



Breaking the Silence

Diane Chamberlain

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Fans of Diane Chamberlain's emotional stories of family, love and lies will be absorbed by one of her earliest novels—a tale of dark secrets and redemption. Laura Brandon's promise to her dying father was simple: to visit an elderly woman she'd never heard of before. A woman who remembers nothing—except the distant past. Visiting Sarah Tolley seemed a small enough sacrifice to make. But Laura's promise results in another death. Her husband's. And after their five-year-old daughter, Emma, witnesses her father's suicide, she refuses to talk about it...to talk at all. Frantic and guilt ridden, Laura contacts the only person who may be able to help. A man she's met only once—six years before. A man who doesn't know he's Emma's real father. Guided only by a child's silence and an old woman's fading memories, the two unravel a tale of love and despair, of bravery and unspeakable evil. A tale that's shrouded in silence...and that unbelievably links them all.

Breaking the Silence Details

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From Reader Review Breaking the Silence for online ebook

Denise says

Solid but predictable mystery..., January 28, 2010

After reading a few of Diana Chamberlain's more recent novels, including my favorite, *The Secret Life of CeeCee Wilkes*, I could tell immediately when I started this one that I was reading one of her earlier books. That's not to say that this novel isn't good, it is -- but it is a fairly predictable story and the revelations at the end come as no surprise to any mystery reader. There are multiple things going on in the book but all eventually comes together to wrap up the various pieces. It's a story of family relationships including great love and loss and getting answers.

I enjoyed the book well enough -- it's fast paced and the narrative draws the reader in with the topic -- torture and experimentation on patients at psychiatric facilities circa 1950s. It's hard to believe that many of those "treatments" were allowed and even encouraged!

In another note, however, I must say that the sudden muteness experienced by the child, Emma, in the book was never fully explained and then mysteriously disappeared. I'm assuming it was some sort of traumatic guilt-like reaction.

All in all, this is an easy read, an early work by an author who has since become more accomplished!

Laura says

Diane Chamberlain never fails to disappoint in her writing. Her stories are a beautiful mix of mystery, suspense, romance and family-orientated saga. Although many of her books were released in the nineties, and therefore outdated in some respects, much of her work has been published again and the cover art modernised.

Laura is a world renowned astronomer, wife to Ray and mother to five year old Emma. After Ray tragically commits suicide whilst alone in the house with their daughter, Emma becomes mute. Meanwhile, some secrets are surfacing and Laura must begin to unravel the complex history of her family.

As with a lot of Chamberlain novels, this kept me guessing throughout and although I attempted to connect the dots myself, I was still surprised as I neared the end of the story.

I particularly liked the way Chamberlain was able to effortlessly glide between time periods - modern day and the 1950's. The pace of the book made this a very enjoyable reading experience. Yes, some parts of the character dialogue is cheesy - but this is perhaps what makes the authors books so pleasing. There are no false promises in her writing.

A lovely addition to any fictional works bookshelf.

Ann says

I am so in love with this book. I was asked the other day what book I would pick if I could only have just one, and I think this book just might be it. It was one of those books that had me thinking afterwards. I was still making connections and asking myself questions about how one person knew another person in the past, or why somebody did what they did. This book involved so many different types of relationships and characters. I was very surprised at the amount of truth in this story. Chamberlain writes about various happenings in a fictitious hospital, such as brain washing and mind control. At the end of the story she writes that these things really did occur in the 1950s, which just floors me. This whole story involves so many different relationships. In the beginning it goes back and forth between these different relationships and people, and at this point it was hard to see that they are related. The further I got into the story though, I could see little pieces that showed how these relationships are related to one another. Everything just made sense at the end of the story. I absolutely loved this book and I have never been disappointed by Diane Chamberlain.

Louise says

Forty-year-old Laura Brandon and her sixty-one-year-old husband, Ray, lived a hectic and hurried life in the town of Leesburg. They have a five-year-old daughter named, Emma.

A few minutes after eleven on Christmas night, Laura receives a phone call from the nurse at the hospital where her father, Carl Brandon, is currently dying of cancer. Laura got dressed and headed out the door leaving Ray at home to watch Emma as she felt there was no point in waking her daughter at this time of night and dragging her out to a hospital.

When Laura arrived in her Dad's room she knew immediately he was still with her, but barely. As she approached his bedside, his eyes opened and Laura could see that he was agitated. She sat on the edge of his bed, took his hand in hers and said: "I'm here, Dad." Carl tried to speak: "Should...have...told..." he said. Laura bent close and asked her father: "Tell what?" He let go of her hand and tried to reach for his night table grabbing at a scrap of paper. Laura picked it up and saw her father had hastily scribbled a name on it – Sarah Tolley. Laura asked her father who she was but all he could utter was: "...friend, please look after her." Confused, Laura asked who she was and where she was. All Carl could say was: "Meadow...Wood..." Laura knew immediately that he meant Meadow Wood Retirement Home but still didn't know or understand who this woman was. Carl became more and more agitated saying: "Take care...promise...promise!!" Upset by his panic, Laura grabbed both of Carl's hands and promised him she'd take care of her. Moments later Carl slipped away forever.

When Laura arrived home she explained everything to Ray. Ray thought it was a bad idea that Laura involve herself with this Sarah Tolley woman. Laura, on the other hand, felt obligated to visit this woman and start caring for her especially since it was her Dad's last death bed wish and she had promised him. Laura decided to go against Ray's wishes and visit this woman but little did she know that in doing so it would cause another death. Her own husband's!! And after five-year-old Emma witnesses his death, she becomes mute. Laura also begins to receive anonymous notes saying: "You don't know her. Don't go again." Obviously someone doesn't want her visiting Sarah, but who?

Laura is frantic, upset and riddled with guilt so she contacts the only person who may be able to help her. A man she's met only once, six years before, and who doesn't know he's Emma's father.

A story of suspense, drama, and intrigue that will have you turning the pages late into the night.

Nabilah Firdaus says

My actual rating: 4.3/5 stars for Breaking the Silence by Diane Chamberlain.

Breaking the Silence (BTS) tells a story of Laura Brandon, whose daughter hasn't spoke since her husband committed suicide. Before her husband's death, she was in search of a person named Sarah Tolley, an Alzheimer's patient, who seemed to have connection with Laura's deceased father.

Loved it. Loved it. Loved it. There is so much to think about this book. This is my fourth book from the author and she is one hell of an author I must say. Diane Chamberlain has the power of creating an emotional and deep-wrecked stories than anyone I've ever read and second, what keeps me sticking to her books is the fact that she always provide the readers with new things to learn regarding history, places & medical stuffs and in BTS, Chamberlain dealt with the issue of mental illness, particularly on the patients, the inhumane treatments (Eg: Lobotomy) in the past (1950-1960) and how mental illness was portrayed in the eyes of ignorants - who thought that mental illness isn't a real disease. There was also a stark insight on the tragic reality of Alzheimer's patients.

It was a great and an easy read despite the heavy issues the author tried to convey. The plot was intriguing and engaging, I gobbled this book in one sitting only despite the long journey of 400+ pages. It's the kind of book that you start reading and stay up very late to find out what happened. Even though I felt the plot was a bit unrealistic and a little too far fetched at times, I really really really loved the whole story and how it ended. And the plot twist(s) - I really didn't see THEM coming. Other than the little-too-far-fetched-plot, another issue I have with this book is the ending. Although Chamberlain wrapped everything nicely, I felt the ending was a bit rushed compared to the earlier parts.

This book, I believe is one of Chamberlain's best work. The amount of research and depth of the story, particularly on the mental illness part was quite impressive - and the fact that she managed to pull of the story by weaving the researches and the heartbreaking story was just impressive. My fourth book of Chamberlain, and certainly won't be my last. Highly recommended!

Christa says

I've read a number of Diane Chamberlain's books, and I tend to find them pretty enjoyable. They're the literary equivalent of a good made-for-TV movie--the characters pull you in, the story moves quickly, and you can just kind of relax and go along for the ride. They're easy to immerse yourself in, and good for the days you want some light entertainment.

This one had an interesting premise--right before Laura's father dies, he makes her promise that she'll take care of an old woman suffering from Alzheimer's who she never met before. When she visits the woman, she has to piece together the story fragments she tells in order to find the link between them. Complicating matters, though, is that Laura's husband recently killed himself in front of her 5-year-old daughter, rendering her mute. So the story goes back and forth between visits with the old woman, Sarah (during which she tells her story in flashbacks) and her current-day struggles to get her daughter to speak. Add to that the re-entry of her daughter's birth father to the picture, and Laura's got a pretty full slate.

Sarah's flashbacks were by far the strength of this story, so much so that I'd love to read an entire book about

her experiences as a psychiatric nurse in a push-the-boundaries mental hospital in the 1950s. However, they made the current day parts kind of pale in comparison, and I found myself hoping that they'd be over soon so we could get back to Sarah's story. Plus, the addition of the love interest didn't really sit well with me--this guy made the biggest 180-turnaround I think I've ever seen in a book, which made the whole thing not so believable and a bit corny.

Still, despite those small issues I had, I still think this was a pleasant read, and I'll definitely try Chamberlain again.

Nicola says

It's hard to *not* compare Diane Chamberlain with Jodi Picoult (even the book cover does this) but I didn't really feel like I was reading a Picoult book. Chamberlain's writing is still very distinctive and unique and I thoroughly enjoyed it from start to finish.

This book was nearly impossible to put down. It's full of fascinating characters and tons of mystery. The whole time I was just so eager to know what the truth was and there was plenty of keep me entertained until the final truth came out- which I was pretty satisfied with, in the end.

I'm not *usually* a fan of alternating narrators but I didn't mind it in this one- it worked and it was very easy to follow. Laura is a really likeable character though certainly not flawless or over the top. Emma was interesting, well developed, believable. Dylan was much more likeable than I expected him to be and Ray and Stuart angered me a lot.

The ending was good. Some bits of it were a bit predictable for example (view spoiler), but the rest I definitely did not see coming and I loved how it all came together and made sense after so many pages of being confused and wondering how it all could work out. Overall, it was an excellent book and I'm really looking forward to reading more of Chamberlain's work.

For more of my reviews and recommendations, visit my blog: [here](#)

Diana Donnelly says

I LOVED this book. It starts off grabbing you immediately and I just figured the interest would wane in the middle somewhere. But that never happened and it held my interest throughout. It covered many interesting fields including psychiatry. In the 1950's some psychiatrists were experimenting with various drugs as well as doing lobotomies. They also were using headphones with tapes as some form of brainwashing. All of this I found very interesting. One character was a nurse in this type of hospital and she questioned their procedures which resulted in being threatened and watched over. It had its suspense and an unsuspecting conclusion. What more can I say, I really loved it.

Gina *loves sunshine* says

so far I have enjoyed all of chamberlain's books, some more than others - she definitely writes a great contemporary female thriller, with a small side of romance! Breaking the silence was one of those books I

really liked, but I can't quite give it 4 stars. There are books that I LOVE that only get 4 stars from me...so we gotta go 3.75** Definitely a quick build up of suspense and quite a cast of characters that need to all come together at some point - I honestly had no idea how it was going to work out!! I think the lower rating is result of me enjoying these characters - but not really loving and siding up with any 1 in particular!

The book really touches on struggles with death, suicide, alzheimer's, child trauma, and air balloon rides!! Also, the quite surprising 1950's hospital doctor who specializes in brainwashing and lobotomies!! That whole issue really floored me - and to read at the end that it was a real scenario and program - yikes!!!! Definitely pick this up for a solid good read!

Natalya says

Cute book, nice drama, complicated situation. Really liked that the characters are not perfect, act in questionable ways (Laura confronting Dylan, Laura's father keeping such secrets), feel remorse for it, get hurt. Chamberlain has a gift for making an outlandish situation come realistically to life. Liked the Dylan character and the psychiatrist. I did not see the last twist coming, thought it was a bit too much. I hated the book cover, it was this garish red and gold affair with an antebellum mansion in the middle, it couldn't have been farther from the plot, whats wrong with a little girl on the cover?

Lauralee says

Can you say obsessed? My obsession with reading Ms. Chamberlain's works just keeps increasing. I don't know how I made it to the age of 44 without discovering this author. I am working my way through all of her books now.

Breaking the Silence was another winner, full of wonderful twists and secrets and surprises.

I used to work with clients who had mental illness and my mind went back to those people and how I would feel if the disturbing type of treatments were performed on them. It was disturbing and interesting and I really felt for the loved ones of those patients that were described in this book.

Now, I am onto the next book and cannot wait!!

Nicky Wills says

I really enjoyed this book - I didn't read the synopsis before starting the book so there were some big surprises early on. I think 5 stars may be a little generous, but I'd go with 4.5. So many twists and turns and connections - very enjoyable.

Nora|KnyguDama says

Jau penktoji mano skaitoma Diane knyga. Vertinant pagal šit? moterišk?, jautr? romantišk?, dramatišk?

žanr?, visos knygos daugmaž patiko. Vienos paliko didesn?, kitos mažesn? ?sp?d?. Didžiai išgirtoji „Pribuv?jos išpažintis“, visur išgirta kaip rašytojos k?rybos „perliukas“, ir man buvo ?domiausia iki kol perskai?iau „Nutr?kusi? tyl?“. Imdama ši? knyg? nieko per daug nesitik?jau – tiesiog atitr?kti nuo nusikaltim? ir kriminal?, kuriuos vien? po kito pastaruoju metu imu ? rankas. Šviesus viršelis, graži mergyt? jame, žinomi autor?s k?rybiniai keliai man liudijo viena – bus graži istorija, daug jausm?, lengvas pasakojimas apie koki? šeim? ištikusi? b?d?. Kaip nustebau pati, taip nustebinsiu ir jus – knyga savyje sl?p? daug ?domesnes paslaptis.

Lora – ištek?jusi už žymiai vyresnio, depresija sergan?io vyro, augina penkeri? met? dukrel? Em?. Prieš pat mirt?, Loros t?vas privert? j? pažad?ti jog globos ir lankys seneli? namuose gyvenan?i? Sar?. Nors Lorai prašymas pasirodo keistas, jokios Saros nei jos, nei jos t?v? gyvenime nebuvo, ji negali nepildyti mirusio t?vo noro. Vos Lora apie tai užsimena savo vyrui, jis kaip ?manydamas bando j? atkalb?ti nuo pažado vykdymo. Lora nepakl?sta vyro prašymui ir kart? gr?žusi namo randa j? nusišovus?. Negana tokios nelaim?s, ?vykio metu namuose buvusi Ema, užsisklendžia savyje ir nustoja šnek?ti. Iš anks?iau buvusios pleput?s lieka tik šeš?lis. Darbš?ioji Lora iš vis? j?g? stengiasi pad?ti Emai ir kartu lanko Sar?, senut? sergan?ia Alzheimerio liga. Sara jai pasakoja apie savo gyvenim?, o jos pasakojimai kuo toliau, tuo labiau šiurpina Lor?.

Taip, galb?t toks turinio atpasakojimas atrodo kaip tradicinis toki? roman? turinys, ta?iau taip yra d?! to jog nenoriu gadinti jums skaitymo malonumo. Norint perteikti knygos ?domum?, reikt? atskleisti paslapt? po paslapties, ko daryti tikrai nenoriu. Knygoje tiek daug netik?tum?, tiek daug stebinan?i? pos?ki?, tiek m?slis? ir kartu jaudulio. Knyga mane sp?jo ir sugraudinti ir sušildyti ir puikiai tiko šaltiems žiemos vakarams. Taip, buvo ?ia ir ta banali meil?s istorija ir galb?t nusp?jamas vaiko likimas, ta?iau Saros pasakojimas ir visiškai netik?ta jo kulminacija sulygino visus plusus ir minusus ir iš visko gavusi tikrai stiprus moteriškas romanas, paliesiantis kiekvien? jautresn? skaitytoj?. Rekomenduoju visiems kas pasiilgo stiprios dramos ar nori susitumpinti ilgus žiemos vakarus – su tokia istorija laikas tiesiog skriete skrieja.

Shelagh Rice says

I have read a few books by Diane Chamberlain and enjoyed them all, but this is my favourite so far. There are several different story lines running at the same time. A young child who is mute after going through a traumatic experience and her therapy and the worry of her mother. An old lady's fading memories of working in a psychiatric hospital during the '50s and and the awful treatment and experimentation on patients. A mother tracing the biological father of her daughter conceived after a one night stand. I know this sounds like it is very confusing but it's not, the stories are woven together very well. The book is very well researched and the memories of the former nurse are based on true events. The characters are all developed well and even though there is a bit too much tidying up at the end I think it is a solid 4 stars.

Mo says

4.5 sad stars.

“My husband shot himself in our bedroom. When I got home, Emma was standing at the bottom of the stairs, screaming.”

Since that awful day, Laura Brandon’s little girl hasn’t uttered a word. When a psychiatrist suggests that Emma won’t talk because she’s terrified of men, Laura is guilt-

ridden. To help Emma, she needs to know what unspeakable secret lies behind her husband's suicide.

This one was intriguing but heartbreaking.

I have read two other books by this author and they were quite intense. I did shed a tear or two reading this one. Hit a bit close to home for me.

"Promise!" he said.

"I was a stranger on a train."

Don't want to say much about it. I didn't really read many reviews before starting it.

"You two are apples and oranges. Impossible to compare."

"Daddy"