

Question and Answer with Rachel Amphlett, author of *Before Nightfall*

1. What can you tell us about *Before Nightfall*?

When Kate Foster secures a lucrative new job, her boss insists that she undertake a pre-deployment security and hostage survival course – a course that's not meant to be easy, and one that Kate almost fails, to the consternation of her instructor.

Six months later, Kate is working in Istanbul when a simple day's task goes horribly wrong.

Kidnapped and held hostage by a group of violent criminals, Kate must recall the lessons she learned during her security training in order to stay alive while she hopes for rescue.

For Finn Scott, the man who trained her, it's his worst nightmare. Haunted by memories of a failed hostage rescue, he is thrust into a situation beyond his control.

Now, against a sinister adversary whose ambitions will tear apart Eastern Europe, Finn must face the demons from his past to secure Kate's future before the kidnappers' deadline expires...

2. Where did the idea for *Before Nightfall* come from?

This one was the strangest process ever – and the quickest. I had the idea for the opening sequence going round in my head during the throes of releasing *Under Fire* in August 2013. Immediately after that book's release, I returned to the UK for a visit, stopping off in Malta for a week's break on the way home.

I spent the last day in Malta on a yacht travelling up the coast towards Gozo and Comino – I'd taken a book to read and I had my notebook and a couple of pens on me as usual.

Daydreaming off into the distance, the opening sequence popped into my head – a woman in trouble, taken hostage, and the feel of the sackcloth hood over her head. I could even sense the way the hood would stick to her mouth and nose as she breathed.

Within half an hour, I was curled up on the sofa in the yacht's lounge area, frantically scribbling out the whole plot sequence for what would become *Before Nightfall*. Everything. No gaps, no “what ifs?” – it all just fell into place.

3. Share with us the type of research you undertook to make the training course, and subsequent action, so realistic.

I'd been very lucky with the writing of the *Dan Taylor* thrillers to meet some wonderful people who do this sort of work for a living (or have done in the past) who haven't minded sharing their experiences with me. I soak up their stories and their advice. I've often been accused of having an over-active imagination, so it hasn't been too difficult for me to put myself in their shoes. I think if you research thoroughly, the storytelling from that becomes a natural spin-off – I certainly find it inspiring.

Before Nightfall was an amalgamation of past conversations I'd had with various experts, plus some additional research into hostage survival courses. It's strange, but whenever I'm working on a new project, the right information comes to me at the right time – I'm a firm believer in synchronicity when it comes to writing!