



Behind the Series
with
Becca Fitzpatrick
author of
silence



The breathtaking continuation of the internationally bestselling
hush, hush Saga
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If it weren't for my tenth-grade biology class, and my dedicated but oddball teacher, I probably never would have written *Hush, Hush*. And if it weren't for my birthday eight years ago, I might never have recalled a single incident from high-school biology.

February 3, 2003. My twenty-fourth birthday. After a long debate between Japanese cooking lessons and an eight-week writing class, my husband decided to give me the writing class for my birthday present. I have to admit, I was hoping for the Japanese cooking lessons because A) I took one English course in college and my professor threatened to fail me, and B) I didn't think I had a story to tell.

To my surprise and pleasure, I immediately fell in love with the class, and more important, with writing. One week, our teacher gave us the assignment to craft a scene showing humiliation. I was immediately struck by the memory of an event that happened years earlier, in my tenth-grade bio class. While sitting in my chair, daydreaming about the cute, slightly acne-plagued guy sitting beside me (ah, high school), my teacher jolted me to attention by asking me, in front of the whole class, to name characteristics I'd want in a mate aka sexual partner.

Talk about humiliation!

Haunted by that memory, I started crafting a scene. There was a girl, Ellie (who evolved into Nora Grey), and a boy, Patch. There was an eccentric teacher asking Ellie, point-blank, to tell the class what she looked for in a mate. There was laughter—lots of laughter—one-liners, catcalls, and most of all, humiliation.

I didn't stop there. The assignment became a fully developed scene. Then one chapter. Then two, three, four. And I was using one common thread to pull the story forward. The very primal, very *biological*, power of physical attraction. The sexual tension playing out on every page between Patch and Nora filled me with innumerable questions and ideas. Is desire purely physical? What causes two people to have instant chemistry? How do two people know if they can trust each other? What in our genetic makeup draws us to one person, and warns us to stay away from another? And what if it's the same person?

I first submitted *Hush, Hush* to publishers in 2003. Five years later, and with nearly one hundred rejection letters under my belt, Simon and Schuster shook my world by offering to publish not only the book, but a sequel (*Crescendo*) as well.

Today I can look back and clearly pinpoint that day as one that altered my life forever. There are more ups and downs now, and I have a completely different perspective on time: life seems to skyrocket past in weeks and months rather than in hours and days. The power of a single word cuts deeper. Reading has become more about understanding and learning than entertainment. And while I still have doubts and insecurities—Who am I to be writing books?—I am filled with confidence and hope.

I used to think if I could have any superpower in the world, I'd want the ability to see the future. But if I'd known back then what I do now, I probably would have been overwhelmed to the point of surefire failure. There really aren't words to describe the leap I took from stay-at-home mom living a quiet, ordinary life to the author I am today. Although, to be fair, the change didn't happen in one blink-

and-you'll-miss-it leap. That's just my warped sense of time getting in the way again. In reality, the change happened day-by-day, page-by-page. Just last week my husband and I were at a party and I was asked by an acquaintance, "How did you do it?" While I debated my answer, my husband answered easily with the truth. "She puts in the time. She works hard. She learns from her mistakes. And she's been very, very lucky."

I have been lucky. And I am grateful for every last twinge of good luck that has capriciously blown my way. But I also know that luck isn't enough. *Silence* is the conclusion to the *Hush, Hush* trilogy, and I'd be lying if I said I don't feel an ever-increasing pressure to deliver upon my readers' expectations. The increasingly difficult tests and tasks Patch and Nora have faced throughout the series have prepared them for this culminating moment. I can relate. In many ways the challenges I faced while writing *Hush, Hush* and *Crescendo* provided me with the tools I needed to write *Silence*. It's going to be difficult to say good-bye to these characters who've struggled and grown right alongside me, but I suppose that is what's so magical about a story.

It lives on.