

## Out of the Silence

**Marie Theodore**

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*A determined lawyer fights to see a sadistic criminal punished in the tense thriller Out of the Silence.*

In Marie Theodore's intense legal thriller *Out of the Silence*, a determined attorney seeks to right a past wrong by personally prosecuting a dangerous criminal who preys on women.

Alexa channeled her troubled family life into a storied career as a criminal lawyer, protecting victims with ferocity. She became New York City's assistant district attorney. When she hears that Casimir, who escaped prosecution for the brutal treatment of his wife, Carmella, fifteen years prior, has been arrested for raping and abandoning a young woman, Maria, in an alley, Alexa refuses to let Casimir evade justice again. She has to contend with victim intimidation and the threat of murder from Casimir's cronies to hold him accountable, though.

Alexa faces multiple obstacles, including a reluctant judge, Maria's wariness, and a corrupt opposing legal team; the novel moves through these at a taut pace. Further, her work to punish Casimir in the present is punctuated by reflections on their past interactions, including regarding how the first case against him went wrong. She persists through it all, determined to put Casimir in prison to protect an untold number of victims. The courtroom drama is intense—an underdog battle that's moved along by Alexa's dogged determination. Still, the book works toward a hope-filled ending that celebrates women's connections and support of one another.

Every character herein is fully realized, even the criminals. Alexa is established in terms of her difficult past and happy marriage, both of which inform her career decisions: she often gives victims opportunities that other attorneys wouldn't. Her coworkers support her through the Casimir case; in the course of their work, their stories and personal dramas are detailed too, as when Alexa's secretary has an affair with a janitor.

However, the book's focus on nonconsensual sexual encounters is discomfiting. Indeed, ill-fitting erotic undertones pervade this story that is ostensibly most about its criminal court case. Some related scenes, as with Alexa's healthy relationship with her husband, deepen the book's characterizations; their lovemaking bouts are frequent and frenetic. Others are less necessary to the story, as with Casimir's sexual exploits, the scenes of which are violent, degrading, and soon gratuitous (the depth of his cruelty is grasped early on in the book). And while the romances in Alexa's office are consensual and empowering, they don't service the central story and come to feel distracting.

In the dramatic thriller *Out of the Silence*, domestic abuse survivors join forces to punish a violent abuser.

JOHN M. MURRAY (September 26, 2024)

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