



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Advancement | Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving

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UCF Alumni Book Club

The Silent Patient by Alex Michaelides

Book Discussion Guide

Book Description

Alicia Berenson's life is seemingly perfect. A famous painter married to an in-demand fashion photographer, she lives in a grand house with big windows overlooking a park in one of London's most desirable areas. One evening her husband Gabriel returns home late from a fashion shoot, and Alicia shoots him five times in the face, and then never speaks another word.

Alicia's refusal to talk, or give any kind of explanation, turns a domestic tragedy into something far grander, a mystery that captures the public imagination and casts Alicia into notoriety. The price of her art skyrockets, and she, the silent patient, is hidden away from the tabloids and spotlight at the Grove, a secure forensic unit in North London.

Theo Faber is a criminal psychotherapist who has waited a long time for the opportunity to work with Alicia. His determination to get her to talk and unravel the mystery of why she shot her husband takes him down a twisting path into his own motivations—a search for the truth that threatens to consume him....

About the Author

Alex Michaelides was born and raised in Cyprus. He has an M.A. in English Literature from Trinity College, Cambridge University, and an M.A. in Screenwriting from the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. *The Silent Patient* was his first novel. It spent more than a year on the *New York Times* bestseller list and sold in a record-breaking fifty countries. He lives in London.

General Questions

- What were your initial thoughts of the book?
- Do you usually read this genre?
- When you read thrillers, do you come up with theories as the story unfolds or do you wait to find out the reveals at the end?
- Who would you cast to star in the movie version?
- What do you hope is included in the film and what do you think they could change or add to the story?
- If this isn't the type of book you usually read, did it change your opinion? Do you think you'll read more thrillers?

Book-Specific Questions

- What did you think of Theo, initially, as he began to work with Alicia? In what way did your view of Theo change?
- Do you consider Theo a hero or a villain? Knowing his entire story, do you feel sympathetic towards him?
- What was your first impression of Alicia? How did Alicia's diary entries throughout the book help shape your opinion of her versus what we gather about her from the other characters?
- How would you describe Alicia and the life she has led up to the time she kills her husband? What was your initial sense of why Alicia refused to speak?
- What did you think was the purpose of showing us Alicia's interactions with her brother-in-law Max?
- What was your initial sense of why Alicia refused to speak?
- Did you think Theo was going to get away with murdering Alicia?
- Did you suspect that the two storylines would eventually come together or were you surprised?
- Much of this story takes place inside a psychiatric hospital. How did this setting impact your perception of the characters—both inside and outside The Grove—and what effect did it have on the atmosphere of the book?

Resources

Discussion Questions

<https://bookclubchat.com/books/book-club-questions-for-the-silent-patient-by-alex-michaelides/>

<https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/11466-silent-patient-michaelides?start=3>

<https://www.oprahdaily.com/entertainment/a31047508/book-club-questions/>

Author Website

<https://us.macmillan.com/author/alexmichaelides/>

Author Interview for Celadon Books

<https://celadonbooks.com/novel-inspiration-alex-michaelides-author-of-the-silent-patient-on-writing-the-perfect-thriller/>

Shelfie with Alex Michaelides

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-p0HrIQz4k>

Meet the Writer Podcast

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/alex-michaelides/id1066877934?i=1000468465733>