

T.C. Southwell interviews Vanessa Finaughty

Q: What inspired you to write *Ashes to Ashes*?

A: I initially wrote a sappy romance version for a new (at the time) company selling personalised novels – that’s where the purchaser’s name and personal information, such as their spouse, best friend, pet or favourite perfume, is included in the novel as the characters. It was a bit of a mess from their side, so I decided in the end that my creativeness was stifled and not to sell them my story. I’m not really into sappy stuff, so I re-wrote it the way I like it – full of thrills and psychos and supernatural experiences. I must say, re-writing the lovey-dovey scenes into stalker/psycho scenes was rather interesting!

Q: Have you had any experiences with the occult that you incorporated into the book, or that made you want to write about the occult?

A: I’ve seen a few scary things that have made me view the world with new eyes – and some that scared the crap out of me, so I believe in the existence of things we can’t see, and I think some of these things are good and others bad, much like humans.

Q: Your heroine is quite a tough girl; was her character based on anyone you know?

A: Not specifically, no, although I do relate to her in *some* ways, like the way she’s had to deal with so much, which has made her a lot harder to push around.

Q: Which genre is your favourite and why?

A: That’s a tough one – I’d have to say that horror/thriller and fantasy tie in first place.

Q: Which do you think is your best book to date, and why?

A: *Sanctuary for the Devil*. No matter what we’re doing, the more we do it, the better at it we become, and this is my latest book.

Q: Your latest fantasy novel, *Sanctuary for the Devil*, Book One of the *Legends of Origin* series, is coming out soon. Tell us a little about it, what inspired it, and how many books do you plan to write in this series?

A: I was lying in bed one night tossing and turning when a scene popped into my head – an injured man racing to monastery where he can claim sanctuary from the powerful enemy that pursues him. I knew instantly that he has many internal battles and is desperate to find hope, but doesn’t truly believe he will... and so Liam MacAskill was born – ex-PI, ex-bodyguard, and the Searcher of legend. At the start of the book, Liam’s pretty much against any form of organised religion, so it seems an unlikely pairing when he teams up with one of the monks from the monastery, Arthean, but some things are just meant to be... It’s not super religious in context, but the plot does revolve around Liam’s search for the Garden of Eden. As for how many books I plan to write in this series – that’s up to Liam and Arthean, and they haven’t told me yet. I have the next three in my head already, though. In Book 2, Earth’s sun is stolen shortly after a portal to the next galaxy opens on December 21, 2012, spinning Liam into an adventure he doesn’t want.

Q: How long have you been writing and what motivated you to start?

A: Ever since I could read, basically. I can't remember ever not wanting to write. Yes, I was one of those kids who loved essays in English class while everyone else complained about them, read books I didn't have to, and made little books I'd handwritten to give family members. I even remember having a 'book signing' or something similar as a kid, where I inflicted myself on family members at some family gathering or something. Yes, I'm strange, but what can I say? I've always known I'm a writer.

Q: Who are your favourite authors and what is it about their writing you like?

A: Dean Koontz, John Connolly and Terry Brookes. Their writing is engaging and usually holds insight into life in general and the way the world and universe works. With Koontz specifically, I like his usually short chapters with cliff-hanger endings that keep you on the edge of your seat, and I love his real characters that he throws into twisted situations, along with his exceptional sense of humour. Connolly's humour also grabs me, along with his fascinating characters and supernatural spin, and Brookes' can write fantasy without bogging it down with too many boring bits, as many fantasy authors tend to do.

Q: What process do you use when you write?

A: None. I just write whatever's in my head or whatever my characters want to do, and it usually works out far better than if I'd planned it. I've had people comment on how much planning I've put into a book, yet I do none at all, so it must work for readers too! I find it's much more fun to write if it isn't planned, and quicker too, since I have to write more if I want to know what's going to happen next. I really write to entertain myself and, if I do, I publish.

Q: Why did you choose to write in the fantasy genre?

A: It wasn't really my choice – it was that darn scene I couldn't get out of my head until it was on paper! I dreamt about it that night, too, which was a sure sign that it needed to be written and fast.

Q: What do you think of self-publishing as opposed to going with a mainstream or vanity publisher? What are the pros and cons?

A: It's definitely the way to go! As an Indie author, you have total control of your book, which is always the best way to go. There are plenty of other good Indie writers out there who need 'talent swaps', say swapping edits on each other's books, so you don't need to skimp on the things a mainstream publisher would ordinarily do for you, such as cover design or editing. The only con for me is that marketing my books takes up a lot of my writing time, as does forming connections and talent swapping with other authors, but I'm a control freak, so this suits me just fine as long as I retain control.

Q: What annoys you the most?

A: Gosh. There are so many things that annoy me... People who say one thing and mean another (basically, being lied to).

Q: What do you enjoy the most?

A: Writing!

Q: Who is your favourite character and what is it about them you like?

A: Arthean, the Tridorian monk in *Sanctuary for the Devil*. He's really the type of person all of us should aim to be – so patient and forgiving, non-judgemental and loyal, understanding and everything else you could ever want in a person.

Q: Would you like to live in the world you created for *Sanctuary for the Devil*?

A: If I could live on Arthean's planet and not know about the rest of the universe, absolutely! The ryokin would be my favourite part, even though, like Liam, I'm afraid of heights! I'm not so sure if I'd have the same answer for Book 2!

All Finaughty's books can be purchased from [Smashwords](#), with a free preview read available, and *Dragon Kin* and *Ashes to Ashes* are available in print from Amazon.