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## Mary Kay Andrews

Savannah Breeze  
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**Q: You write as if you are really familiar and comfortable with these characters. Are they based on people you know? Of course, they are fictional, but do you feel as if you have a relationship with them?**

A: My characters—especially BeBe and Weezie—seem like real people to me, especially since *Savannah Breeze* marks a return appearance from an earlier book. None of them is based on real people, but I'll admit a tiny bit of me is in each of my female protagonists. Usually it's nothing anybody else would recognize, but maybe my own reactions to situations presented in real life. Or sometimes, I twist around what my own reaction would be and give a character like BeBe the polar opposite reaction. And with secondary characters, I sometimes borrow from real life. For instance, in *Savannah Breeze*, Granddad's addiction to candy bars and the Weather Channel was based on my own late father's habits.

**Q: Who or what have been some of the major influences on your development as a writer?**

A: I think my development as a writer has been a gradual evolution. I come from a journalism background, so in my early novels, which were mysteries written under my own name, I concentrated on good plotting and puzzle solving. When I started writing the Mary Kay Andrews novels, I gave myself permission to play with style and characterization, and to let my natural sense of humor come through in the books. Of course, I'm always trying to grow and change, to keep myself and my readers entertained.

**Q: Do you enjoy the actual process of writing, or is it just hard work, or both?**

A: Writing is just doggone hard. I love the sense of achievement I get when seeing a pile of pages on top of my desk at the end of a work day. And on a really good day, I can give myself an "attagirl." And on the bad days, I stare at the computer, I stare at the ceiling, and I stare at the classifieds looking for a high-paying job that doesn't involve writing fiction!

**Q: You used to be a journalist. If you were to have a career other than writing, what might it be? Designer? Chef?**

A: If I weren't a writer, I might have become an antique dealer, or a shopkeeper, or a beach bum.

**Q: What advice would you give to someone who wants to write a novel?**

A: My best advice to beginning writers is to read, read, read. Figure out what you want to write. Play to your strengths. Write and keep writing. Treat your writing like a job. Approach it with dedication. And don't take yourself too seriously.