

**TITLE:** *Silence and the Fig Tree*

**GENRE:** Literary Fiction / Diaspora Fiction

**SYNOPSIS:** When his mother Zaynab dies, Karim—a British-born son of Algerian immigrants—returns to the family home he once fled, stepping back into rooms thick with ritual, memory, and unspoken grievances. His father, a former political prisoner shaped by trauma and years of quiet endurance, is a man Karim has long struggled to understand. Their shared silence, once a barrier, becomes the fragile ground on which they begin to rebuild a fractured bond.

As Karim sorts through his mother's belongings, he discovers the fragments of a hidden legacy: her annotated recipes, tender letters, and stories rooted in the fig tree she planted as a girl in Oran. Tea ceremonies, shared meals, and the act of cooking become a tentative language through which father and son start to reconnect. At school, Karim's pupils write poems about longing, silence, and identity—echoes of the questions he has avoided asking himself.

Determined to bridge the distance between his heritage and his present life, Karim begins learning Arabic and slowly uncovers the truth about his father's past. He realises that silence was not neglect but a form of survival—an inheritance passed down through generations.

The journey culminates in a pilgrimage to Oran, where father and son stand beneath Zaynab's fig tree, its roots entwined with their family's history. In that moment, silence becomes presence, grief becomes ritual, and healing becomes possible.

*Silence and the Fig Tree* is a lyrical novel about migration, memory, faith, and the unspoken love that binds families across continents. Blending poetry, recipes, pupils' voices, and personal archives, it explores how we learn to listen—to our past, to our people, and to the quiet truths that shape us.