

[The Silent Patient](#) by Alex Michaelides

Reviewed by S.T., Class of 2029

★★★★☆☆

Genre: Mystery, Psychological Thriller

What made you interested to read this book?: My friend recommended this book to me.

Setting:

The story's main setting is a mental hospital called The Grove in modern day London.

Protagonists:

The protagonists are Alicia Berenson, a patient at The Grove, and Theo Faber, her psychotherapist. Alicia, a once famous artist, has not spoken since the day she killed her husband, if she even killed him, the public speculates. She is a puzzle to be solved to Theo, who applies for a job at The Grove in hopes of figuring out why she did it. Her character remains a mystery to the reader, making her very intriguing. Though Alicia does not talk, bits and pieces of her character and story are revealed through her behavior and how Theo interprets her to the reader. Theo's own morals and beliefs are shown uniquely through his approach to understand Alicia and how he explains events to the reader.

Plotline:

The story follows Theo as he attempts to treat the "silent patient" Alicia who hasn't talked after supposedly killing her husband. Her refusal to speak leaves the question of if she was guilty or not and if she'd ever talk again. As his obsession of finding out what caused Alicia to kill grows, Theo learns more and more about who she was and her history. He meets family members and supposed friends to try to understand her fully. He desperately wants her to talk to him in hopes that her side of the story will reveal the missing pieces of the murder. The clues start to build up and soon, Theo has become fully absorbed in Alicia's life. Parts of his own life start to fall apart such as his relationship with his wife, causing him to reconsider what he is doing with his life. Will Theo find out the truth or will this have all been for nothing?

Reflection on the novel's strong points and weak points:

A strong point of the novel was the understanding of characters, especially near the end of the story. The motives and thoughts of both characters were well shown through how they perceived their own actions and their justifications. The specific point of view helped the reader not only piece together the ending but also understand why it made sense the story unfolded the way it did. Little hints of characterization were left throughout the story as well. Additionally,

Alicia's journal entries from the weeks leading up to the murder were integrated, which helped the reader understand who she was as she didn't talk.

A weak point of the novel was the middle part felt boring with not much suspense or action. It mostly contained dialogue with new characters that didn't result in much until the whole picture was revealed. I also feel that the twist was not that surprising and only relied on a small detail.

What are some themes that come across?

Some themes in the book were mental health, perspective, character and psychology.

Do you feel that the cover art is true to what the media is about?

Yes. The cover art is very eerie and mysterious which fits with the vibe of the story.

Did you enjoy it? Would you recommend it?

I thought it was okay. It was a fun mystery read that felt exciting at parts, but sometimes boring. I'm not the biggest fan of mystery though. I would recommend it to friends my age who like mystery/psychological thriller fans. Though I couldn't really get into it personally, I think others might be able to. The concept and plot are intriguing.

Read and Watch-a-likes:

*The Housemaid* by Frieda McFadden

*We Were Liars* by E. Lockhart (the book, and the 2025 show)

Submitted December 2025