

the silent patient

SUMMARY

Main Characters

- **Theo Faber:** the narrator and a psychotherapist
- **Alicia Berenson:** a silent psychotherapy patient of Theo who killed her husband
- **Gabriel Berenson:** Alicia's husband whom she murdered
- **Kathy Faber:** Theo's wife and an actress.

Full Synopsis

Alicia Berenson is a famous painter who has been found guilty of murdering her husband. He was the famous fashion photographer Gabriel Berenson, who was tied up and shot. Because she took a plea of "diminished responsibility," however, she is admitted to a secure forensic unit called the Grove as opposed to being sent to prison.

Six years later, at the Grove, Theo Faber is a newly hired forensic psychotherapist uniquely intrigued by Alicia's case. He requests to be assigned to Alicia's care.

Alicia is "The Silent Patient." She has not spoken since the day of her husband's murder. She remains mute during therapy sessions.

But over time, Theo reduces her medication, allows her to paint, and gives her time outdoors.

She gives Theo her diary, wherein she details weeks of being watched in her home by a masked man before the murder of her husband. She suspects the brother-in-law who once assaulted her or the owner of the art gallery she had planned to leave.

Meanwhile, Theo learns that his wife is cheating on him, and he learns that her lover is also married.

Since Alicia fails to speak, Theo reaches out to her cousin to learn more about her. Alicia's cousin recounts the impact of Alicia's mother's suicide when she was a child, and how Alicia's grieving father said he wished Alicia to be dead instead.

Theo talks about this traumatic childhood event with Alicia.

Finally, she speaks, telling Theo that it was the masked man mentioned in her diary who entered her home and murdered Gabriel, not her.

The Silent Patient Ending Explained: A Plot Twist!

Theo was actually the masked man. He broke into Alicia's and Gabriel's home in order to confront Gabriel, who had been having an affair with Theo's wife, Kathy. Theo then held Alicia and Gabriel at gunpoint, giving Gabriel the choice to save either himself or Alicia. He chose himself.

However, Theo then left the Berenson house without shooting either Alicia or Gabriel. In reality, his only intent was to expose Gabriel's selfishness to Alicia.

But, this intimate betrayal reminds Alicia of her father's betrayal after the death of her mother, and her darkest emotions and impulses overwhelm her. Alicia shoots Gabriel in the face and kills him.

The news of Gabriel's murder is what sparked Theo to apply to work at the Grove. He sought to help her recover from the murder in his capacity as her therapist.

But, when Alicia finally speaks, telling Theo the clearly false story that the masked man killed Gabriel, he realizes that she recognizes him as the masked man.

Theo then attempts to murder Alicia by way of a drug overdose of morphine, leaving her in a coma. Theo had learned that her prior doctor, Christian, had treated Alicia before Gabriel's death in an unlicensed practice. Theo blames Christian, and he is arrested.

Unbeknownst to Theo, however, Alicia revealed Theo as the masked man in her diary before losing consciousness. Her friend finds the diary and gives it to the police.

This twist also means that Theo's story of his wife's affair did not occur in the present but rather in the past, before Gabriel's affair.

The police then arrive at Theo's home and read him Alicia's final diary entry. The charade is finally over, and Theo feels an odd sense of relief that he has been caught.

