# *The Silent Patient* by Alex Michaelides

## Synopsis

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

## Discussion questions

1. How would you describe Alicia Berenson and the life she has lead 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 an ancient Greek Eurpidean 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. Do you begin to see Alicia as a mythic character, a parallel to Alcestis? If so, in what way?
4. 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?
5. What do 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?
6. Were you shocked by the big reveal at the end? Or did you see it coming?

*Synopsis/Discussion questions from https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-reading-guides/fiction/11466-silent-patient-michaelides?showall=1*