**Q&A with David Michael Williams**

**What is *Magic’s Daughter* about?**

At its core, *Magic’s Daughter* is a coming-of-age story of a girl deciding who she will become and how much of her true self she will share with family members who harbor secrets of their own.

Steeped in the traditions of sword-and-sorcery fantasy, *Magic’s Daughter* favors mystery and complex relationships, both familial and romantic, over copious bouts of combat and geographical exploration. The book reads more like a biography than a typical battle-heavy quest.

To put it another way:

Selena Nelesti wants nothing to do with her noble name.

While her mother schemes to find her a highborn husband, young Selena loses herself in her studies, learning about the villains and heroes who helped shape the world.

But ancient history cannot fix her future. To destroy the shackles of duty and forge her own path, she must seek out new knowledge—forbidden knowledge.

All magic requires sacrifice, however, and if Selena is not careful, it may consume her completely.

**Whom is the book about?**

The story follows the life of Selena Nelesti from age 14 to 18. Selena is a brilliant young noblewoman who wants more out of life than what tradition dictates. When she discovers magic, she finds an avenue to rebel against her family’s wishes.

Selena feels trapped, but only time will tell whether magic is the key to her freedom or the path to another prison.

The supporting cast includes her manipulative mother and an increasingly distant father, her beloved but ailing grandmother, a stable boy who provides a perspective from outside the castle, a combative priest, and a wizard who will change Selena’s world in ways seen and unseen.

**Where does *Magic’s Daughter* take place?**

The book is set in Altaerra, a medieval world with magical elements that have been largely pushed to the periphery of human civilization. Selena’s family lives in the prosperous nation of Superius within the Confederacy of Continae.

Altaerra also serves as the setting for *The Renegade Chronicles*, which often referenced Superius and even contained a few scenes set there, though the bulk of that series took place on the island province of Capricon.

**Why did you decide to return to the world of Altaerra?**

I’ve spent years—decades, actually—building my own fantasy world. Once upon a time, I couldn’t imagine telling stories outside of Altaerra. I wrote the first draft of *Magic’s Daughter* immediately after wrapping up the *The Renegade Chronicles* trilogy (circa 2005) but didn’t do anything with it for a long time thereafter.

Honestly, I didn’t know if I would return to the manuscript, but after getting a warm reception for my first three Altaerra novels, I suspected *Magic’s Daughter* would get released in some way, shape, or form in the future. When I discovered Radish, an app that allows authors to publish their works as serials, I rolled up my sleeves, made massive cuts and revisions, and published chapter after chapter from Sept. 3, 2019, to Feb. 6, 2020.

It was a whole lot of fun visiting Altaerra again. Hopefully, readers will feel the same!

**Is this book part of *The Renegade Chronicles*?**

No, this is a separate story, and the bulk of the plot takes place prior to the events in *The Renegade Chronicles*.

That said, *Magic’s Daughter* is something like a cousin to my first trilogy. Names of people and places will be familiar to those who have read *The Renegade Chronicles*, and there’s at least two characters who appears in both works.

**Should one read *The Renegade Chronicles* before *Magic’s Daughter*?**

Because *Magic’s Daughter* is an independent work featuring different characters, geography, and timeframe, reading *The Renegade Chronicles* is not a prerequisite.

And while *Magic’s Daughter* takes place first, chronologically, the two works can be read in either order.

**Who will enjoy this book?**

Readers of YA fantasy, NA fantasy, and straight-up swords-and-sorcery fantasy are the target audience. Given the protagonist and themes, *Magic’s Daughter* might skew a bit more toward a female readership than male.

Fans of *The Renegade Chronicles* may also enjoy the opportunity to return to Altaerra and experience a different type of tale—one that focuses on a smaller cast of characters, contains more romance, and takes a different approach to matters of life and death.

If you like smart stories with heart, give *Magic’s Daughter* a try.

**What is *Magic’s Daughter* “rated”?**

The suggested audience is age 13 and older. Although *Magic’s Daughter* could probably earn a PG rating if it were made into a movie, the story touches on several mature themes, including sexuality and abuse.

**What does the title mean?**

I chose *Magic’s Daughter* for the title because it touches on the two biggest themes of the story: power and family. It seems as though Selena must choose between her identity as an ambitious spell-caster and her aristocratic role within the Nelesti home. The title also hints at the ambiguity of relationships.

I also liked *Magic’s Daughter* because it could easily be adapted for future books in a series—*Magic’s Disciples*, *Magic’s Defenders*, etc.

**Is this a standalone novel or the first book in a new series?**

It is a standalone novel in that it is self-contained.

However, there is a chance future stories starring Selena Nelesti may be written and published. I have many stories starring the wizardess and her future companions mapped out as well as the first half of a potential sequel drafted.

As always, reader interest—as well as my own—will dictate whether more books will be released.

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

I have dozens of storylines for books set in Altaerra swimming in my brain.

After I finished writing *The Renegade Chronicles*, I was tempted to forge ahead with future tales of the Renegades and the defenders of Fort Valor, but I realized that the next Altaerra saga I wanted to explore started in another place and time.

To do that story justice, I needed to step away from *The Renegade Chronicles* for a spell.

Rather than jump into another high-stakes epic starring three battle mages, I chose to challenge myself by focusing on just one of them—an origin story that featured a single protagonist struggling with personal problems and making decisions that would impact her—and her allies’—future adventures.

*Magic’s Daughter* gave me the opportunity to dig into Altaerra’s magic, which was only glimpsed through a couple of characters in *The Renegade Chronicles*.The book also allowed me to play with complex family dynamics and new themes like identity and memory/memory loss—topics that I went on to explore in *The Soul Sleep Cycle*.

**What is your next project?**

The paperback and Kindle editions of *Magic’s Daughter* were released on April 14, 2020. More e-book editions and, fingers crossed, an audiobook edition will come out later this year.

Although I am tempted to continue working on Selena’s saga, I now turn my attention to a standalone YA portal fantasy slated for Fall 2020, tentatively titled *Sir Larpsalot*.

(You can follow my progress on that book and other projects through my blog at david-michael-williams.com.)