manuscript and my boss was hugely supportive. She sat down and read it, and said 'let's see about getting you an agent'.

[Child X](#) [3], LA Weatherly's first published novel came out from David Fickling in 2001. Since then, she has written over 50 more, many of them in series fiction for younger readers, including the **Fairy School** series under the name, Titania Woods; and for Usborne, **Seahorse Stars** as Zuzu Singer, and **Pocket Cats** as Kitty (miaow) Wells. She also co-authored the **Sophie and the Shadow Woods** series with Linda Chapman. "The thing I love about series fiction is that it usually behaves itself. You have the basic landscape in place and the stories are quite short. I soon found out that with longer novels, that isn't always the case".

Initially, her **Angel** did behave. Book one "just sort of spilled out" and Weatherly completed it in about six months. "I'd had the basic structure for the story for a long time, and Alex and Willow were still hanging around in my head. I'd been thinking for a while that I wanted to do a real-life story and then I got the idea of Willow being psychic after reading a memoir by a US medium called Sonia Choquette. I don't know how much of it I believed but I found it fascinating, particularly the fact that she would give psychic readings to friends and neighbours when she was 12 or 13. And I thought: that would be an amazing story idea. What if Willow saw something she shouldn't see which then puts her in danger. Alex could then be the hitman who's hired to get rid of her because of what's she's seen". The book clicked into place when Weatherly came up with the concept of angels not being what they seem.

Having sold the **Angel** books to Usborne as a trilogy, Weatherly had already planned out **Angel Fire** and **Angel Fever** in some detail. But much evolved in the writing of book one. "I learned so much more about the world and the characters, that I realised that my ideas for book two in particular weren't quite right. It all came from thinking about the angels and how they worked in the world; and how humanity would react to them. That's how the concept of a Church of Angels came to me; this huge religion that would spring up and take over everything".

Did she have the idea of cults in mind? "I did. I find cults absolutely fascinating, both the psychology and dynamics. How you can be so subtly brainwashed without realising that's what's happening. So many kids who become wrapped up in cults in the US are right around the ages of 18 ? 21 or so, like Beth in **Angel**".

Is Weatherly religious herself? "Though my father was agnostic, my mother was quite strongly religious, so I was taken to church every Sunday from an early age. It wasn't long before I started asking questions and having doubts. Having said that, I do feel like there's more in heaven and earth than we know. I am quite a spiritual person, and as a writer, I often have the sense that I'm not the one doing it, that it's coming from somewhere else, and then through me onto the keyboard".

Weatherly was prepared for some adverse reaction to her negative portrayal of angels, particularly in the US where she has done book tours, including to the Bible Belt states. "But what has surprised me is that I've really had no problems from anyone. In the UK, the only thing that happened was when **Angel** first came out, and someone saw it in the window of a bookshop and went in to complain about the strapline: The only good angel is a dead angel".

Softly-spoken, and contained and thoughtful in person, LA Weatherly nevertheless admits to some strong emotions at the completion of her epic trilogy. "It still hasn't sunk in. **Angel Fever** in particular is very intense pretty much all the way through. So to get to the ending and write the last pages was quite emotional. The characters have been inside my head for so long and now I'm saying goodbye to them. I really wanted to give them a good send-off".

**Angel Fever** 978-1409522393

**Angel Fire** 978-1409522010

[Angel](#) [4] 978-1409521969

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