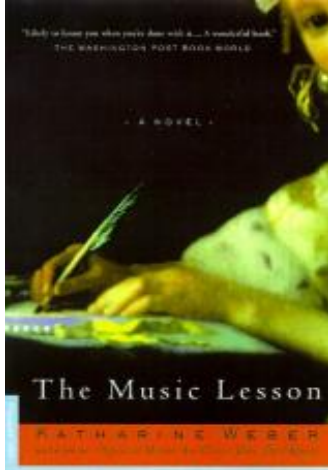


# The Music Lesson

by Katharine Weber

---



## About the Book

Patricia Dolan is alone with a stolen Vermeer painting in an Irish cottage by the sea. How she got here is part of the story she tells; about her father, a Boston cop; the numbing loss of her daughter; and her charming Irish cousin, who has led her to this high-stakes crime.

## Discussion Guide

1. Katharine Weber's first novel, **Objects in Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear**, considered appearance and reality, perception and perceptivity. How are those issues manifest in **The Music Lesson**?
2. There are many small and hidden spaces in this novel -- fake compartments, hidden cupboards. How do they signify? There are also many characters who aren't what they seem. Can you identify all the characters whose identities shift in the course of the story?
3. This novel deals with the ideas of accomplices and couriers. In which way are we all accomplices and why do we become accomplices? In which way are we all couriers?
4. Discuss the idea that a representation can seem more beautiful than the real object.
5. What is the impact of the journal entries on the pace of the novel? What is the effect of the brevity of the novel, at only 192 pages? How does the spareness of the language control the flow and the tension of the novel?
6. Is Patricia's life better before the story begins or after the story ends?
7. Do you believe, by the book's end that Mickey is really Patricia's cousin? Do you believe that he had genuine feelings

for her?

**8.** The age-old question applies here-do the ends justify the means in **The Music Lesson**?

**9.** **The Music Lesson** is a visual, tactile, sensory book. Music, color, texture, the natural world, the world of Dutch 17th century painting...these are all addressed in the book, though not always overtly. Is the author "painting" the world from which Patricia has withdrawn? Does Patricia regain this world by novel's end?

## Author Bio

Katharine Weber is the author of the novels TRIANGLE, THE LITTLE WOMEN, THE MUSIC LESSON and OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR. She lives in Connecticut with her husband, the cultural historian Nicholas Fox Weber, and is a thesis adviser in the graduate writing program at Columbia University.

## Critical Praise

"Throughout Weber's trickily, tension-filled plot, double-crosses, murder, and art forgeries dramatize the deeper themes of love, refuge and loss."

---

## The Music Lesson

by Katharine Weber

**Publication Date:** January 2, 2000

**Paperback:** 192 pages

**Publisher:** Picador

**ISBN-10:** 0312252854

**ISBN-13:** 9780312252854