

# Smaller and smaller circles

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Lead by Father Gus Saenz , with the help of his former student and fellow forensic anthropologist Father Jerome Lucero, they track down and try to decipher the mind of a serial killer, Alex Carlos whom Atty. Benjamin Arcinas the head of the NBI investigating team that doesn't believe that serial killer exists.

Description of the characters:

Father Gus Saenz represents the tall, mestizo, and ruggedly handsome priest you hope would not be in front of an altar in your wedding, but beside you instead. He is a product of an affluent, amiable family, is well-educated, and witty.

Father Jerome Lucero is Father Gus' former student, a forensic anthropologist, and his partner in solving the series of killings. He is much younger, but less likely to withhold his feelings when agitated or irritated.

Posing as a hindrance, the acting director of the police department is somehow a satire of the attention-seeking, media-loving police figure. He not only takes the case carelessly, but leads the people in the wrong direction just to make himself look good and seem in control of the case. Atty. Benjamin Arcinas.

Alex Carlos is the resident dentist-slash-serial killer in this fast-paced novel. He works in the mobile clinic that provides dental and medical check-ups in the Payatas area. It is there that he is given access to the undersized and undernourished boys he needs to fulfill his sick plan. His anger comes from being molested as a child by his PE teacher Mr. Gorospe. Unable to talk to his

parents about the humiliating incident, and incapable of talking to any friends about his trauma, he grows up psychologically impaired and angry.

### Summary of the novel

#### The Big Circle:

The story opens to Father Emil—a fellow priest and acquaintance to Father Gus and Father Jerome—finding a dead boy's body dumped in the Payatas. A series of investigation has started, and over six bodies are already found suspiciously patterned to one another. Although, Father Gus and Father Jerome are eager and most likely sure about the crime being done by a serial killer, the lawyer who heads the NBI's investigating team Atty. Benjamin Arcinas never believed in their theories.

The two priests pursued the investigations of the crimes. Double checking all the evidence left by the killer on the corpses especially the facts that he kills with precision and with symbols—he defaces his victims, and excises the genitals, signs that there is a sexual conflict and a need to rid off the identity of the kids.

Figuring out the goings-on of a psychologically disturbed killer, especially if he's very good at hiding it, is fairly difficult. The sleuths go through some complicated twists in their quest to find truth and justice amidst the media-hungry personalities who don't give much attention to the case.

Deciphering the crime isn't easy.... they conducted investigations among the people of Payatas and also within the volunteer medical group members

assigned there. They suspect that the killer is one of the men attending to the people's health. They ended up researching the records of one of the dentists—Alex Carlos. They found out that Alex was molested by his homo PE. Teacher when he was still in elementary school at Payatas. And as a way of bringing out his revenge he kills boys at his age during the abuse. Father Gus together with the troop conducted an arrest. They cornered him inside the medical van. Father Gus got inside the van alone and he tried to convince Alex to surrender but before he could speak the killer had injured him using a medical blade many times. He dropped dead outside the van.

When Father Gus dropped dead outside the van the troop immediately came forward for rescue and when they saw Alex still holding the blade they shot him. Alex died. And Father Gus managed to escape death after the fatal injury. The two priests proved their theory and the crime was solved.

Reaction to the novel:

The novel is really great, at first I wasn't really interested in it because of my first impression on the title but then, when I read the summary at the back I found myself reading it even before I could let the teacher check for it.

F. H. Bantacan's way of writing is really good. It drags you deeper and deeper, as if as you continue reading you were already in the scene and yet nobody sees or notices your existence but you know what is happening, you can see everything and you can hear everything, whisper or thoughts, that are being left. Naturalistic dialogue that's also contributed to the essence of the story, it made it like a true to life story. And last, but not the least, is how

the published it—the book is handy so it's more comfortable to read anywhere, anytime.

The novel was a thrilling detective story.

From reading the novel I got to the idea that, the antagonist seeks for justice like most of Filipinos (especially those who are under the poverty line). The police force only pays attention to those cases that will bring them media exposures, I believe this really happens to the kind of society we have now. Justice men should at least look to every case equally.

As a student I'm also an observer of the happenings in our country and I admit there have been many cases that I watched over the television that had been solved but it is also true that most of them are cases that involve high profile persons. The story opened my eyes to this kind of harassment that maybe a lot of people have been experiencing and yet they can't talk about it to anybody so they tend to let it out through killing/violence.

This novel changes my view of priest from stereotype to more exciting and analytic life of priest. I love reading books but previously I read only those that is written by foreign writers but after reading this novel I appreciate it a lot that I am convinced to read more and more Filipino books. My understanding towards people grew deeper and wider. I learned lot of things. The Filipino values that were depicted in this novel were the tight family ties- they continuously search for their love ones even though there's a high possibility that they were dead already, warm family and loving- pictured in the family of Father Gus.