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Psychiatrist teams up agoraphobic hacker and ex-con in Cardiff crime novel

CARDIFF, UK - Novelist and junior psychiatrist Rosie Claverton combines her intimate knowledge of killer psychology and Cardiff's secrets in *Captcha Thief*, the third thrilling instalment in her Welsh crime series *The Amy Lane Mysteries*.

Released on 29th February 2016, this compelling mystery surrounds a break-in at the National Museum of Wales, where a security guard has been murdered and a priceless Impressionist painting stolen.

Captcha Thief gives readers an unusual tour of Wales, from Cardiff's grand marble museum to the beaches of Anglesey. The book also focuses on art theft, an unusual topic for a crime novel. Previous novels in the series have involved a serial killer (*Binary Witness*) and drug trafficking (*Code Runner*).

Rosie juggles a career in psychiatry with writing crime novels, which offers her a unique perspective on people. She says "I see a lot of people under stress, when their emotions are at the fore, and that emotional honesty is vital to my work." This insight also enabled Rosie to create Amy, a woman struggling under the weight of her agoraphobia and depression, yet travelling the world through her homemade supercomputer.

Rosie Claverton's other work includes short film *Dragon Chasers*, which aired on BBC Wales in Autumn 2012 and starred Alex Reid. *Captcha Thief* is published by Crime Scene Books. You can find more about Rosie at her website <http://rosieclaverton.com>.

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About *Captcha Thief*

Book three of The Amy Lane Mysteries

Agoraphobic hacker Amy Lane is recovering from her last case when her ex-con assistant Jason Carr finds a new crime to solve – a murdered security guard at the National Museum of Wales and a stolen Impressionist painting worth millions.

Ice-cold National Crime Agency investigator Frieda Haas is on the trail of the missing painting and charms Jason into following her to North Wales. He abandons Amy for new thrills, driving her to desperate measures to keep her panic under control and to stay on the track of the killer.

Nothing in this case is what it seems and Amy's investigation takes her and Jason down a dangerous path – playing games with a murderer.

About the Author

Rosie Claverton grew up in Devon, daughter to a Sri Lankan father and a Norfolk mother, surrounded by folk mythology and surly sheep. She moved to Cardiff to study Medicine and adopted Wales as her home, before studying psychiatry in London.

Her first short film *Dragon Chasers* aired on BBC Wales in Autumn 2012. She co-wrote the ground-breaking series of short films *The Underwater Realm*. Her debut novel *Binary Witness* was published by Carina Press in May 2014, with the sequel *Code Runner* published in September 2014. Crime Scene Books continued publication of the series with *Captcha Thief* in February 2016.

Between writing and medicine, she blogs about psychiatry and psychology for writers in her *Freudian Script* series and hosts the monthly Twitter chat #psywrite, advocating accurate and sensitive portrayals of people with mental health problems in fiction.

Recently returned to her beloved Cardiff, she lives with her journalist husband and their pet hedgehog.

Contact

T: 07946113354

E: rosie@rosieclaverton.com

W: <http://rosieclaverton.com>

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Full media press kit, including high-resolution images and latest updates, available on [The Amy Lane Mysteries website](#).

Sample Q&A for *Captcha Thief* by Rosie Claverton

Why did you choose to write The Amy Lane Mysteries?

Amy is a technological genius who can travel anywhere in the world via her computer, but can't leave her apartment due to crippling 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! And I had to tell their story in Cardiff. Wales has a murder rate of three per year – with serial killers, gang slayings and art heists, my detectives are out of their depth and attract national media attention.

Where did you get the idea for Captcha Thief?

My first book *Binary Witness* features a serial killer in Cardiff and the sequel *Code Runner* focuses on drug trafficking. I wanted to write about a different sort of crime, and an art heist appealed to me. I like exploring the inter-dependency of Amy and Jason by tearing them apart, ideologically and geographically, and then letting them struggle back to each other.

How do you juggle writing novels with working as a doctor?

I try to write a little each day, even if it's only a few hundred words or a small piece of planning. It requires a lot of discipline, sitting down to write after a day's work whatever job you do, but sometimes psychiatry can be emotionally draining too. However, I find my work a great source of inspiration too, particularly for three-dimensional characters. I see a lot of people under stress, when their emotions are at the fore, and that emotional honesty is vital to my work.

What experience do you bring into this novel?

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. I also think my mental health knowledge allows me to create an accurate yet sensitive portrayal of a woman struggling with agoraphobia and depression – and creating compelling villains.

What research did you do for this novel?

I had to learn a lot about museum security, researching notable art heists of the recent past. I also delved into the stories behind the art and artists, as a human element really aids the story. My friend Lisa Gray helped with a description of Glasgow city centre, as I've never visited, and the Holyhead coastguard told me exactly where to land a boat when up to no good!

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Excerpts from *Captcha Thief* by Rosie Claverton

Excerpt #1 – A mere impression

Between the little puddles of light around the artworks, the black was absolute, only made deeper by the brightness of the lights. Paul squinted into the black spaces, his head beating up into his throat as the seconds stretched into millennia in his panic. Who was lurking in the darkness and what did they want? His boss was never going to forgive him—neglecting his duties, mooning at paintings. If something was lost, could he forgive himself?

He heard a whisper of movement to his right. Despite the screaming of his nerves, Paul ran through the archway into the adjacent gallery, looking left and right for the intruder.

Then he saw her.

The cruel rend was jagged, uneven across the background—more like a lumberjack’s hack than a surgeon’s precision. The top of the canvas had flopped over like a dog-ear, obscuring face and gloves and bustle. All that remained visible were her perfect skirts, fold upon fold of cerulean, azure and sapphire, and that cheeky inch of scandalous toe protruding beneath them.

The bastard had cut The Blue Lady.

Paul could weep for her. His hand stuttered forward, to restore her beauty, but then he jerked back. He must not damage her. Talia and Soo-jin and Noah—they would know what to do for the best. They would save her.

He should call them right away, before the cops. They had to preserve her—the weight of the canvas threatened to tear her further, rip her open like one of Jack the Ripper’s whores. Split open for the vultures—

Thud! Paul’s head collided with the painting and he slid, stunned, to the ground. He tried to get up, face his attacker, but his arms were strangely heavy, his legs uncooperative. His body was a sack of stones, beyond his control, a ghost of something like pain spreading over the back of his head.

He gasped for air that would not come and, as he looked up at the encroaching darkness, his vision was filled with the most perfect blue.

And a splatter of red.

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Excerpt #2 – Assessing the evidence

Amy had always considered herself focussed and dedicated, when her depression was bearable. But her attention was waning, more intent on watching her assistant than keeping an eye on the evidence. Though he was an attractive man, it went deeper than that—she depended on him. He was vital to her.

“You all right?”

Jason’s voice brought her back and she realised she was holding the CD over the open drive, staring off into space.

“Tired.”

It was her default excuse. The one that would prevent further questions from him. Stop him guessing the real cause of her absent-mindedness.

Processing the discs took a few minutes, so she looked over the crime scene photos, forcing herself to look, really look. But nothing was going in and Jason leaning over her shoulder in his customary position wasn’t helping.

“It’s a funny choice of weapon,” he said.

“Maybe it’s all he had.”

“For a pro? Your backup plan for a job gone wrong isn’t a hammer to the head when a gun pressed against his back would do the job, or even something gun-shaped if you can’t get hold of the real deal. Why risk the time for GBH or murder when the threat works better anyway?”

At moments like these, Amy was abruptly reminded of Jason’s past. She didn’t ask exactly what he would choose, or whether his experience was practical. Some things were better left in the dark.