

# TOOTH DECAY Q & A

Garrett Socol

*TOOTH DECAY explores a lot of issues: infidelity, jealousy, lust, blackmail, obsession, murder, scandal.*

Just a typical day in a small Midwestern town.

*Did you have all these topics in mind when you started writing the book?*

No. The story evolved as the characters evolved. Just like in life, one thing leads to another. The blackmail grew out of jealousy. The infidelity grew out of lust. The murder, actually, grew out of a series of events that plagued and haunted one of the characters. There's obviously no justification for murder, but I wanted to delve into the mind of the criminal to understand where the killer instinct came from.

*Obsession seems to be a theme in this novel - not only the dentist's obsession with his hygienist, but his obsession with teeth.*

Yes. In fact, that obsession with teeth is what initially brings Calvin and Rosalie together. When he discovers this common bond, he becomes swept away. Not only is he physically attracted to this woman, he shares a very profound passion for dental care with her. He'd never met anyone with whom he could "talk teeth." On their very first lunch date, all they talk about is dental care, and Calvin can hardly believe he found someone who shares this passion. He is in tooth heaven.

*Calvin doesn't seem to feel too much guilt about his affair with Rosalie. Why is that?*

Well, he does acknowledge that he's committed adultery. But his marriage was never strong. He never felt a deep connection to his wife, the kind of connection he instantly feels with Rosalie. After experiencing that bliss, he believes every human being deserves to feel that kind of happiness and fulfillment. Deep down he knows his marriage must end.

*But he doesn't end it right away.*

He's afraid to move too quickly. Calvin has always been someone who followed the rules. He always did what was expected of him, and it paid off nicely. He built a successful dental practice, he has a nice home, a lovely wife. But he discovers that it's not enough. Still, he finds it hard to break the cardinal rule of marriage. He also wants to make sure his relationship with Rosalie will last. His biggest fear is that she'll lose interest in him and he'll be left alone.

*Why does Imogene, the tough-as-nails office manager, react so violently to what's going on between the dentist and hygienist?*

Because she wants to control everything. This is a woman who likes to be in charge, and suddenly she has no power whatsoever. So she devises a devious way to *gain* control, and that's what sets off the scandal in this small community.

*All hell breaks loose.*

That's right. This affair becomes the topic du jour. It's discussed everywhere by everyone. I'll give you a few lines from the book:

That's what the people of Solon Springs were discussing morning and night...at the beauty salon, the post office, the bowling alley, the Laundromat, the car wash, the gas

station, the bus station, the funeral parlor, restaurants, grocery stores, even at Tuesday night Bingo at Saint Clement of the Sacred Angels Cornerstone Community Church in Chippewa Falls...Nothing like this had happened in recent memory, and the residents of this small town couldn't get enough of this real life soap opera.

*As all this is going on, there's a police investigation about the disappearance of two local women.*

Right. This small Wisconsin community is suddenly thrown into complete turmoil.

*It's fascinating how the disappearance of these women is somehow related to what's going on in the dental office.*

Everything comes full circle, just as it often does in life.

*Despite the serious nature of the issues explored here, there's a quirky, off-the-wall humor that runs from beginning to end. Why is that?*

I think humor can be found in almost any situation. I can't help seeing it. I find the strangest things funny.

*Did you have fun with the names of the small towns?*

I had great fun, but I didn't make any of the names up! They are all actual small towns in Wisconsin: Cobb, Flerke, Shallowford, West Sweden, Otter Creek, Siren, Sister Bay.

Sometimes the truth is much funnier than fiction.

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