

*Dear Reader,*

In 2022, when I started drafting *Dark Sisters*, I was journaling quite a bit about my pre-teen years and my experiences with Purity culture as a member of a Fundamentalist religion. I already had the seed for the book planted, but as those memories about modesty and Purity Balls and Purity rings and the concept of True Love Waits resurfaced, the themes regarding how men stifle women's power by seeking to control their bodies I'd already started exploring in the book came into starker focus.

That summer *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, and I watched as the fictional horrors I'd been plotting became frighteningly more real. It is a tenet of Purity culture that women be ashamed of their bodies. Under the guise of purity and modesty, women learn to shrink themselves to fit the world their fathers and husbands insist upon. They give over ownership of their bodies and their power. They are told how to feel. What to do. What not to do. They are not allowed to trust themselves. To make their own decisions. I lived it and so have countless others.

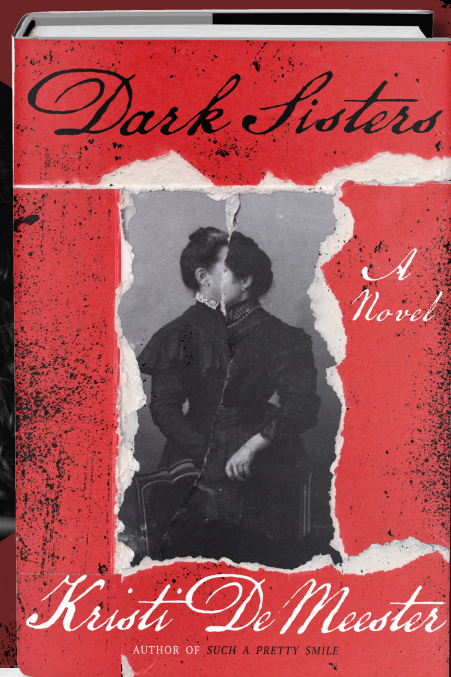
Writing *Dark Sisters* was a way to push past that old guilt and shame. A way to accept all parts of myself. I invite you to do the same. To embrace it all and know that even what someone tells you to hide in the dark is part of your power.

This is for the impure girls.

In darkness and light,



Kristi DeMeester



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