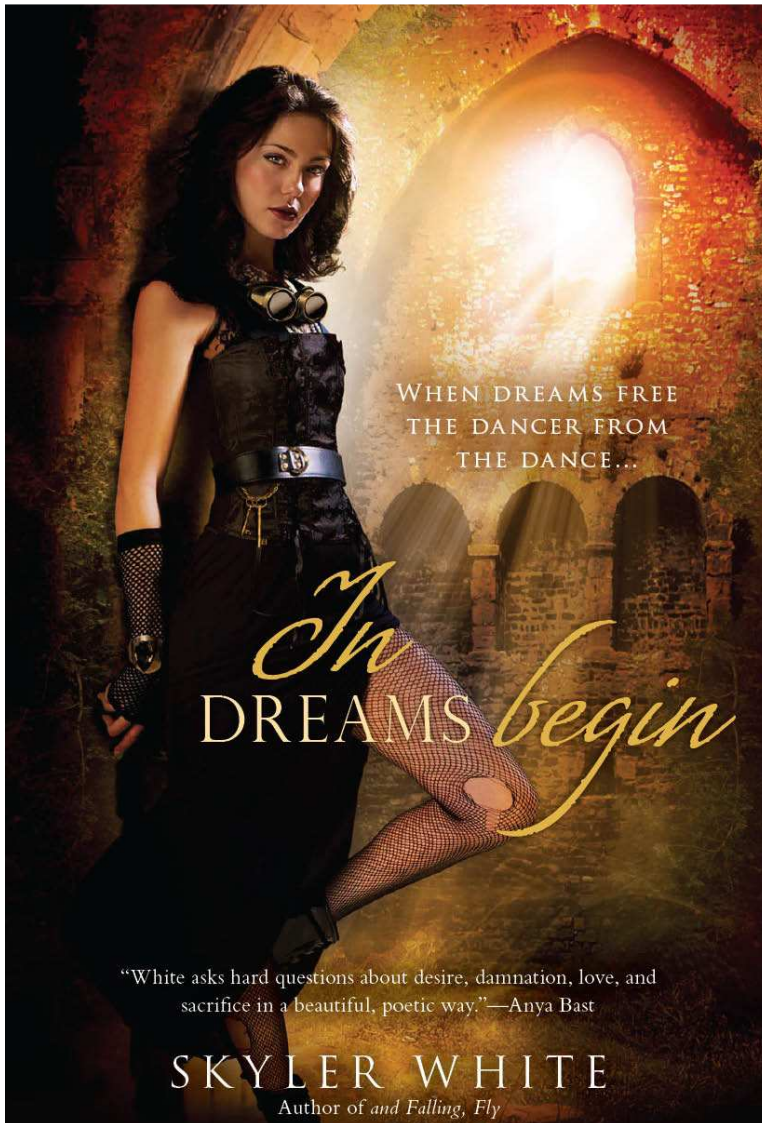


Close your eyes tightly—tightly—and keep them closed . . .



From the author of the “spectacular debut” *and Falling, Fly*—a dark time-travel horror-romance set among the luminaries of the late Victorian ‘Golden Dawn’ occult movement

In Dreams Begin

Skyler White

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From a Victorian Ireland of magic, poetry and rebellion, Ida Jameson, an amateur occultist, reaches out for power, but captures Laura Armstrong, a modern-day graphic artist instead. Now, for the man or demon she loves, each woman must span a bridge through Hell and across history . . . or destroy it.

“Every passionate man is linked with another age, historical or imaginary, where alone he finds images that rouse his energy.” W. B. Yeats

Anchored in fact on both sides of history, Laura and Ida, modern rationalist and fin de siècle occultist, are linked from the moment Ida channels Laura into the body of celebrated beauty and Irish freedom-fighter Maud Gonne. When Laura falls—from an ocean and a hundred years away—passionately, Victoriously in love with the young poet W. B. Yeats, their love affair entwines with Irish history and weaves through Yeats’s poetry until Ida discovers something she wants more than magic in the subterranean spaces in between.

With her Irish past threatening her orderly present and the man she loves in it, Laura and Yeats—the practical materialist and the poet magus—must find a way to make love last over time, in changing bodies, through modern damnation, and into the mythic past to link their pilgrim souls . . . or lose them forever.

Skyler White crafts challenging fiction for a changing world. Populated with angels and rock stars, scientists, demons and revolutionaries, her dark stories explore the secret places where myth and modernity collide. She lives in Austin, Texas.



www.SkylerWhite.com

Skyler White

<http://www.skylerwhite.com>

<http://www.skylerwhite.com/media-room>

<http://www.skylerwhite.com/contact-skyler>

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Publicist: Rosanne Romanello

Ace & Roc Publicity, Penguin Books USA

rosanne.romanello@us.penguin.com

212.366.2323

Praise for *'and Falling Fly'*

Library Journal: Starred Review (the only starred SF/F title out of 18 books in March 2010)

**Dear Author and Joyfully Reviewed:
Recommended for March 2010**

**Fresh Fiction: 'Books Not to Miss' pick
for February/March 2010**



“Strong storytelling and an unusual interpretation of vampires should attract fans of supernatural fiction and urban fantasy to this outstanding debut.” – **Library Journal**, starred review

“White’s debut is a trippy urban fantasy, an esoteric battle between myth and science told in floods of evocative prose ... paranormal fans will appreciate White’s willingness to take chances and try something new.” – **Publishers Weekly**

“Wow, what a mindf*ck ... an ending that satisfies and yet leaves the reader’s brain buzzing.” – **Fantasy Literature**

“A curious and interesting mix of philosophy and myth which takes it a step beyond the ordinary paranormal.” – **Dear Author**

“Skyler White’s soul-rending debut is cutting edge paranormal fantasy ... intensely passionate, sublimely poetic ... reads like dark ethereal poetry ... I’ll remember this book for the rest of my life. I found myself immersed in the cool, hypnotic narrative and deeply affected by White’s subtle (and not-so-subtle!) symbolism and social allegory. So much more than a paranormal fantasy – it’s literary fiction, it’s otherworldly poetry, it’s dark philosophy that will change the way you see the world if you let it” – **Paul Goat Allen, Barnes & Noble Explorations Sci-Fi Fantasy Blog**

“*and Falling, Fly* is a wonderfully strange novel ... among the best vampire writing I have read in years. Skyler White is a writer to watch and a name to remember ... [she] crams so many ideas into this book that it is bursting at the seams. Memory, myth, allegory, and desire all get a metaphysical workout ... I’m telling you, people, this is the kind of author who will have a cult following in a few years, if not a lot sooner. I can see fans of unconventional fantasy writers like Tanith Lee appreciating what White is doing.” – **Mondo Vampire**

“From its sophisticated, intelligent writing style to its compelling characters to its reinvention of vampire lore, *and Falling, Fly* had me hooked from page one. It’s a book that’s hard to put down once you start reading and extremely rewarding once you reach its end. It’s the perfect novel for hopeless romantics, sinners, saints and those in the mood for a completely different vampire novel. Highly recommended!” – **Fatally Yours**

“An intellectual playground of paranormal romance and urban fantasy like nothing you’ve ever read before ... a wild ride full of riddles, love, desire and read-between-the-lines meaning. I was hooked from page one.” – **Fang-tastic Books**

“*and Falling, Fly* is an absolute treasure. I have been excited and intrigued about a lot of novels lately but none come even close to Skyler White’s spectacular debut novel.” – **Strictly Reviews**

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Skyler White's *In Dreams Begin*

Talking Points

- *In Dreams Begin* is a dark time-travel horror/romance that transports a contemporary woman's awareness into a Victorian woman's body to explore questions of **possession, sexuality, poetry, feminine beauty** and **magic**.

- Each chapter of *In Dreams Begin* takes its title from a Yeats quote, is prefaced by **lines of his poetry**, and concludes with an excerpt from a primary source – ranging from the **autobiographies** of two of its main characters (W.B. Yeats and Maude Gonne) to an 1897 **first-person account of mediumship**, to a 1930 **treatise on sex magic**.

- *In Dreams Begin* offers a new twist on the literary mash-up, bringing the life, occult practices, and poetry of W.B. Yeats into **very personal overlap** with the life of a contemporary writer and the characters she creates.

- Skyler White holds an MA in dramatic theory and literary criticism. She did extensive academic and personal research for *In Dreams Begin*, including travel to Ireland, England and France. She read all of **Yeats's poetry, essays** and **autobiographies**, and delved deep into the **Victorian occult, Irish independence, women's suffrage** and the **Sídhe**.

- *In Dreams Begin* belongs to Skyler White's *The Harrowing* – edgy, allegorical tales set in a parallel world of mythic damnation, combining the relevance and romance of **urban fantasy**, the darkness of **contemporary horror**, and the craft and introspection of **literary fiction**. The first book, *and Falling, Fly*, is a dark fable following the trials a vampiric fallen angel and a neuroscientist in a secret Irish hell.

- Skyler is an experienced and dynamic speaker with an edgy appearance who interviews well for TV, print and radio. She will be participating in **readings, signings and panel discussions** at local, regional and national fantasy/sci-fi/comic/romance conventions in 2010-11.



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Skyler White Q&A

Tell us a little bit about *In Dreams Begin*:

In Dreams Begin is a dark time-travel horror/romance based on my personal history and the occult movement of the late Victorian era. Laura, a contemporary graphic artist, wakes up on her wedding night channeled into the body of Maud Gonne, the famous Victorian beauty, Irish revolutionary and amateur occultist who may have been part faerie.

In Maud's body, Laura, our modern, professional woman, while still coming to grips with Victorian rules and outfits, meets W.B. Yeats, the Irish poet. He's wildly romantic, ridiculously passionate, and she, of course, falls (rather embarrassingly,) in love with him, only to wake up back in Portland. The story tracks Laura and her new husband over two weeks, and Laura, Yeats and Maud Gonne over almost thirty years, all completely obedient to actual history.

It was a tremendously fun project to work on because history kept handing me such amazing stuff, allowing me to explore body-image, feminism, fidelity and about six different kinds of possession across a hundred years, through several perspectives and all echoed in the lines of Yeats's poetry. My editor at Berkley has done an amazing job securing rights for me, so I'm going to be able to include the most relevant quotes and historical annotations in the manuscript!

How much of *In Dreams Begin* is true?

The assignment I set for myself is the inverse of the politician's plausible deniability. To the best of my knowledge, there's nothing in the book that can be proved false. I tried very hard to make certain that if a scene takes place between Maud and Yeats in London in 1898, that I had evidence that they were both there then (or at least no evidence showing they were somewhere else). Also, I tried to make sure that none of the historical figures in the book say or do anything inconsistent with what I could learn of their character. I also didn't invent any of the named Victorian historical characters except Ida Jameson, and she actually existed; I just don't know anything about her. I used her name, her parentage, and her friendship with Maud, and invented the rest. But with that exception, any character with a first and last name was a real person whose description and behavior is based in fact.

Where does the book's title come from?

Yeats used the line "in dreams begin responsibilities" as an epigraph to a collection of his poetry, crediting its origin only as "from an old play." I shortened it because I liked the rhythmic resonance *In Dreams Begin* created with *and Falling, Fly*, the title of my first book, and because I liked its ambiguity. A lot of things in this story begin in dream,

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responsibility being only one of them. And the story, to an extent, is about what it means to dream. Or to be a dreamer. Or to be fully awake.

Also, as a writer, I sample other writers. With *Falling*, it was mostly The Bible and Dante, but *Dreams* takes that to a whole new level, remixing history and Yeats's life and writings very liberally. This title allowed me to play with that very overtly, first as a line Yeats himself had sampled; secondly as the title of the brilliant Delmar Schwartz short story (which I reference both explicitly and thematically); and finally as a wink to my fellow U2 fans, who'll recognize the line from a song whose lyrics also outline the same problem-space I'm working in with the story.

Your books aren't really a series, but they're linked, right?

Right. The books share a story world, although they don't overlap much in time. They take place in a universe where things that have mythic or symbolic power also have physical reality. Olivia (from *and Falling, Fly*) makes a tiny cameo in *In Dreams Begin*, although she's not mentioned by name, and there's one other character who makes appearances in both *Dreams* and *Falling*, but I'm not saying who!

What's with the "damned" tattoo gallery on your website?

They're cool freebie temporary tattoos you can get by writing and asking for one. I made them when *and Falling, Fly* was first released, as an easy, fun promotion because the book was addressed directly to the "Reborn and Undead, Damned, Cursed and Misbegotten." It was intended as a playful acknowledgement that, if you're wearing one, the book is for you, but I've been fascinated by way people interact with them, and the visceral reaction a single word can still elicit; a certain hesitation people feel in actually applying "Damned" to themselves – even if it'll wash off. I wrote about it [here](#).

You can also still get a tattoo and join the gallery. It's never too late to be damned!

What can we look for next from you?

I'm working on an all-American, no travel west of the Mississippi, completely contemporary possible trilogy. It nestles into the world of *Falling* and *Dreams*, but I'm thinking of it as a stand-alone series. Sort of an existential detective series within the larger *Harrowing* world.

Blog entries from *In Dreams Begin* research trip in Ireland, England and France:

[Ghosts of Gonne and Yeats](#)

[Yeats' Family Home; The Book](#)

[The Tomb](#)

[Irish Beginnings – and Endings](#)

[Our Shadows Wander the Garden Gravel Still ...](#)

[Castle for Sale](#)

[Yeats's Tower, Thoor Ballylee](#)

[An Island Almost All Castle](#)

[Why I Went to Samoa](#)

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In Dreams Begin: Excerpt

from Chapter 5. They But Thrust Their Buried Men Back in the Human Mind Again

As children, Maud and Ida had walked thus, deliberate and slow, down Donnybrook Road, both of them shaking, although only Maud with fear. Arm in trembling arm again now, through the dark October graves, toward Georges's tomb, Ida still needed to caution herself against skipping in her first giddy moment since arriving in France almost a month ago. The country irritated her, the rigorous attention the nation paid to beauty, the constant wine in small glasses, and how at home Maud was within it.

Ever the hostess—ever the *French* hostess, for all her Irish color—Maud had brought red wine and flowers to the crypt. Ida, always more practical, carried candles, blankets, and lap rugs. Maud unlocked the metal doors of Georges's little memorial chapel, and Ida stepped into its dark of underground smells and windless cold.

Ida dropped the furs in a corner while Maud cursed benignly, burning matches, unable to make the flame stick to the candle wicks. If they lived together and entertained, they would bustle about thus, in friendly silence, preparing for their guests. But tonight only Lucien was expected, he and whatever spirits came, invited or otherwise. Ida tore the bloom from one of Maud's flowers and scattered the petals over the altar. "Why don't you let me light the candles, darling?" she suggested.

Maud leaned her back against the cold and unadorned stone wall. "Ida . . ."

"I know." Ida kept her smile sympathetic, and took the matches from Maud's ghost-white fingers. "Pour the wine."

"Ida, I don't think I can do what I . . ."

"Go ahead and have yourself a glassful, dear. We have more than enough for our communion."

Maud took glasses from the wooden crate they had provisioned over several trips to the little mausoleum. Ida lit the candles, humming to herself. Maud already had a reputation for pleasant evening gatherings, but Ida would raise the tone of the soirées. She and Maud would talk Art and God with their guests, not only politics. The tomb's rich, under-earth smell of graveworms and mushrooms crept over Ida. Maud had been too frightened of tonight to eat, but when they entertained together, Cook would serve duck in whiskey sauce, or salmon with morels.

The candles blazed like a birthday cake, dancing in the drafts admitted through the glassless windows and the open grate in the door. Possibly too from the colder metal doors in the cold stone floor. Maud sat on the provisions box, wordlessly taking her wine like the poison or medicine it was. "Did you want some, Ida?"

"No."

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“He will be here soon.”

“Yes, I should think so.” Ida stood over Maud, strong and unafraid, behind Maud’s sloping, robed shoulders. In Paris, Halloween festivities would be mocking the rites and devils Ida and Maud hoped to make real tonight, in the little village of Samoie. Through the provincial streets to its tiny cemetery, Maud had walked, a priestess or a secret witch cloaked and hooded with Ida, her familiar bird, wing-in-elbow beside her. But inside Georges’s little burial chapel, Maud shrunk to an Irish crone, her ritual robes a weathered shawl wrapped over curling shoulders and the hollowed-out hole where her heart had been, and Ida, her carrion bird behind her.

She plucked the pins from Maud’s hair. “Let’s prepare you,” she whispered.

Maud did not move while Ida’s pecking fingers unwound the braided skeins of rust and shadow. It slithered free over Maud’s shoulders, and she absently pushed back the strands snaking into her face. She caught Ida’s hand in an icy grip. “Ida, I’m frightened.”

Maud choked on the blood-scraped whisper, but Ida had heard, and her smile broke like a towering thundercloud. Maud’s deathbed promise to her father broken—to never be afraid of anything, not even death—and Ida here beside her. She sank down beside Maud’s shuddering shoulders and wrapped her robe-winged arms around them. “Shhh,” she murmured, cheek in flowing hair, lips to sunken throat. “You must master your fear. There is no other way.”