



Sample Q&A for *Hard Return* by Rosie Claverton

Why did you choose to write The Amy Lane Mysteries?

At the start of the series, Amy is a technological genius, who travels the world through her homemade supercomputer, but can't leave her apartment due to severe agoraphobia. Jason is an ex-con who ran with the wrong crowd and is trying to turn his life around. Amy and Jason took up residence in my head and wouldn't get out!

I had to tell their story in Cardiff, and then in the wider environment of Wales. The country has a murder rate of three per year—so, my amateur detectives are often out of their depth and attract national media attention.

As the series progressed, I wanted to tell the story of someone in recovery from mental health problems. I wanted to show possibilities, but also the effort involved in maintaining good mental health with a demanding job.

Where did you get the idea for Hard Return?

I wanted to play with the classic “country house” mystery from the Golden Age of Crime and give it a modern twist. Taking twelve convicts and locking them in a secret prison compound is bound to lead to violence, but how do you get away with murder when you're being watched 24/7? I really enjoyed the challenge of working that out!

Putting Jason back into a criminal environment and pushing Amy out of her comfort zone to follow him placed both characters under immense stress—which is where all the interesting stuff comes out! They're also working through the beginnings of a new relationship, which adds an extra thread of tension.



How do you juggle writing novels with a medical career and family life?

It's difficult to write after a day's work whatever job you do, but psychiatry can be emotionally draining too. However, I find my work a great source of inspiration too, particularly for three-dimensional characters.

Since the birth of my daughter, keeping to a rigid schedule is a luxury! I'm very grateful to my husband for enabling me to keep writing when we both have such high demands on our time. My side of the housework is often the first thing to go out of the window!

What experience do you bring into this novel?

My knowledge of mental health had been key to the series—particularly as Amy's journey has changed throughout the series. I also feel that psychological insight has helped build convincing characters, and motives that are embedded in human experience but not resorting to harmful stereotypes of mental illness.

I lived in Wales for seven years, and I was in Cardiff for five of those, having also recently returned to it. I have intimate knowledge of the city and its atmosphere. I've met a number of Jasons – and a fair few Amys in my online haunts.