

**“For the avid imagination...”**

Linda Plater, Writer  
and Media Consultant

## An interview with Karen M. Black

### **Moondance is quite a ride. Your inspiration?**

*Moondance* explores questions (and arguments) that I had about life in my mid- to late thirties. It's the result of being bounced around in the corporate world, having some painful relationship experiences, and wondering why my life didn't turn out as I had planned.

I wrote the first 120 pages of *Moondance* in 1996 after a relationship ended. In a state of heartbreak, the words gushed out of me in a curious, unstructured wave (the first page I ever wrote was page 271). What I wrote was intense and emotional and it scared me. What I had created wasn't aligned with who I thought I was—which was logical, tough, steady and calm. I was creating scenes and dialogue I didn't understand with my logical mind. So I rejected it and finished my MBA instead.

Five years later, still single, with questions about my life mounting, I participated in a five-day retreat called the Trust Program [www.4trust.net](http://www.4trust.net). Trust was a turning point, a powerful experience which helped me understand who I am, what I believe and what's important to me. After Trust, I embraced my sincere belief in reincarnation and began to study karmic astrology while working full-time as a benefit communication consultant—something I never could have conceived of before .

### **Who is Moondance written for?**

I wrote *Moondance* for me. I published *Moondance* for anyone who's had their heart broken by life or by love, and has had the curiosity and the courage to ask why.

### **What's your educational background?**

I received my MBA in marketing from the Rotman School of Management from the University of Toronto, and a double major in biology and literature at Erindale College at the University of Toronto. Grew up and did high school in Collingwood, Ontario, home of Blue Mountain. Yes I ski. I cottage more. I've also done a three-year karmic astrology internship with Linda Brady of Creative Choices in Jay, Vermont.

### **You're an MBA and a karmic astrologer! Is Moondance about your life?**

*Moondance* is fiction, but the themes it explores are true to me. My life unfolded in ways I never imagined. Over the years, I've asked the questions my main character Althea has asked. I've raged at the universe like Althea has, wondering about life's injustices and why things are so easy for some people, and so difficult for others. Like Althea, I've experienced heartbreak.

I never planned to be 40 and single. I never pictured myself as anything but conventional. I figured I'd get married in my 30's and I'd work at a job that fulfilled and regularly promoted me. It took a while for that dream to die, and another to replace it. Now, I'm so happy with who I am, I can't imagine myself any other way. But it hasn't always been easy.

### **Any real people in Moondance?**

The character Michelle is based on astrology and tarot card reader Yvonne Karkas, a woman I knew for twenty years. Yvonne was wise, compassionate and humorous, kicking me in the butt – with love – when I needed it. She approved of Michelle, but sadly died before she could read the entire book.

### **When did you know you were onto something with Moondance?**

When I read a book called *The Courage to Write*. It described the fear associated with writing, and the author said that whenever he had a student in his class that was scared of what was inside them, it was usually because what they had to say was powerful.



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**“I couldn’t stop reading...”**

Dee Miller, Executive Director,  
Renewed Strength

## An interview with Karen M. Black, cont’d

### What would you compare *Moondance* to?

I was swept away by *Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold. When I read it, I cried. It was particularly compelling to me because of Alice’s experience of being raped when she was a student. What Alice did with the book was amazing... the book is drawn from a deep well of experience and emotion, yet delivered through a haunting, fictional tale. Like *Moondance*.

My favourite TV show ever is *Six Feet Under*— I love how it explores the mystery of death and does it in edgy, contemporary, entertaining way, through characters who are utterly fallible. One minute, I’m laughing, another minute I’m close to tears, and another minute, my jaw drops. *Moondance* is contemporary and grounded in the real world, while exploring ideas you don’t see often in a reality-TV obsessed world. *Moondance* would make a great movie or TV show... it’s so visual.

### Your thoughts about spiritual awakening?

Personal development, change, awakening, consciousness, whatever you want to call it, isn’t linear. It’s more like peeling a slippery, meandering onion, searching for a highly prized, tender centre. Then once and a while it slips out of your hands and you forget about it—until you fall nose first into the smelly thing.

In the corporate world, I was rewarded for being logical, deadline oriented, detailed and intellectual. But true growth doesn’t occur in our heads—it takes place in our hearts.

Every heart is different, with different needs. There isn’t a quick fix. There isn’t one book we can read and get all the answers. If someone gets stuck in one spiritual concept or philosophy while rejecting or not exploring the rest, I think that it’s not only limiting, but dangerous. It becomes fundamentalism—new age or otherwise.

I’m reading and seeking all the time, but most of all, I’m open to the lessons of my heart. I’m open to learning—and to re-learning—about myself and my place in the universe.

### What’s the connection between *Moondance* and karmic astrology?

When I was writing *Moondance*, I was taking an astrology internship with Linda Brady and doing some past life work myself and so karmic astrology found its way naturally into the plot.

I also created astrological charts for my characters. Using their charts as a guide, I know about their secret wishes, and deepest fears. I understand their Achilles Heel, what they might obsess about, and the kind of experiences they might create in their lives which are meant to nudge them on their path. I go deep with my characters, and the charts help me do that.

*Moondance* is really about my main character Althea’s journey toward her purpose, which is represented by the astrological sign Scorpio according to karmic astrology. Scorpio is intense, sexual and transformational. So is *Moondance*.

### You do private karmic astrology sessions?

Yes. Get in touch through [www.karenmblack.com](http://www.karenmblack.com).

### What does the image on your cover mean?

It’s adapted from a crop circle web site I stumbled into! I love it because *Moondance* is thematically Scorpio, and because it ties in the circles metaphor I use throughout the book.

### Where did the name *Moondance* come from?

In 2003, I took a karaoke workshop to face my fear of singing in public. The song I sang over and over, for three days, was *Moondance*, by Van Morrison, and months later, it hit me—*Moondance* was the perfect name for the book I was writing.

In astrology, the moon represents the emotions. The dance part... well, you’ll have to read the book to find out.

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## “Thought-provoking...”

Cynthia Barlow, President,  
Constellation Learning

## An interview with Karen M. Black, cont'd

### Will there be a sequel?

I've started the sequel, and know the themes I want to explore. I'll just say this. *Moondance* is just the tip of the iceberg—you just wait! Althea and her friends have lots more otherworldly dramas and earthly neuroses to explore... all part of the fun.

### What do you do when you're not writing or working?

When am I not working?!

*Moondance* itself is a full time job. Right now, I'm building my web site, and learning ways to promote *Moondance* using publicity and online marketing.

I also still work as a freelance pension and benefit communication consultant—I have a wonderful client base and I'm so grateful for that. *Moondance* has been an investment in not only time, but money, so working this way has helped me bring *Moondance* to life—and keep practical things going, like paying my mortgage, and traveling occasionally.

When I do have free time, I cook, read, meditate, expand my music collection, learn about astrology, do pilates, shop in Chinatown, bike, and spend (not enough!) time on the water.

### What are your proudest achievements?

In no particular order...

- Finishing my MBA full-time while working part-time
- Working with a great team of creative professionals to win three Benefits Canada communication awards in 2000
- Having the courage to take the Trust program
- Writing *Moondance* during weekends, while working full-time as a benefit communication consultant and completing a three-year astrology internship

- Leaving the corporate world to become a freelance benefit communication consultant, so I could focus on *Moondance*
- Assisting at the Trust program
- Setting up Ricochet Publishing to publish *Moondance*
- Getting comfortable with being vulnerable (a work in progress)

### What would you change about your past?

Absolutely nothing. Really. It was all perfect – for me.

### What do you desire in the future?

More experiences to help me understand who I truly am.

Free time to write more books. To see *Moondance* produced as a movie!

The opportunity to share my life with a man, who's a friend and an equal—preferably on a private lake somewhere.

To continue to deeply appreciate my life in every moment.

