

Vanessa Kier
Interview Questions for MFRW Newsletter

How much of your personality and life experiences are in your writing? Not much. I'm pretty shy and not particularly brave in the face of danger, unlike my characters. However, I do believe strongly in justice, which is a theme in my romantic thrillers. Some of the places I've visited show up in my books. For example, my new series WAR takes place in West Africa. I lived in West Africa for a few years and am using my knowledge of the customs and the rhythm of life of that part of the world to add depth to the stories. Thankfully, I was there before Ebola and before the rebel violence, so I didn't experience the life-and-death situations in my books.

What kind of research do you do for a book? I do a lot of internet research and read biographies or applicable histories. I also belong to the online Mystery/Romantic Suspense chapter of Romance Writers of America aka Kiss of Death (KOD). Through their pre-conference tours I've had a chance to visit the FBI, the CIA, various military bases, fire departments, and police departments. Plus, both KOD and the San Francisco Area chapter of RWA have offered workshops with members of law enforcement, forensic pathology, and the law. I ask tons of questions and take copious notes!

Who are some of your other favorite authors to read? In the romantic suspense genre a few of my favorites are Suzanne Brockmann, Cindy Gerard, and Tara Janzen. I also love urban fantasy from such authors as Ilona Andrews, Patricia Briggs, Karen Chance, Jim Butcher, Seanan McGuire, Eileen Wilks and Keri Arthur. As you can probably tell, I like action-packed stories with emotionally complex characters. Those are also the type of stories I like to write.

If you came with a warning label, what would it say? WARNING: Creative mind at work. Human may not respond as expected.

Are you in control of your characters or do they control you? Ha! Control my characters? As if! I am absolutely, positively a character-pecked writer. My characters have minds of their own and enjoy screwing up my entire plot just because they decide they want something I failed to anticipate. Do *not* get me started on He Who Did Not Die, the minor antagonist I'd planned to kill off but ended up redeeming himself, falling in love, and getting his own book.