

***The Silent Patient* by Alex Michaelides**

Discussion questions from www.litlovers.com

1. How would you describe Alicia Berenson 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?

2. Alicia's self-portrait is entitled *Alcestis*, based on an ancient Greek Euripidean tragedy, which in turn is based upon Greek mythology. Do a bit of research into the myth to find out what Alicia might have been saying about herself in her portrait. What, in other words, does the painting reveal about the painter?

3. *Follow-up to Question 2:* The author once took a post-grad course in psychotherapy and subsequently spent a couple of years working part-time in a psychiatric unit like the Grove. What did Michaelides mean when, in 2018, he said in an interview with the Bookseller...

I saw how the world of psychotherapy might be the perfect modern setting to reimagine [Alcestis'] story and explore its themes of death, guilt and silence.

4. *Follow-up to Questions 2 and 3:* Do you begin to see Alicia as a mythic character, a parallel to Alcestis? If so, in what way?

5. The author has created his own challenge: he must gradually reveal Alice to readers (and to Theo) without allowing her to tell her own story. How does Michaelides use Alicia's physical appearance and artwork to reveal her character?

6. What do you think of Theo, initially, as he begins to work with Alice? What do you come to understand about him, and his motivation, as the book unfolds? In what way does your view of Theo change?

7. Were you shocked by the big reveal at the end? Or did you see it coming?

8. *The Silent Patient* is called a psychological thriller, but the reviewer of Crime by the Book blog considers it an in depth character study in which both characters' identities take precedence over the actual crime. In what genre would you place the book—character study or plot-based thriller? (It's presumably "both," but let's say you have to choose one or the other.)