

Andi Osho

In Conversation with Jonny Wright

'There is a lot of me in *Asking for a Friend*. Like, I say to people, like, 'if you read *Asking for a Friend*, then you'll know me.' Really, aren't all writers to a degree writing themselves?'

— Andi Osho

Presenter: This is *WritersMosaic* In Conversation. Screenwriter Jonny Wright talks to writer, actor and comedian Andi Osho about writing her debut novel.

Jonny Wright (JW): Hi, it's Jonny Wright here with *WritersMosaic* and I'm here with the amazing writer and actor Andi Osho. How do you do?

Andi Osho (AO): How do I do? I'm fine, thank you. How are you?

JW: I'm pretty good, I'm pretty good. *Asking for a Friend*: give me the elevator pitch. I loved it, by the way.

AO: Oh, thank you. So the elevator pitch is that *Asking for a Friend* is about three girlfriends who are having no luck in their own love lives, so they decide to ditch the dating apps and go and ask guys out in real life, but for each other, and needless to say, it doesn't quite go the way that they expect it to.

JW: Real life—ask—I mean, I got married through Tinder.

AO: Wooh!

JW: I met my wife on Tinder, so this—it has been a long time since I asked someone out in real life and I was never, I was never very good at it.

AO: Well, I mean, it is a minefield and in the book the girls step into that minefield because, you know, at the end of the day, most people, I think, they meet through somebody, either somebody they know or they're—you know, they work with somebody or they go down the online route. But just randomly going up to

somebody in the street or in the pub or whatever, we don't do that anymore. It's a lost art, mate, it's a lost art.

JW: I think it is! I'd describe the book as a romantic comedy. Think that's fair?

AO: Yeah yeah, I'd say so, yeah.

JW: I love the three characters. I'd say the lead by a nudge is Jemima.

AO: That's right, yeah.

JW: And then you have Meagan and Simi but it really is a kind of three-hander and they all have their own chapters, which I really like and it kind of alternates between the three of them. Jemima is a novelist—

AO: That's right.

JW: —which you are now after having written this novel.

AO: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Meagan is a comedy agent and she's got one acting client and her one acting client is Simi.

AO: That's right.

JW: I found that relationship really interesting, actually, between Meagan—well, I found the whole—the, the three-way relationship was really nice and messy but this kind of like professional/personal relationship that Meagan and Simi had: I really found that kind of interesting of like *where does this friendship end and the professional relationship start?* I wondered have you had that in real life with agents or with other writer friends that—where you've been collaborating, maybe in a professional space, have you ever found that things get messy between business and pleasure?

AO: I've been very lucky in that there's been—I mean, look, there's always moments, but I've never had, like, disasters. Cause I know some people have had real disasters where things weren't put in writing and you know, do you know what I mean?

JW: Mmm-hmm.

AO: So I've been lucky in that respect of people around me have—and I, I hope—have managed to delineate quite healthily. But you see, the thing is, the thing about, the thing about the character Simi specifically is that she's got no boundaries. She is blurred lines in all directions. So that's why that relationship sort of goes off the rails, is partly because Simi just doesn't know how to really make a stand for herself.

JW: And talking about kind of healing and having boundaries, and—I think that was a theme that came all the way through the book, that all the girls I felt in some way needed to heal and in some way have boundaries, the different boundaries for the different girls. And is that something, were you drawing on real life experiences for that or—?

AO: Yeah, very much so. I mean, a lot of what troubles the girls; the space that they're in that they need to heal from; is taken from personal experience. And then just on a bigger sense, I wanted to make sure that the book wasn't just, superficially just recounting this funny story. I want there to be—I wanted there to be some emotional depth, but I wanted to hide it in such a way that it wasn't this sort of trauma-porn type of thing. It was just in the background and the background mood of just like, actually these people have been through a lot. They are damaged by

what's happened and they are gonna go on this journey to heal themselves. And it's gonna be funny.

JW: And it was funny; and lots of—

AO: Oh good.

JW: —and lots of falling was sort of like, lots of like, and I don't mean this in a degrading way, like lots of funny slapstick, like people—there were quite a few falls in there, quite a few comedy falls.

AO: Yeah, there was mainly Simi throwing herself around.

JW: Yeah. As well as lots of comedic lines as well.

AO: It's funny, 'cause I hadn't thought of it as slapstick, but yeah, it is. I mean, there's one scene where Simi is on a, on a skateboard in a tiled gelateria or whatever, so.

JW: Yep, and she's also like hiding in a—in Oscar's, in an ex-boyfriend's basement.

AO: Oh, that's right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, she does do a lot of—yeah, you're right! There is quite a bit of slapstick in there as well.

JW: But before we talk more about the book, actually, let's rewind a little bit and go more to the beginning. And our beginning, I believe, did we meet during a Royal Court theatre writing course?

AO: Yeah, I think it was Critical Mass, wasn't it? Yeah, at the Royal Court. At that point, I think that I hadn't started doing standup. I had just started acting then. I'd been acting a few years. I think I just realised that to get a foot in, you needed, I needed more, more strings to my bow. And so that's when I—and actually, I kind of had felt like this creative door had opened by me going from what was a very operational job before, I had quite a technical job working in, you know, behind the camera on TV shows and stuff, to suddenly like declaring myself an actor, even though I, you know, I hadn't really done much training and all that. And, but I, so the floodgates almost opened creatively and I wanted to get all this stuff out. And I realised that having writing as another thing that I was doing would give me another access point to the industry. So I was still sort of tentatively doing that and going for opportunities wherever I could find them and Critical Mass was one of them. It's like, you know, it's taking all these writers from underrepresented groups and putting us all together, giving us this access to training, to education, to learning to

help us further our careers. And it's interesting like how many people came out of that particular group that are doing very well! Yeah so, so that's kind of where I was at that point is just like trying to, trying to get a foothold in the industry, basically that's that was it.

JW: And then, so how did you then go about getting your foothold in the industry (because I'd say you've got both feet firmly in the industry at the moment)?

AO: Do you know, I think a foothold is, is such a psychological thing rather than an actual thing, or a lot of it is psychological.

JW: Mmm-hmm.

AO: Because I—you know some days now I tell myself, *man when is it when is it going to happen for me?* I honestly have that conversation with myself and then other days I'm just like, *you're so lucky! Just look at what you've got* and be, you know and and I'm just—

JW: It's happening, I'm telling you, it's happening!

AO: Thank you, yeah. I mean, some days I get aligned with my appreciation and gratitude or whatever but some days I do tell myself a story that isn't true and actually one thing that I found really useful is, if you write stuff down that is going well, especially if you're, you're predisposed to that type of thinking, as I am, you're you know once you've written it down you can refer back to it and it can't lie.

JW: Yeah [laughs] and so when you were in LA you were still doing stand-up, is that right? You're still doing a bit of stand-up in LA?

AO: Yeah, but—so this is 2012. So I was sort of deciding *okay I want to give this a go I'm gonna go and have a reconnaissance mission 2013* and so I was coming to the end of my time with stand-up because—and I've spoken about this before. It was making me depressed, essentially; that's the long and the short of it. I was feeling like I was on rails that I didn't want to be on and I was exhausted. Everything, every time I tried to take a break, take—get some rest I was coming back from that even more tired and I thought, *you know what, I actually just need to stop. I need to properly stop and so I'm going to do this thing. I'm going to go to LA, see what it's like over there* and so I was still doing stand-up but I was coming to the end of my time with it because I realised that it can't—whatever it is I'm looking for, I'm not going to get it by continuing to do stand-up; not in the way that I'm relating to it at the moment.

JW: And so then, after that it was kind of full steam ahead with acting and writing?

AO: Well, you say it like I just was like, *boom, shazam, lights out!* [*JW laughs.*] You know, getting all these roles, people throwing them at me, but really what it was was a huge risk.

JW: Yeah.

AO: Because you know stand-up, up until that point, that was my major calling card and I sort of—more that I, more—It wasn't so much I gave it up as I used it. I transitioned by using it as a calling card in America, because otherwise I've got nothing. All I've got is a few British TV shows, acting-wise, that they won't have heard of. So I kind of used it as a way in and luckily my managers—people are much more comfortable with people doing—creatives doing more than one thing in America. So I was able to be a stand-up but be submitted for acting, having conversations with people about, you know, pilot scripts and things like that. But I mean, I was always backwards and forth, so for example at one point I was um shooting this consumer affairs show for Channel 4 and so I came back to do that and then I would go back to the States and then I would—and really, the great thing about that is it taught me that I actually presenting wasn't something that I really wanted to do. But it did

subsidise my being in the States while I was still trying to sort of get a foothold and, you know, projects were coming but they were piecemeal. It wasn't—I never really felt like I got momentum over there. Yeah, about 2019, I started to think about—alright, what am I actually doing here in LA? Because at the time I was writing *Asking for a Friend*, and I really felt like *I want to start really generating some momentum in my life, in my career. How am I going to do that? Ah! I need to change my management.* So, even though my guys had been great they were more focussed on comedy and because I was moving away from that it made sense to find management that were more interested in where I wanted to go. And so that was the decision to—and also I realised from an acting perspective, certainly, maybe even a writing one, I probably have as good a chance of accessing the industry from the UK—a better chance actually, because I'll have a better chance of having getting reps because I, you know, I'm known there than I would be staying and then that was, it was quite—

JW: Uh, you've called yourself a hyphenate before and having these these, these different lanes which you're in; do you think there's more pressure as a black artist to do that, to be the, what the americans would call the slash or the hyphen?

AO: Uh, yeah, I think I think there is, I do, because it's that old thing of, you know, having to work twice as hard to get half as much and as much as I think a lot of

black artists aren't necessarily thinking about that day to day because otherwise we would go crazy?

JW: Yeah.

AO: It is a background reality that we have to hustle, we really do. And as much as it seems like we're very present and opportunities are coming our way, this is what happens—this is just the redressing of the balance and it is also a response to the hard graft that we all put in because we know we have to.

JW: Yeah, absolutely. And so, back to, back to your novel *Asking for a Friend*. So you'd started, right? How long was the process in writing, that—you had started writing in LA, you said—

AO: I can't remember where I started it was so long ago; um no, I actually started when I was doing this—*The Miser in the West End*. So this was 2017 and so, Jonny, I really had to learn how to write a book while writing this book. I, I have this thing which I've labelled 'naive arrogance' where I, I just think *how hard can it be? How hard is it going to be, really?* And then I start something and I realise oh it's f*ing hard it's going to be really hard! But I, I just—I'm focused on the outcome.

JW: So what was your writing background at the time? Like, what had you written?

AO: In terms of a novel, I think I tried writing one when I was 11 and it didn't quite go to plan and I was like *oh this is stupid* and stopped, so—

JW: And then you'd been doing writing for theatre and writing for screen?

AO: Yeah writing—I mean, I hadn't had much produced; I was still, I feel, learning my craft and, you know, in terms of screenplays I think I'd, uh, I think I'd written a short for Sky Arts, so they have these comedy horrors, I think that had been made, and I'd had a comedy pilot on E4. So little bits and pieces here and there. But writing the book was probably the biggest—it was definitely the biggest commitment I'd had. And so I really—

JW: And did you find those skills crossed over or was it completely learning again?

AO: There were definitely some transferable knowledge but I had to—there were things that I just didn't know. Like, one time I got notes back from my editor, the first set of notes said something along the lines of, 'Really great start [Laughs] but there's a lot of dialogue' and I had—because I was so focussed on screenwriting—

JW: Mmm-hmm.

AO: —the first draft of it was like, ‘then Jemima said and then Meagan said and then Simi said!’ [JW laughs.] It was just talking, talking, talking; I didn’t—there was no sort of like scene description or anything like that and so I realised, *oh yeah, that is what books are like, aren't they?* And then, um—

JW: And how did you get it—how did you get an editor? How did that work out?

AO: Um, so it was really—I was very fortunate the way it happened and this is why everyone's journey is different and, you know, there's no one way of getting access but I met, years ago when I was doing stand-up I met a literary agent at Stratford Circus—

JW: Okay yeah.

AO: —and he said to me at the time and continued to say for many years, ‘the literary world are looking for strong, funny, female voices. You should write something.’ I'm like, ‘yeah, yeah, cool, totally, good idea,’ and then I—and we would have that conversation and I was like, ‘Yeah I'm totally going to write something’ and then I would proceed to go off and do *Supershoppers* and move to LA and you

know. And then one year I just sat down and like put something together an idea came and then literally it must have been another year or two after that where he said to me, 'Right you're back from LA for Christmas. I'm gonna set up some meetings. Let's, let's see if I can, if we can't, you know, get this commissioned' or whatever and so, uh, yeah, he set up some meetings and we met one, one publisher—and I wasn't completely wedded to the idea of becoming a novelist at this point.

JW: Mmm-hmm. I think I was more interested in the advance rather than the actual writing [JW laughs.] And so we, we had a couple of meetings and one publishing house said, 'Great, yeah, I really love the idea, what else have you got?' and then another one was like, 'Oh that's really interesting, um, why don't you write two or three chapters and then come back to us I was like, *I'm not all writing two or three chapters for free.*

JW: Yeah.

AO: So I just like, you know, cocky that I am, I was just like, 'no I'm not doing that' and then we met Harper Collins I think it was the last one last folks that we met and they've got a new imprint at the time, they had a new imprint just launching called HQ Stories and its remit specifically was inclusion; to really represent not just

around race but all kinds of areas: disability have—you know, women front and centre I mean women I think write more, anyways and certainly they read more, but anywho, so they had created a PowerPoint presentation about why I should sign with them. I was like *hmmm, I get the sense that these are the guys to go with* [they laugh] but then um yeah and so obviously with that comes your editor and, and all the amazing things that come along with working with a major publishing house. The only thing that doesn't come with it unfortunately is the actual book and so that's uh, yeah, thankfully I had two great editors: one, she was with me for a little while and then she moved on to another company and then, and then she was replaced and they both helped me get the book over the line.

JW: How was that, having two different people? Was that a smooth transition?

AO: Yeah, it was actually okay, because the book was pretty much there—so it was almost like the book got over the line with one editor and then the second one came in and she was more overseeing the actual publication of it, so she, she was more across—the, the title changed and um, you know—

JW: Ooh, can we—do we get to know what it used to be called?

AO: All the way along it was 'My Friend Fancies You'.

JW: Okay.

AO: Because it's based off that thing that we all do in high school or in school—

JW: Yeah.

AO: —just going up to somebody and going 'Oh, so and so fancies you,' [JW laughs] and they just felt like it, it was a little juvenile, maybe, and might—and for those that didn't recognise that that it would, you know, it wouldn't connect or whatever—various reasons. Anyway, they got marketing people who, who know about these things and so while the previous editor was still in her position she came back and she said, 'We've had a meeting with the team and they love 'The Dating Game'. I was like, 'The Dating Game'?

JW: Mmm, yeah.

AO: And I go, okay I get that, because the girls go out and they play this, they do this thing like a game, so when they go out and ask guys out for each other they—they call it their game and they have rules and stuff like that; that's all right, 'The Dating Game', okay. Took me a little while but I'm down, I'm down and then she left and

then the new editor came in and she, you know, after a few weeks or whatever, she said, 'Loved the book, really enjoyed reading it. Had a meeting with the wider team—' (the wider team again!) [JW laughs] 'and we decided that we think a name change, a title change would be great and we've decided on 'Asking for a Friend'. And I was like, *what now?* [They laugh.] Because I'd really invested in 'The Dating Game'. I thought this was perfect. I was visualising the cover, I was thinking pink and black, yeah! But 'Asking for a Friend' really took a while to, to grow on me.

JW: How was it to be involved with *I May Destroy You* which is—Michaela Coel created—

AO: Ah!

JW: —and you were great in it—

AO: Thank you.

JW: —and I thought, um I thought it was just a really good show and a good slice of life of Black London, really; and so how did you find—but how was that from the inside? 'Cause I'm on the outside looking in, so how was it on the inside?

AO: Well I mean I, I didn't do a huge amount on the show but from what I saw there's a few things that stood out. One was that the crew were hella diverse—

JW: Mmm-hmm.

AO: —and, so that was the first thing that blew my mind. I don't think I've ever been miked up by a black man. It's a big deal when there's brown faces in places that you haven't seen them before. The other thing was just, like, I could see I, I could see how—what a great leader she was and you can—

JW: This is Michaela?

AO: —This is Michaela, yes. So you're not—it's not how, by how somebody behaves but how people react to that person. It's the same—that's what they say in, in acting in terms of playing status: you don't play status; status comes from how people treat you; well, how people treated her; you could see that she was, you know, really respected and, and well-liked leader in, on the production. And then that's just not even discussing the creative, the creative aspect of it where she is showing a slice of—but it's not just a slice of Black London; it's a slice of life, of Black life that hitherto hasn't really been seen, because a lot of—even the more liberal broadcasters—what they will tend to do is show Black trauma—

JW: Yeah.

AO: —show us in a particular type of trauma that's specifically related to our race. As much as they feel like, *look at our representation!* Well, it's still limited because it's only showing that's—that is—that's the only—like, that's the limit of who we are.

JW: Which I thought—getting back to your work, *Asking for a Friend*, that is what I found most refreshing about it. These were three Black girls but it was not about Black trauma.

AO: That was so important to me; that I wanted those women, those characters, to just be living their best life in the way that many Black women are. They're not in this hand-wringing, top of-a-tower-block, 'Where's the baby daddy?' [They laugh.] You know what I mean? But if you would look at these shows or the things that become popular—

JW: Yeah. Mmm-hmm.

AO: —that's how that is how we are represented. I was like, *absolutely not*. The most important thing for me about this and why this represents—representation

was important to me is because I don't know that life. I want, I want there to be different archetypes because we, we're—you know, if we get into a rut that's when stereotypes happen and that's when humanity gets lost.

JW: Yeah, I think I think that's absolutely true and what I—the humanity on, um, that I found with these characters, one of the themes that I felt was hurting them actually was a theme of, of fathers, especially for two of the characters.

AO: Yeah.

JW: How important a thread is, is that for you and what was the inspiration there?

AO: Well that was really important because that's, that's part of my story, or it was. My dad left the family home when I was seven so basically that's partly Simi's story.

JW: Mmm-hmm.

AO: But what I subsequently have learned through therapy and courses and workshops and all the rest of it, is what an impact that can have on a woman's development; and you know, we joke, about strippers having daddy issues, quote unquote, or whatever but that can be what happens; is that if the father's not

around, that you—your boundaries get all skewed; like, there's so many important things that a father brings by being in the family home. I mean a good dad, right? [They laugh.] Not a wasteman, like you're better off without him [laughter] but you know, that they help you bring you—to create boundaries; they help a woman with her confidence with their self-esteem; psychologically really fundamental, important things happen by the presence of a dad and so with mine not being there I saw the fallout from that. I was like *aha!* and so I gave that to the character but I also wanted dads to sort of be thematically for all of them but if I have time to do it in the future I'd like to pick that up in another story and more head-on deal with it.

JW: Mmm-hmm.

AO: But the other interesting thing I wanted to add around the dad thing was that actually I was, I was doing a course recently so this has become my narrative: 'oh my dad left home at seven and I can see the impact that that's had yada ya'. And then this guy who was facilitating the program he was like, 'Well hang on a minute, but what about your mum? What's your relationship with her and how you see her in relationships? And so I said a bit about that and he was like, 'Well, you know, 'cause you learn about relationships from both parents. It's not just from dad or absence of dad, it's from mum too and my mind was blown. So I say all that to say that whilst

I was creating this narrative out of an absent dad, actually we learn from both our parents—

JW: Yeah.

AO: —how to, how to be in a relationship and how to relate to other people in a relationship.

JW: Well it's, it's interesting so you've mentioned therapy a couple of times and also, I think, two of the characters is it, are two of the characters in therapy at the start of the book?

AO: One of them, so um yeah, Simi uh oh? Yeah, Simi I think she's the one that's uh—

JW: Already in therapy. Yeah.

AO: Yeah. Well, she's had therapy and then she goes—anyway. Not giving away endings.

JW: Yeah, yeah, yeah; no spoilers! Yeah but what's your relationship like with therapy and how has that helped you with your writing process or your process as an artist?

AO: Yeah. I mean, personally therapy has been incredibly helpful; I mean it saved me, really, at one point, because I was so unhappy and I didn't know how to get out of this unhappiness and I was indulging it and, you know, oh gosh! I was—yeah, I was a very unhappy human during my 20s. I had joy as well but also a lot of self-made misery in a way and so therapy helped me to work through that. And then after that I started doing these programmes. Ontological studies, is what it's called: just inquiring into the nature of being: what does it mean to be a human being? And again, on a personal level very instructive: helped me to let go of things that weren't serving me; move away from unhelpful patterns, blah blah blah. But on a professional level both the therapy and these courses have helped me to understand human being. Like, that there's some break or trauma that happens when we're young and it can be non-event trauma or event trauma and it sets up a belief that we have in the world and that informs how we see everything; our actions and our perspective are kind of shaped by those beliefs that we create.

Having that understanding of the building blocks of our humanity is very useful for creating a character because if you want to really go deep with it you can start with:
right, what happened when they were five?

JW: [Laughs] Yeah.

AO: *Why are they the way they are?* And then build them up from there. So that's basically what Simi is. What happened when she was seven? Her dad left. That's why she's the way she is. What happened to Jemima? Her dad died. That's why she is the way she is. What happened to Meagan? Her mum and dad were broke, brokity broke and so from there she decided she is never going to have nothing again. She is never going to be shamed by people coming into the family home, taking her telly, taking her Xbox: the one thing she loves.

JW: When Jemima's writing she finds it kind of easy to lean on her friends' experiences than her own. Do you find the same for you? Is it easier to—because I find like, with all you've said just now I was like *yeah okay cool I can—this reminds me of a friend, this reminds—* I find it easy to analyse friends. *Oh he's like that because he's not known his dad. She's like that because—* whatever, but I will be much less [more] reluctant to do that about myself; that self-reflection because that's harder to do—

AO: Mmm.

JW: —and, and Jemima was—in the book—is the same. Do you find that with you or has therapy made it quite—or easier for you to self-reflect?

AO: Yeah. I do draw on me quite a lot. There is a lot of me in *Asking for a Friend*. Like, I say, I say to people, 'If you read *Asking for a Friend* then you'll know me.' Really, aren't all writers to a degree writing themselves?

JW: Is there one character of Meagan, Jemima or Simi that you think you have more of than others or is it—?

AO: I think it's Jemima for sure, because I mean—

JW: Yeah.

AO: —we're closest in age—

JW: Mmm-hmm.

AO: —and Simi—up until my mid-30s I would say I was most like her. Just this like floundering around, trying to find love, open-hearted, puppy dog sort of approach to life; still figuring out the boundaries. My heart was a little bit more hardened than

hers, but still, I was—yeah, just a bit lost when it came to relating and relationships. So yeah, but now I'm more Jemima. I'm just a bit more compartmentalised [JW laughs] and a bit like, 'you know what? Can I be bothered? I don't think I can.'

JW: Well I thought it was a—I thought it was a fantastic read and I hope—

AO: Thank you.

JW: —I hope our listeners can, can read it as well. That's *Asking for a Friend*. Just before we wrap up I would like your top five novels and/or writers that can be a combination. So you can include playwrights and screenwriters in there if you want.

AO: Sooo. Oh that—I mean, that's tricky in terms of like things that have been—creative things that have been written, I've just watched *The Matrix*. So I'm going to say the first three Matrixes. I think it's some of the—our greatest—cinematically it's such, it's such an important set of films and I like all three of them. Some people didn't!

JW: Yeah, I was: the third one, ah, eeh—even the second one.

AO: [Crosstalk] I thought it was great.

JW: Okay, okay.

AO: I was all in. Okay. And then I'm reading Will Smith's autobiography at the moment—which is just fantastic: the, the fifth of the way in that I am—I'd say is a great read.

JW: OK.

AO: So it could all go wrong after this! No, I doubt it will. It's just such a fascinating story. And it's almost fantastical, his life, but it is the life that he had. He was like this incredibly successful rapper. I almost forget that part of it. Then in this huge sitcom and then huge movie star so—um, what else? What else? What else? Um, back to the screen. *The Wire*. Literally every minute of it. But that moment when Omar says—he's on the stand, on the witness stand, and he basically says that the game—like, 'I'm playing the game on the streets, you're playing it here with the briefcase and all your fancy words, and whatever but it's still the same game,' you know, he says to the lawyer and the lawyer's completely disarmed by how articulate and wise this stick-up guy is.

JW: Yeah.

AO: Let's see; books again. *Big Magic* by Elizabeth Gilbert I talk about all the time because I, I just think it's great. It's just such a lovely, light, funny but wise read about being a creative. And then what else? Um—

JW: It can even be a children's book. It can be a book from your childhood.

AO: Oh! You know what I'm gonna pick then? In which case—that's good. *Bears in the Night*. I just think it's great. It's just—I had such nostalgic memories of it and, and I in my mind—so basically the story is, the plot is [they laugh] that a little baby bear is put to bed and then decides it's going to go on this midnight adventure. So it goes out of the window, over the bridge, it goes up to—anyways and then it gets scared and then it runs all the way back home. But in my mind I had it that it was this epic adventure; that it went on for pages and pages and pages and I was like, *this book is the best thing ever* and then I bought it about a year ago [they laugh] and it's about eight pages! I was like, *where's the rest?* But I still—it was just so lovely and nostalgic to—I mean if, if your kid is like, I don't know, maybe two or three or something like that. I think it's perfect because it's beautifully illustrated. It's so simple and it's really about like that thing of children being able to go a certain way on their own but always being able to retreat back to the safety of the home.

JW: That's great I'm gonna get *Bears in the Night*. I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna, I'm gonna buy it.

AO: It's lovely, it's a really lovely book.

JW: Great. Just to finally wrap up, I want two pieces of advice from you. One for any up-and-coming creatives and secondly, dating advice.

AO: [Laughs] Oh my God! Well my dating advice: let me give that first.

JW: Go on.

AO: Um, whatever I say, do the opposite. Uh, that would be my dating advice. [JW laughs.] I am like the least successful when it comes to relationships.

JW: Okay, but what you do know; when someone comes up to you, when they come up to you and chirps you, you know what—

AO: Yeah.

JW: What doesn't work! So what should people not do?

AO: Oh, okay. Um—

JW: See, I flipped it around, flipped it on its head!

AO: I see what you did. But the thing—the fact of the matter is, is that if you are vibing with somebody, if you're into them, it doesn't matter what they do and if you're not into them it doesn't matter what they do. They're not going to be able to turn you. So I just say be yourself, as cringe and as obvious as that is, I think just being yourself—

JW: Hey, I think it's great advice.

AO: Cool, alright; and then the—creatively, gosh, it's pretty much the same again: be yourself!

JW: Well thank you for being yourself. It's been an amazing interview. Really had fun.

AO: Thank you, Jonny, that was great. It was really good to chat.

Andi Osho was in conversation with Jonny Wright for *WritersMosaic*

A recording of this interview can be found at writersmosaic.org.uk

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