**Q&A with David Michael Williams**

**What is *If Sin Dwells Deep* about?**

Here’s the official teaser:

Even good girls have secrets.

When straight-laced Allison sleeps, the rebellious goddess Syn wakes. Having a fling in the dreamscape may seem like harmless fun, but when a sadistic predator learns her true identity, the fantasy begins to bleed into real life.

*If Sin Dwells Deep*—a parallel novel to *If Souls Can Sleep*—exposes the hidden world of dream drifters and explores the war between gifted government agents and those who would use their abilities to corrupt life, death, and that which lies beyond.

**Who is *If Sin Dwells Deep* about?**

The story centers on Allison, specifically her struggles while navigating multiple realities and the morality of managing conflicting identities. The reader also gets glimpses into the mind of the Wolf, a disturbed dream drifter who is determined to punish Allison for her alleged sins.

Intertwined with the main plot are chapters that feature psychiatrist-turned-fugitive William Marlowe, who was presented as an antagonist in Book One and whose scenes help uncover the true threat to the dreamscape in Book Two.

**Who is your favorite character?**

In *If Sin Dwells Deep*,I really enjoyed creating point-of-view characters who were all very different from me. Allison is a conservative young woman; the Wolf is a sexual predator; and William is a gay man of Japanese descent. All three have unique voices and presented their own challenges to me as the author.

While I don’t think I can pick a favorite, I always appreciate the characters who give me an opportunity to express humor. The relationship dynamics of Allison and her love interest, Eben, were a lot of fun to write, though William—a scoundrel on the verge of a mental break—gave me some of my favorite lines in this book.

**What is the setting for *If Sin Dwells Deep*?**

The real-world scenes are split between Seattle and Philadelphia in 2007, but most of the action takes place in the dreamscape, the collective unconscious where dream drifters can access the minds of unsuspecting sleepers.

There are also a few flashbacks, both inside and outside of the dreamscape, that drop clues as to how the actions of William—and other members of the defunct Lucid Dreaming Society—resulted in the current conflict.

**Who will enjoy this book?**

With *If Souls Can Sleep*, the first book in the series, I set out to write something very different from the sword-and-sorcery fantasy stories I had been writing previously. I wanted to tell a story I had never heard before, something unique and unusual.

As a result, Book One and Book Two of The Soul Sleep Cycle are both mashups of several genres, such as science fiction, fantasy, suspense and metafiction.

Fans of speculative fiction—including fantasy and science fiction—are the obvious audience, but the series, as a whole, appeals to people outside those genres too. It’s a wonderfully weird story, so anyone who likes rich characters and unpredictable plots can enjoy *If Sin Dwells Deep*.

**What is *If Sin Dwells Deep* “rated”?**

Whereas I would have rated *If Souls Can Sleep* as PG-13, *If Sin Dwells Deep* earns an R rating. The Wolf is one twisted soul, which brings mature aspects into the story. There’s profanity, violence and sexual content. The suggested audience is age 18 and older.

**How long did it take you to write the book?**

I wrote the first draft of *If Sin Dwells Deep* in about eight months in 2011 and 2012. It wasn’t until 2014 that I wrote a second draft. Then I wrapped up the final edits and proofing in early 2018.

On paper, it looks like it took six years, but when you ignore the time I spent working on other projects, I’d estimate just under a year from writing the prologue of the first draft to finishing the final version.

**What does the title mean?**

I really liked the title of Book One, *If Souls Can Sleep*, which came from a quote within the book. Using an “if clause” leaves the reader hanging and injects some suspense.

The working title of Book Two was “Almost a Fantasy,” but it lacked vim. So I tried to come up with something better, something that tied into the first title.

*If Sin Dwells Deep* was perfect in that it touches on two themes in the novel—whether one’s actions in a dream could be considered actual sins and the idea of “going deeper” while dream drifting.

**Does Book Two pick up where Book One left off?**

*If Sin Dwells Deep* is not a direct sequel to *If Souls Can Sleep*.

With Book One, I realized early on that I was trying to write three books at once. I had to cut two significant storylines in order to streamline it. In the end, Book One became Vincent’s—and to a lesser extent, Milton’s—story.

Yet I knew I wanted to reveal more about the gods and goddesses of Project Valhalla. Ultimately, I decided *If Sin Dwells Deep* would be a parallel novel to *If Souls Can Sleep*. This allowed me to tell another side of the story—the stuff that couldn’t fit into the first book—while giving readers an alternate entry point into the series.

Because *If Sin Dwells Deep* is a parallel novel, readers won’t have to have read *If Souls Can Sleep* first. They could start with either book, though I suspect reading them in the order they were published will be more satisfying.

**Does that mean Book Two tells the same story as Book One?**

No. *If Sin Dwells Deep* isn’t just a retread of the first plot. While the new book will fill in some blanks, shedding light on Project Valhalla’s actions during *If Souls Can Sleep*, it’s strong enough to stand on its own.

Although the two books share a handful of scenes, I thought it was important to make both books self-contained. The two books are interconnected yet independent.

There will be closure in *If Sin Dwells Deep*, but the overarching saga still needs a conclusion—hence, a third book in the series.

**How many more books will there be in the series total?**

At least one more: *If Dreams Can Die*.

The third book is slated for publication in spring 2019. *If Dreams Can Die* will wrap up the saga that began in *If Souls Can Sleep* and *If Sin Dwells Deep*. It will provide a satisfying conclusion to the myriad, intertwining storylines.

However, I always leave a couple of doors open in case I want to return to a series—and, more importantly, if readers do. I try not to let myself think too far ahead, but I do have ideas for a fourth installment of The Soul Sleep Cycle.

**Where did you find inspiration for this book?**

I like putting realistic, relatable characters in strange situations and seeing how they will behave.

As with Vincent in the first book, *If Sin Dwells Deep* focuses on an ordinary person in an extraordinary situation. What would you do if you could do anything without consequences? Who would you become?

Allison uses the dreamscape as an escape. So does the Wolf, though his explorations skew to a much darker extreme. And then there’s William, who hopes to capitalize in the real world from what he can do in the dreamscape.

As for the dreamscape itself, well, I’ve always had vivid dreams. Why do our minds produce their own movies every night? What if dreams actually link our brains to others? I find psychology and neurology fascinating. There is still so much we don’t understand about the science of dreams; I suppose that is what science fiction is for.

**What is your next project?**

Frankly, I have no idea what I’ll pursue after I publish *If Sin Dwells Deep* and *If Dreams Can Die*.

If sales of my existing books support it, I’d love to revisit The Renegade Chronicles or The Soul Sleep Cycle someday. Yet I know I’ll need some kind of palate-cleanser in the meantime.

I have no shortage of ideas. That’s the silver lining of working on a series for so long: new ideas pop into one’s mind while elbow-deep in the current project. I jot them down for later. I’m not sure which I’ll pursue, but I expect I’ll write something a little less complex next—maybe a short story or a stand-alone novel.

The young adult (YA) market is tempting not only because those books seem to be selling well, but also because I’d love for my kids to be able to enjoy my fiction in the next few years. Someday I’d love to write for a comic book or a video game. Only time will tell!

**When will *If Sin Dwells Deep* be available to purchase?**

The publication date for the paperback and the e-book is Oct. 1, 2018. Preorders for Kindle will be available about a month before release, with other e-reader formats to follow in January 2019.