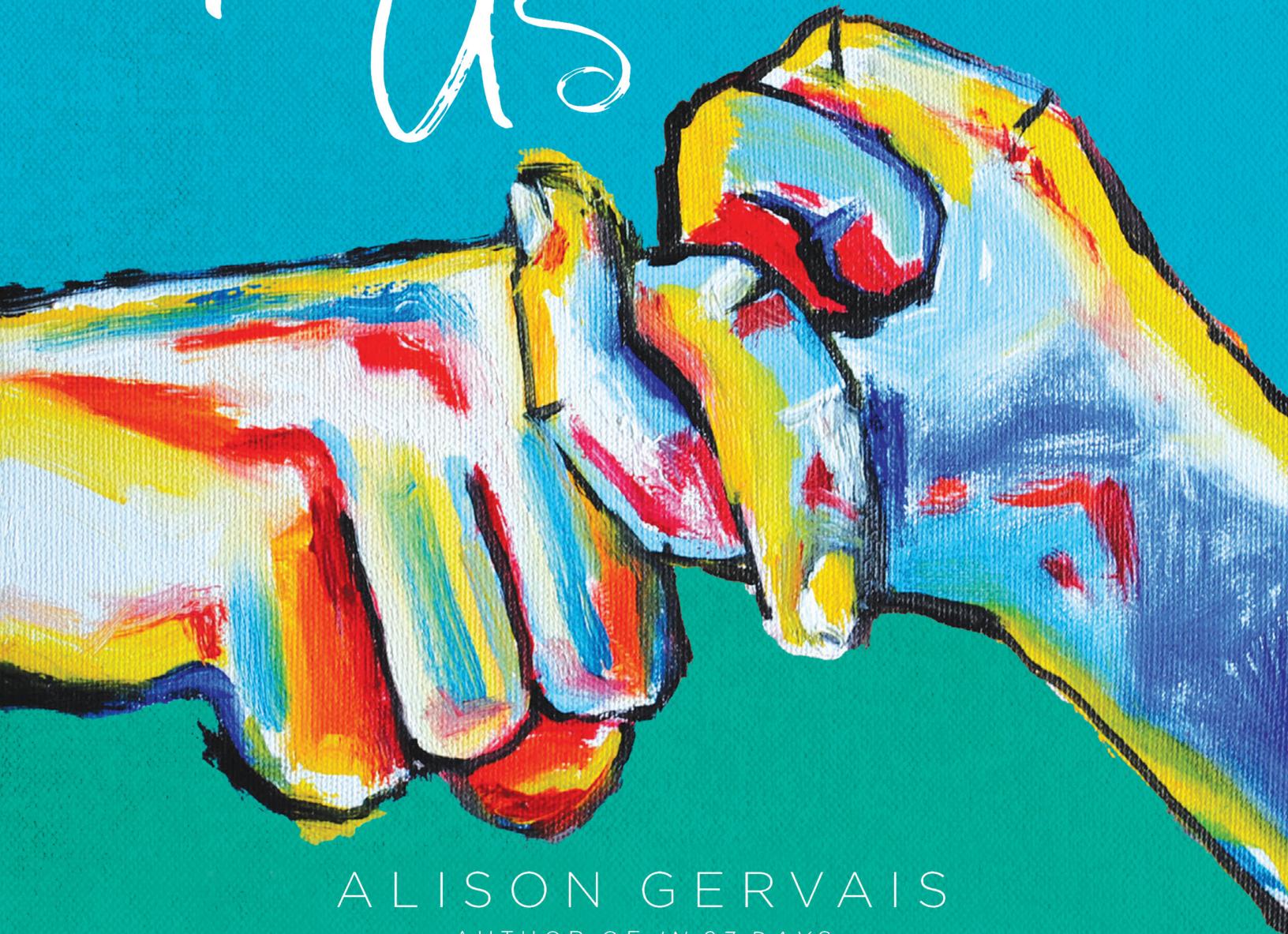


# The Silence Between Us

I SEE YOU.  
NOW HEAR ME.



ALISON GERVAIS  
AUTHOR OF *IN 27 DAYS*

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## EDUCATOR GUIDE

### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Before reading the novel, discuss these questions with your students. It may be helpful to have your students record their thoughts in order to allow them to reflect when they finish reading the novel.

1. Define frustration, and describe how you deal with frustration in your own life.
2. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2, W.9-10.3, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4]
3. Distinguish first person perspective, second person perspective, third person perspective, and third person omniscient perspective.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4]
4. Consider whether you feel people with disabilities receive more attention than others when they go out in public and explain.  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2, W.9-10.10]
5. Think about how you make friends or have made friends in the past. Describe the conditions that made it possible for you to become friends with another person.  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3, W.9-10.10]

### PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Before reading the novel complete the task below as a class or have students work independently.

1. Research American Sign Language - What is it? Is it possible for you to sign your name? If so, how? Then, create a short video where you explain what American Sign Language is, and you sign your name.  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.6, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4, SL.9-10.5]
2. Research the difference between hard of hearing and deaf. Create a T-Chart, and bullet out some facts about both conditions.  
[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3, SL.9-10.4]

### POST-READING QUESTIONS

After reading the novel, discuss these questions with your students. If you had your students record their responses to the pre-reading questions, then have them review their responses and respond to the following post-reading questions on the same sheet of paper.

1. Describe the points you felt were pivotal in Maya's life and explain why you felt they were pivotal.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]
2. Consider how the story would be different if it were not told from Maya's perspective.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1]
3. Describe the tension Maya felt on her first day of school. Give text evidence to support your conclusion.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]
4. Discuss the friendship between Beau and Jackson. Consider how their friendship would make you feel initially if you were Maya.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]
5. Discuss whether you feel the injury to Beau's leg helps him relate to Maya.  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]
6. Why is it important for Maya to recognize herself as deaf in her self-portrait?  
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

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7. Contemplate how you would have reacted to the explosion by Maya's lab partner during their exam if you had been a student in the classroom.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

8. Describe how being deaf impacts Maya's interactions with the world.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

9. Discuss how Beau's character evolves over the course of the novel.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

10. Consider Maya's perseverance and ambition to become a respiratory therapist. Describe the challenges she overcomes, and discuss whether you would have been able to do what she does.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

11. Describe which character you felt like had the most impact on Maya's life and explain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

12. Discuss what point in the story you feel was the climax and explain.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

13. Describe how the point of view of the narrator impacts your reading of the novel.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

14. Explain why it was an important step in Maya and Nina's friendship for Maya to give Nina her own sign.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

15. Discuss why Beau seems to upset Maya so much early in the story.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

16. Describe the impact of Maya's responsibility towards her brother on her life.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

## ACTIVITIES

Students may complete the following actives while reading or after reading the novel.

1. Write an informational journal article on cochlear implants by researching the pros and cons of the procedure. Your article should be correctly cited and three-four paragraphs.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.6]

2. Choose a condition that could affect the life of an individual. Research this condition and create a presentation depicting the challenges of the condition to present to your peers.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1, W.9-10.7, W.9-10.8, W.9-10.10; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.4, SL.9-10.5, SL.9-10.6]

3. Compose a Window Journal following the course of the novel through the perspectives of Beau, Nina, Maya's mother, and Connor. A Window Journal is a collection of journal entries composed over the course of the novel from perspectives of different characters.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3, W.9-10.10]

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4. Create a self-portrait like Maya did in the book using whatever medium you like.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.6, RL.9-10.7]

### ABOUT THE BOOK:

Moving halfway across the country to Colorado right before senior year isn't Maya's idea of a good time. Leaving behind Pratt School for the Deaf where she's been a student for years only to attend a hearing school is even worse. Maya has dreams of breaking into the medical field and is determined to get the grades and a college degree to match, and she's never considered being Deaf a disability. But her teachers and classmates at Engelmann High don't seem to share her optimism.

And then there's Beau Watson, Engelmann's student body president and overachiever. Maya suspects Beau's got a hidden agenda when he starts learning ASL to converse with her, but she also can't deny it's nice to sign with someone amongst all the lip reading she has to do with her hearing teachers and classmates. Maya has always been told that Deaf/hearing relationships never work, and yet she can't help but be drawn to Beau as they spend more and more time together.

But as much Maya and Beau genuinely start to feel for one another, there are unmistakable differences in their worlds. When Maya passes up a chance to receive a cochlear implant, Beau doesn't understand why Maya wouldn't want to hear again. Maya is hurt Beau would want her to be anything but who she is—she's always been proud to be Deaf, something Beau won't ever be able to understand. Maya has to figure out whether bridging that gap between the Deaf and hearing worlds will be worth it, or if staying true to herself matters more.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Alison Gervais began writing at the age of five and gained recognition by posting her work on Wattpad in 2011. She graduated from Colorado State University - Pueblo with a degree in English and is still figuring out what else she'd like to do in life. As for now, she plans to keep writing, rereading Harry Potter, watching *Supernatural* and *Law and Order: SVU*, and enjoying life with her husband and their two cats, Jane and Smoke. Learn more at [www.alisongervais.com](http://www.alisongervais.com).

