

When a college freshman falls in love with a classmate who was sexually abused, their secrets threaten to destroy everything that means anything to them.

Eighteen-year-old Dave Carmichael is a golden boy who aspires to pastor the biggest church in his denomination but has a habit of stealing porn. Leah Kline has her mother's compassion and her father's self-righteousness, but longs to escape from their abusively fundamentalist home. When they meet at a southern Californian Bible college in 1982, their secrets threaten to derail all their dreams.

DOUBLE VODKA is a contemporary novel that tells the story of Dave and Leah, through their own POV's, as they struggle against everything from Leah's sexual abuse to Dave having possibly knocked up his dad's girlfriend. It is Tara Westover's memoir EDUCATED meets Nancy Pearl's GEORGE & LIZZIE, with hints of Rainbow Rowell's FANGIRL. There's a touch of neurodiversity via Dave's undiagnosed dyslexia and Leah's sister with Down syndrome. DOUBLE VODKA is complete at 107,000 words.

Like Jojo Moyes' ME BEFORE YOU (in the series of the same name), DOUBLE VODKA is a standalone novel, but also the first in a planned trilogy following Dave and Leah through falling in love, marriage, infertility, infidelity, desertion, and falling in love again after twenty-five years.

This novel is particularly relevant as our country grows increasingly polarized, filling the need for stories that show the humanity and peculiarities of the evangelical sub-culture. One of my beta-readers, an atheist with a PhD in psychology, loved the glimpse into a world so foreign to her. I believe it will also find a secondary audience with disenchanted evangelical women who long for honest stories from their youth.

About me: I'm a former evangelical pastor turned bartender and ghostwriter. During my time as a pastor, I published a spiritual living book (RADICALLY NORMAL, Harvest House, 2014) and have a modest network in the faith communities. Please note, however, that DOUBLE VODKA was not written to be a Christian novel. I'm a confident public speaker and have done numerous radio and TV interviews. Bartending, however, is a lot more fun than pastoring. Pays better, too.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Josh Kelley