

Q&A WITH AUTHOR ANNIE FOX



1. Where did you get the inspiration for *The Little Things That Kill*?

Because of my work with teens, someone sent me a link to an article about a young girl who took her own life. Such a tragedy! But the story was made more tragic with the insinuation that a couple of the victim's friends contributed to her troubled state of mind. I couldn't shake my curiosity about the "story behind the story" so I did what all writers do, I began speculating. And the novel was born.

2. How did you come up with the characters of Nicole, Isabel, and Cassie?

The newspaper article provided the idea of a friendship triangle gone wrong, but the girls are pure invention. Each has her own strengths and limitations and are often at war with each other, but when combined, they add up to one very effective young woman who is intelligent, creative, spiritual, compassionate, persistent, feisty and a great problem-solver. I enjoyed playing them off of each other and watching how their conflicts resulted in their learning something important, and thus changing for good.

3. Do you see yourself in any of the characters and why?

There are aspects of my 16-year-old self in each of the girls.

Like Nicole, I was a singer-songwriter who played guitar and loved to perform. Also, like Nicole, I had a close relationship with my dad. Unfortunately, my dad died when I was fifteen, but he still occasionally visits me in my dreams.

Like Isabel, I am a bit of witch (if that's a thing). While I never owned a Ouija Board, I certainly played with them as a teen. To this day, I light candles and incense for comfort, and I also wear a rose quartz crystal necklace.

As for Cassie, I may love her most because she needs the most love. Thankfully, my childhood home was nothing like hers. Though I happily confess that Cassie and I share a profound love and respect for dogs and little kids. At one point in my life I ran a pre-school.

4. The novel is told from three-first person perspectives and there is a lot going on. How did you plot it out?

It wasn't easy! Initially I used dozens of color-coded index cards to keep track of the individual storylines. Later on I used Keynote software to create a digital storyboard. Both helped. The trickiest part was when the storylines overlapped and the narrators became unreliable due to faulty memories and/or lies they told themselves or others.

5. How did you come up with the title?

The title of the first draft was *The Afterwards* because, at that time, the story focused on the dead girl's revenge. During my second major revision, I realized that Nicole had to progress beyond anger and bitterness to forgiveness. Ultimately she needed to accept responsibility for her actions and make amends to those she'd harmed. That's when the new title and subtitle came to me. ***The Little Things That Kill: A Teen Friendship Afterlife Apology Tour***. (Because it's never too late to say you're sorry.)

6. **You've written several non-fiction advice books for tweens and teens, notably the Middle School Confidential series. In your fiction debut, what made you choose this fantasy/paranormal genre?**

I'm a fan of stories that realistically demonstrate a character's emotional growth. I'm also a sucker for ghost stories and anything that includes elements of magic, time travel, after-life/past life, reincarnation, karma, and redemption. I wrote a novel that I would like to read.

7. **Are you working on a new book?**

I am! It's a YA novel called [Leeta Simtar, A Life on Two Planets \(The Unauthorized Biography\)](#) and it will be published in February 2025. You can pre-order it at AnnieFox.com/leeta



8. **What do you like to do when you're not writing?**

I live in the San Francisco Bay Area where we are fortunate to enjoy public access to endless hiking trails on open space preserves. Several times a week my husband David and I hike with Gracie the Dog. (Yes, I named Mentor Grace after her.) I love to travel internationally. I also enjoy baking bread and taking photos of flowers and Gracie and bread! I especially love hanging out with our kids, their partners, and our grandkids (who call me Granny Annie). But if I'm working on a book, the truth is, some part of my brain is always writing.

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THE LITTLE THINGS that KILL

A Teen Friendship Afterlife Apology Tour

by Annie Fox



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