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The Grave of God's Daughter
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Story Behind the Book

The origin of this book came from a story my mother told me the about a priest who'd been buried in a Potter's Field, for reasons that no one would reveal. The forbidden quality of the secret surrounding the priest intrigued me. I tried to imagine what he could have done that would prohibit him from being buried in consecrated ground, and that was where the root of the story took hold.

The setting for the novel is also based on the place where my mother was raised. All throughout my childhood, we had made trips to her hometown in Western Pennsylvania, and to a young girl, it was like a foreign land that was just a car ride away. I remembered eavesdropping on people as they spoke in Polish and attending mass at Saint Joseph's Church, the foundation of which my great grandmother had actually helped dig. Some of the streets were still cobblestone and there was an enormous neon cross perched on the mountain on the other side of the river that glowed through the night. I'd grown up hearing the tales my mother told about the strict nuns who were her teachers in school, collecting glass bottles to make change, and how she'd never seen a mosquito while growing up because of the chemical plant on the other side of town. While thinking out the novel, those stories began to blend with my own memories. One in particular was the time when I visited my great uncle's house where he raised pit bulls. The sound of over two dozen dogs barking was as frightening for me as a child, as it became for the narrator of the novel. Though the fabric of the book has many threads of fact, they are only the framework for a story about the unwavering bond between mother and child. Given the source of the story, the theme couldn't be more apt.