

Not a Sound Discussion Questions

by Heather Gudenkauf

Author Bio: (from her website & Fantastic Fiction)

Heather Gudenkauf, who was born with a profound unilateral hearing impairment, tended to use books as a retreat as a child, which is why she writes now. Heather currently lives in Dubuque, Iowa with her husband, three children, and a very spoiled German Shorthaired Pointer.



Heather graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in elementary education, has spent her career working with students of all ages, and continues to work in education as a Title I Reading Coordinator.

Characters:

- **Amelia Winn** – Former nurse who was hit by a car 2 years previous. She is now deaf due to the accident and an alcoholic. Lives in her father's old fishing cabin. Has a soon-to-be ex-husband, David, and a stepdaughter Nora (7). Her brother's name is Andrew. Her service dog's name is Stitch.
- **Barb** – Office manager at 5 Mines Regional Cancer Center.
- **Dr. Joseph Huntley** – Director of 5 Mines Regional Cancer Center. Well known oncologist. Offers Amelia a job.
- **Gwen Locke** – Nurse. Floats between nursing departments. Works as a rape crisis nurse. Former friend of Amelia. Husband – Marty. Daughter – Lane. Amelia finds her body in the local river.
- **Lori** – Secretary at 5 Mines Regional Cancer Center.
- **Peter McNaughton** – Went to school with Gwen. Obsessive compulsive. Owns a bookstore and lives with his father. Laid lilies at the place where Gwen's body was found.
- **Rachel Nava** – Patient at the 5 Mines Regional Cancer Center who fainted and had to be treated.
- **Evan Okada** – Amelia's neighbor. Owns 5 Mines Outfitter which rents boats to tourists.
- **Dr. Sabat** – Dr. Huntley's partner.
- **Jake Schroeder** – Police officer. Former childhood friend of Andrew, Amelia's brother. Has been in Amelia's life since she was a child. Widowed. Late wife was Sadie, who committed suicide. His retired K-9 partner is Rookie.
- **Stacy** – Abuse victim who was in same hit and run as Amelia. Stacy was killed.
- **David Winn** – Amelia's soon-to-be ex-husband. Doctor. Gynecologist and obstetrician at Queen of Peace Hospital. Has a daughter Nora. 1st wife was Trista. 2nd wife is Amelia.
- **Linda Winthrop** – Husband, John, was a patient at 5 Mines Regional Cancer Center. She questioned Huntley's treatment of her husband.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. Who was your favorite character in the book? Why?
3. Did the characters seem real and believable? Can you relate to their predicaments? To what extent did they remind you of yourself or someone you know?
4. How did Amelia's hearing loss affect her actions and responses throughout in the book?
5. What do you think would be the worst thing about losing your hearing?
6. If you suddenly found yourself disabled in one way or another, like Amelia was when she lost her hearing in the hit and run accident, how would you react?
7. Amelia had distanced herself from all of her past friends and colleagues. Have you ever lost touch with someone you wanted to reconnect with? How did you go about repairing the relationship?
8. Stitch, Amelia's service dog, alerts her to people at the door, phone calls, and other common household situations. What are the advantages of having a service animal? Are there any situations where a service animal is a disadvantage?
9. If you trained your whole life for a job, was successful at it, and suddenly lost your ability to do it, what would you do?
10. A lot of what Amelia learns she discovers while scanning private medical documents. How realistic do you think it was? After reading this book, how concerned are you about the privacy of your medical information?
11. Did you figure out who the killer was before it was revealed in the book? How did you know?
12. How culpable is David for his actions after Gwen was killed? He has the potential to go to jail. Should he?
13. Were you satisfied with the ending of the story? If you could change it, what would you do to make it better?
14. Gudenkauf was inspired to write "Not a Sound" as a way to explore her own hearing loss. If you were going to write a book inspired by your own life, what would you write about?
15. Gudenkauf has written seven other books. Will you read any of them?

References:

- Bookish – <https://www.bookish.com/articles/heather-gudenkauf-not-a-sound/>
- Fantastic Fiction – <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/g/heather-gudenkauf/>
- Heather Gudenkauf website – <https://heathergudenkauf.com/#biography>
- GoodReads – <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/32739978-not-a-sound>

Heather Gudenkauf Books

Stand Alone Novels

- The Weight of Silence (2009)
- These Things Hidden (2011)
- One Breath Away (2012)
 - Little Mercies (2014)
 - Missing Pieces (2016)
 - Not a Sound (2017)
- Before She Was Found (2019)
- This Is How I Lied (2020)

If you liked **Not a Sound**, try...

- [Darkness at the Edge of Town](#) – Jennifer Harlow
 - [The Chaos of Now](#) – Erin Jade Lange
 - [The Row](#) – J.R. Johansson
 - [Splinter](#) – Sasha Dawn
 - [Painted Gun](#) – Bradley Spinelli
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