

# Jon Malysiak — Sample Q&A

*For press kit, podcast prep, written email interviews, and any journalist who would like to write a piece without a live interview slot.*

## **On the cultural moment for satirical glamour fiction**

*“There’s a hunger right now for fiction that takes wealth and bad behaviour seriously without flinching from how funny and devastating it can be at the same time. You’re seeing it not just in books but in film and TV with the popularity of shows like *Beef*, *Succession*, and of course *Rivals* — not to mention the *Real Housewives* franchise and the recent film *Saltburn*. We hate-watch these people, but at the same time we can’t help but feel a bit envious of that same wealth, glamour and power we purport to disdain. *The Templeton Family Chronicles* feeds into that as satire. It’s a transatlantic story about people who have everything and yet, somehow, don’t seem able to stop themselves from systematically destroying all that their privilege has given them. The books satirise a lot of other hot-button topics as well, but wealth and privilege is the throughline.”*

## **On the decision to self-publish**

*“These books are self-published and I feel no shame in saying that. I didn’t even bother pitching them to commercial houses. However, I’m approaching the launch as if they were published by a commercial house. I think self-publishing is a very viable and respectable option for more and more writers, especially as commercial publishing becomes increasingly limited in terms of what gets through the door.”*

## **On the origin of the series with his brother Colin**

*“The idea came to us on a mountain hike in Colorado, where my brother lived. I don’t remember how we got onto the topic, but I do remember having a laugh about how tragic and yet ridiculous the world had gotten, and from there we came across the idea of collaborating on a novel that kind of explored the hot-button issues of our times but did so in a really irreverent way. Some might argue too irreverently. Colin had this tremendous sense of humour. He could find something farcical and funny in any situation. Much more so than me. Nothing was sacred with him. His humour and his love of satire combined with my dramatic vision — I’ve always loved epic sagas — to perhaps surprisingly prolific effect. *The Templeton Family Chronicles* was born. I was living in Chicago at the time, Colin outside Breckenridge, CO. The series bridged the distance between us and, unknown to us at the time of course, bonded us closer as brothers in the years before his death.”*

## **On finishing the series alone**

*“Over the better part of seven years, Colin and I created well over a thousand manuscript pages of storylines and characters all within this Templeton Family universe. *Posh* and *Trash* are just the tip of the iceberg. I’d say I’ve got probably another two or three novels’ worth of content waiting to be sculpted and edited into publishable form. It’ll definitely keep me busy. And although I’ve put a more cohesive throughline into this material, this series still belongs to both of us. The work, the process, the creativity — these are all a part of the longest conversation I’ll ever have with him. It’s my duty to see this vision — mine as much as Colin’s — come to light.”*

## **On the tone of the books**

*“While there’s definitely a poignancy in regards to how the Templeton Family Chronicles came into existence, the content is anything but maudlin. It’s sexy, fun, and irreverent. It pushes the envelope. Think *Jilly Cooper**

*mixed with the Real Housewives and a healthy dose of Saltburn. Hell, toss in some Euphoria too. The point is, this series is a tribute to my brother's sense of humour, the fun we had collaborating on it, and a celebration of this really messed-up world we live in."*

### **On keeping a sprawling, multi-location world straight**

*"Keeping all the twists and turns and characters straight is definitely a challenge. With books like these that consist of overlapping time frames and multiple locations spread worldwide, it's so important to maintain organised notes. I'm not particularly well-organised in that regard, but my brother was. He never forgot anything and I've still got a lot of our discussion notes on file which really helps. Also, it's really important to read and re-read and edit as you go along. I can't say enough about the importance of having a good editor. Sometimes when you as the author are too deep in the weeds with your storytelling and character-building, you can easily lose track of who's who and what's what. I used to hate being edited but I've come to appreciate a good development editor. They're a necessity, and the less they hold back as far as constructive criticism, the better."*

### **On the character that most surprises him: Chloe Templeton**

*"Chloe is one of the main characters in Posh. She's one of those people of a certain class and position who basically views herself as a philanthropic do-gooder out to change the world, and yet what she says and her actions and reactions to things are so narrow-minded and self-centred that it sets up a tension between what she believes herself to be and what she actually is. I love Chloe. I think she's hilarious. Annoying as hell but so completely out of touch with the real world that you can't help but kind of feel sorry for her. She's not a bad person. She just doesn't know how else to be. She says things that, even though I wrote her, take me by surprise. Like how utterly un-self-aware can a person be?"*

### **On Naomi Wasserman in Trash**

*"Beautiful. Totally unhinged. A whirlwind and a catastrophe. Yet, in revisiting her story arc after having put Trash in a drawer for a few years after my brother's death, I actually came to see her as something of the ultimate survivor. Yes, her behaviour is manic and unpredictable, but she's had truly horrible things happen to her that have forced her to build up this incredible reserve of resilience that she will have to draw from again and again as her storyline progresses. There's a lot more to her than the packaging."*

### **On what each setting (London/Dorset versus Beverly Hills) demanded as a writer**

*"Posh is much more narrowly confined, both geographically and socially. It exists within a very particular world: London society and an old family estate in Dorset, with all the history, hierarchy and restraint that comes with that environment. The characters in Posh are shaped by generations of tradition and by the pressure to maintain appearances at all costs. Even when they behave badly, there's still a level of repression and supposed gentility governing them. The isolation of the estate itself creates a pressure-cooker atmosphere that simply wouldn't work in a more sprawling setting. Trash, by contrast, opens everything up. Los Angeles, and particularly Beverly Hills, gave me a completely different energy. The American characters are bigger, louder, more expansive, and far less restrained than their British counterparts. There's a performative quality to Los Angeles that felt perfect for the themes of the novel: celebrity, reinvention, image-making, excess. Dorset lends itself naturally to secrecy, inherited wealth, family legacy, and decay. Beverly Hills, on the other hand, thrives on visibility. The novel could only really exist in a city built around spectacle and self-invention in the way Los Angeles is."*

### **On the riskiest thing the series satirises**

*“One of the biggest risks, honestly, is being a male writer writing a series so heavily dominated by its female characters. The women in *Posh* and *Trash* are absolutely the driving force of the books: the smartest people in the room much of the time, certainly the most emotionally intelligent, and often the most dangerous too. The men, by comparison, are frequently quite ineffectual. Cringey, even. What interested me was exploring not only toxic masculinity, but toxic femininity too. The books play with ideas around power, gender, beauty, ambition, and the shifting dynamics between men and women in a post-#MeToo world. Satire works best, I think, when it pushes ideas slightly beyond the edge of comfort. There’s a scene where Lady, the protagonist in *Trash*, visits her mother at Eve’s Garden, an all-female commune where men have effectively been banned, and Lady finds herself arguing that not all men are bad and that some men are, in fact, decent people. The fact that the conversation itself feels controversial says something about the cultural moment we’re living through. Obviously figures like Harvey Weinstein, Andrew Tate, and the broader manosphere culture represent genuinely toxic and damaging behaviour, and the books don’t shy away from that. But I also think there’s a danger in reducing people into absolutes or flattening entire genders into caricatures. Satire should complicate things, not simplify them.”*

### **On what was most fun to write**

*“Probably the sheer excess of it all. Wealth, vanity, status, social performance, cosmetic perfection, emotional dysfunction hidden beneath luxury. Those things are endlessly entertaining because they’re simultaneously ridiculous and deeply human. The characters in these books are often behaving outrageously, but hopefully there’s still enough emotional truth underneath the satire that readers recognise parts of themselves in them too, which is usually where the comedy becomes a little uncomfortable.”*

### **On what the writing day actually looks like**

*“I’d like to say I’m super-disciplined about writing, waking up at four in the morning to hash out 1,000 words or whatever before heading off to work. But that’s definitely not me. I write when I have pockets of time. I actually quite like writing on my train commute to and from London. Or on weekends in cafes. Much of *Posh* and *Trash* was written in hotel bars and airports with a glass or two of red wine at hand. I long ago realised I don’t like writing at home. I like being around people with the buzz of activity around me. When I do sit down to write, I tend to set 1,000 words as my target. Sometimes less, sometimes more, depending on how inspired I’m feeling.”*

### **On what the day job has taught the night job**

*“The most useful thing the day job has reinforced is the importance of knowing your target audience, doing your homework on your book’s genre, and establishing a clear strategic vision for the book from the outset. If you don’t know who you’re writing for and are unclear about what you want your book to be, chances are you’ll end up writing a book that appeals to no one. The world of the *Templetons* was well-defined in my mind before I committed a single word or character to the page. Sure, during the writing process, things change. An inspiration will suddenly come to me and I’ll think, ‘wow, I need to explore this!’ There’s definitely joy in creative spontaneity, but you need to have a structural framework within which to explore that spontaneity. And the worst habit I’ve had to unlearn? Being too spontaneous.”*

### **On the advantages and pitfalls of self-publishing**

*“The main advantage of self-publishing is you maintain full control over your work: editorially, but also how the book is packaged, when it’s released, how and where it’s distributed, and how it’s marketed and promoted. You’re not beholden to a publisher’s schedule, vision, or marketing plan. The big disadvantage to self-publishing*

*is you're not going to automatically get the in-store bricks-and-mortar presence that still carries a lot of weight in the industry. You're also not going to have the support of a publisher's in-house marketing and PR team. Having said that, there's no reason a self-published author can't market and promote the hell out of their books themselves. But it's going to cost them. For *Posh and Trash*, I've hired a team. The books have been edited by a veteran London-based publishing executive who's developed Sunday Times bestsellers. My marketing and PR is handled by a highly experienced book publicist. The series' website was created by a fantastic web designer. The cover and interior designs were created by a long-time publishing-industry veteran who has done work for top-five publishers. One could argue I have an advantage because I've worked in publishing for a long time, but even so, I still have to pound the pavement or else the books will disappear into obscurity. And honestly, what's the point of writing a book if no one reads it?"*

### **On AI-generated content flooding self-publishing**

*"It's a shame the market is being flooded by AI-generated content. As if it wasn't difficult enough establishing a presence as a self-published author, to now have to compete with computer-generated drivel is really frustrating. The fact that so much of it is terrible, derivative, plagiaristic even, makes it even harder when a self-published author who's written every word of their book themselves is unfairly judged as guilty by association. More needs to be done to regulate what Amazon and other retailers put on their sites for sale."*

### **On the influences that shaped the series**

*"I grew up in the golden age of the great 1980s mini-series and prime-time soaps: *Hollywood Wives*, *Princess Daisy*, *Lace*, *Dynasty*, *Dallas*. Even today I don't think television has quite matched them when it comes to portraying wealth, glamour, excess, and the deeply dysfunctional lives of people with too much money and power. The Disney+ adaptation of Jilly Cooper's *Rivals* comes closest. They were heightened and camp, certainly, but underneath all the shoulder pads and champagne there was something almost Shakespearean about them. Contemporary TV approaches those worlds differently. *Succession* sharpened the satirical edge of wealth and privilege, while *Euphoria* impresses me for its sheer fearlessness. As for books, I recently re-read *American Psycho* and was struck all over again by how close it is to a perfect satire of late-1980s and early-1990s consumer culture. It's fearless, hilarious, and was profoundly misunderstood when it was first published. Reading it again in 2026, it also felt startlingly contemporary, particularly in its parallels to influencer culture, performative wealth, materialism, and social hypocrisy. While I don't go to the same extremes as Bret Easton Ellis, I do see similarities between what he was attempting and what I'm trying to do in *Posh* and especially *Trash*. Other influences include Edward St Aubyn, particularly the Patrick Melrose novels, and more recently Allen Bratton's extraordinary *Henry Henry*: aristocratic satire executed perfectly. And honestly, the *Real Housewives* franchise can hardly be viewed as anything other than satire at this point: unintentional perhaps, but satire nonetheless. That's very much the world *Trash* inhabits."*

### **On what readers wouldn't expect**

*"I'm biased, of course, but I think these books are genuinely funny. You could say that every character is a stereotype, and they are stereotypes to a certain extent, that was done consciously, but I also believe they're deeply human. Well, maybe not all of them. I can think of a couple of characters who are pretty unredeemable. But by and large, each of these characters believes they're striving to live their best lives. They're just not necessarily going about it the right way or in a way that most normal people today would find acceptable. They live with blinders on, whether that be due to family legacy, class, social status, looks, gender, sexual orientation or profession. And while you may hate these characters, I do think there's something to love about each one of them. (Well, maybe*

*not Svetlana.)”*

### **On the transatlantic identity, and where home is**

*“Despite being born and raised in the US and living there until I moved to the UK full-time in 2019, I’d say I feel most at home as a writer and as a person in the UK. My mum was English, my dad’s American. I grew up in a very trans-Atlantic home. Some may disagree, but I feel there’s a greater freedom to be creative here in the UK than in the US. At least that’s been my experience in London. I’m fortunate to have the greatest city in the world just a short train ride away from where I live in Northamptonshire. And I benefit from living amidst some of the world’s most beautiful countryside. I get to be very town and country. But I’ll always have a soft spot for LA. The weather, the people, the vibe. If I were ever to move back to the US full-time, it would probably be to Southern California. I grew up in Chicago. Nothing against Chi-town but So-Cal is more my scene.”*

### **On what he hopes readers take from the books**

*“I want readers to be shocked and appalled but also have a damn good laugh, or at least break into a smile or two. Both books hold a lens up to how truly ridiculous the world we’re living in today is. But also how self-serious and righteous society as a whole has become. It’s stifling: what and who we can and can’t write about, what’s now considered sacred and profane. My brother and I didn’t set out to write the Templeton Family Chronicles as a polemic against contemporary society, though through its use of satire it definitely has a point of view. Readers can agree or disagree, or choose to be offended or laugh along with it. That’s up to them. For myself, I’m having a lot of fun writing these books and there’s a lot more to come.”*