



Through The path of the Silent Mockingbird

*a thrilling novel by
Alex Gadala*

FIRST CHAPTER SAMPLE

Through the Path of the Silent Mockingbird is a Mystery Forged in Silence and Secrets

Through the Path of the Silent Mockingbird is a gripping psychological thriller where silence speaks louder than truth—and some paths call to you from the shadows.

After thirteen years of silence, the echo of a forgotten crime begins to stir in the depths of the forest. When a young girl is found murdered, the truth is quickly buried beneath grief, unanswered questions, and a father's heartbreak. But the past is not done speaking.

Follow Officer Daniel Falconi—a driven young cop haunted by his own doubts—and Mila, a sharp, resilient orphan whose instincts refuse to be ignored. Together, they unravel a web of lies, distorted astrange, silent mockingbird that seems to appear at every turn, they begin to question everything: official records, personal loyalties, and even their own convictions.

What once seemed like a closed case transforms into an obsessive search for a truth buried beneath layers of guilt, silence, and trauma. And as the investigation pushes them further into the heart of the forest—and the heart of a grieving family—they learn that some truths are dangerous... and some were never meant to be found.

With a chilling atmosphere and relentless tension, *Through the Path of the Silent Mockingbird* invites readers to piece together a puzzle where every answer reveals a darker truth.

Perfect for fans of *The Silent Patient*, *Gone Girl*, and *The Analyst*, this novel doesn't just grip you—it haunts you long after the final page.



The background of the page features a soft, painterly illustration. On the right side, there is a profile of a person's head, looking towards the left. On the left side, there is an open book with handwritten text on its pages. The overall color palette is muted, with shades of blue, grey, and white, creating a contemplative and artistic atmosphere.

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CHAPTER 1

The Lone Mockingbird

In the forgotten corners of the afternoon, where the sun seems to slow its descent and linger too long in a reluctant dance with the horizon, the shadows lengthened across Alexandra's backyard. An eldritch chill swept through the air—a silent whisper from the dense forest at the edge of her property.

Perched on a creaky wooden chair, she hesitated, pen poised above her journal, like a traveler uncertain of an uncharted path, heart brimming with silent verse. The atmosphere felt charged—the usual comforting rustle of leaves now a thunderous hush.

Glancing toward the dense thicket, she couldn't shake the feeling of unseen eyes watching. The creaky furniture hummed in tune with the forest that lay just beyond her house; the forest's timbers, a relic from trees long ago felled.

Alexandra's pen danced over the pages of her journal as the mid-afternoon sun painted dapples of gold on the backyard of her rustic home. To her, the forest that bordered the house was a friend, a silent confidante who had listened to her secrets since childhood, hiding them within its labyrinth of evergreens and shadows—an exaggerated contrast from the suburban neighborhood on the opposite side of the house.

Today, her journal bore the brunt of internal tempest.

There was Frank—his recent transgression not unforgivable, but unforgettable. Tangled emotions sprawled across several pages like a forest path overgrown with thorns.

She loved him—his lopsided smile, the way he pulled her close when the world felt unbearable, his tender kiss. After her mother's death, he had been a warm anchor in her tumultuous life.



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But his jealousy—and his irrational rage—tainted everything. His insecurities seeped into every moment, turning comfort into something oppressive. More and more, his love felt suffocating. His anger made her feel small. And maybe, just maybe, letting go was the only way to find herself again.

Was it possible to love someone and still feel lost? Love wasn't supposed to be this complicated, was it?

She felt torn between comfort and rawness. She feared she was holding onto Frank out of fear—fear of emptiness, fear of letting go.

She remembered a line from *Queen Margot*, underlined once in the back of her planner with smudged blue ink: “Women are never so strong as after their defeat.”

She understood now. She could find strength after being brought down after being afraid.

And then there was her best friend—the constant hum beneath the noise of her life.

But that kiss a few nights ago—unexpected, electric—left a fracture that wouldn't heal. It sat heavy between them, a quiet storm building at the edge of the horizon. Maybe a vulnerable mistake. Or maybe it meant something more. What if it changed everything?

She couldn't deny the spark, just as she couldn't deny the fear—the fear of destroying their friendship in a bout of confusion.

Since then, everything felt off-kilter. Frank had sensed it. His jealousy spiraled like a tightening noose, their fight exploding days later with the force of something long buried.

Yet here she was, caught in the wreckage.

Her love for Frank was still there, but it felt thin now, worn at the edges—like a thread pulled too tight, fraying with every tug. She wanted to forgive him, to believe they could work things out. She loved him, even if that love was bruised by his jealousy and rage.

A breeze stirred the hedge beside the garden, carrying with it a faint rustle—soft, deliberate,



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not the careless shuffle of wind.

Alexandra paused, pen hovering mid-air, her gaze flicking toward the dense green—nothing but leaves, layered in shadows.

Still, the uneasy prickle at the back of her neck lingered.

She exhaled, sharp and quick.

Stop it, Alex. It's just the wind.

Just when she was weighing whether to tear out the pages and turn them into kindling, the doorbell rang.

She quickly made her way through the garden to the edge of the hedge, staying out of sight. Frank stood at the front door. His face looked haggard, as if he had traveled through not just miles, but years of regret. She slowly moved forward.

He had that rugged charm that made people look twice—the kind of face carved from stubbornness and boyish pride. His dark hair, thick and tousled, curled just above his ears, unruly in a way that seemed both deliberate and accidental. There was a roughness to him—like a river stone worn smooth but still sharp enough to cut.

Broad shoulders filled out his flannel shirt, and that half-crooked grin—the one she used to fall for—flickered for a moment before vanishing under the strain of the moment. His dark brown eyes, usually glinting with mischief, now seemed clouded, heavy with regret.

Before Alexandra could make her presence known, a rustle from the forest's edge caught her attention.

A mockingbird, its feathers shimmering with an eerie luster, perched unusually close. It seemed to stare directly at her—an omen.

Her breath caught.

The background of the page features a soft, painterly illustration. On the left, an open book with handwritten text is visible. On the right, the dark silhouette of a woman's head and shoulders is shown in profile, looking towards the left. The overall color palette is muted, with greys, blues, and a touch of red for the title.

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The forest—her once tranquil refuge—now whispered untold secrets hidden in its shadows.

With a deep breath, she stepped forward, the confrontation with Frank unavoidable now, yet the forest's newfound mystery tugged at her with scintillating foreboding.

The crunch of dry leaves underfoot betrayed Alexandra's approach, her footsteps—soft but deliberate—forced Frank's gaze toward her.

She had that kind of beauty that snuck up on you—quiet, yet undeniable. Her skin, a smooth bronze, caught the fractured sunlight in a way that made her seem both rooted to the earth and somehow part of the forest's whispered secrets.

Framed by the afternoon's dimming light through the trees, her hair pirouetted on the blurred boundary between reality and ethereal—a dark cascade in loose, natural waves that brushed past her shoulders, catching the wind like ribbons.

Her wide, almond-shaped eyes, a deep mossy green, held a look of layered emotions—thoughtfulness tinged with something heavier, something friable. Her nose, elegant with a slight curve, gave her profile a classic softness. But it was her mouth Frank always noticed first: full lips, naturally downturned at the edges, giving her a contemplative, almost distant look, even when she smiled.

A faint scar traced the arch of her left brow—a thin, pale line that caught the light when she tilted her head just so. It didn't mar her beauty. It deepened it, hinting at an old story she never told.

Frank's breath hitched. As if an ache rose in his chest.

She looked like the kind of person who belonged somewhere else—on a windswept hillside, maybe, or framed by the ruins of some old stone church. But here she was, in the dwindling light, walking straight toward him.

Her bright green eyes held sorrow that even the fading sunlight couldn't stir.



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He approached her with caution, each step weighed down by careful remorse. His heart pounded. The few feet of separation felt like miles of tangled emotions.

As he finally closed the gap, he searched her eyes for signs of forgiveness—for some hint that the simple act of moving forward could unmake his mistakes.

“Before you say anything, please let me finish,” he choked out. “And if you still don’t want to see me again, I won’t come back. I know my jealousy has been pushing you away for a while now, and I understand you must be confused. You have all the right to be. Who would want to be with someone who always makes them miserable?”

He paused, slowly inhaling.

“But all I ask is for you to give me a second chance. I can change, I promise.”

As their gazes locked, she found herself drawn into the familiar depths that had always been her refuge. Her anger slowly dissipated, replaced by a perplexing mix of emotions that both unsettled and soothed her. A wave of sadness, tinged with the sweetness of nostalgia, engulfed her.

“That’s some speech,” she responded, her voice a mixture of skepticism and lingering hurt. “But if you think I’m going to forgive you just because you apologized, you don’t know me at all! You think—”

He pulled her in by the waist and kissed her.

She pushed him away by the shoulder and blurted, “That’s not going to work every time.”

But he kissed her again, and with that simple act, awash with absolution, a weight lifted. For a split second, the fractured pieces of their love story knitted back together in deafening silence.

“Alms.”

A rusty voice behind them suddenly woke them from their dream.

“Some spare change,” the voice continued.



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Frank exasperatedly dug into his jeans pocket, past keys and scraps of paper, finally making contact with the clammy skin of loose change. He placed it in the palm of the old man. The beggar closed his hands around the coins, his knuckles a landscape of liver spots and scars—as if each one told a silent story of hardship. His lips peeled back in a smile, revealing a sparse array of teeth, worn and yellow as old piano keys.

Just as the old man pocketed the coins and pivoted on worn heels to go about his weary way, Alexandra intertwined her fingers—soft yet assertive—through Frank’s and latched on. As she led him toward the hedge, the faintest prickle of unease crawled up her spine.

She glanced back over her shoulder, eyes scanning the street.

The beggar was moving away, his silhouette shrinking against the fading light, but something about his posture seemed off—too slow, almost deliberate. For a fleeting moment, she felt as though his eyes might still be on them, watching through the veil of his retreat.

She tightened her grip on Frank’s hand. Without a word, as if to avoid drawing any more attention, she guided him away from the driveway, the peering windows of the neighborhood, and the old man—who was already dissolving into the landscape like a faded memory.

She led him through the threshold of the hedge and into the backyard—a chaotic sanctuary insulated from the world. The stalwart hedge stood sentinel, its verdant layers meshing with the shadowy fringes of the forest beyond.

Alexandra delicately brushed her fingers over the rough stubble on Frank’s cheek, tracing a familiar path as she leaned in, drawing him close until the space between them vanished again. Their interrupted kiss found its fervent rhythm once more.

This time it was slower, almost tender, and she let herself believe—if only for a moment—that this was how things could be. A hush of unspoken hopes coiled between them, fragile as morning mist. No fights. No questions. Just the warmth of someone who knew her better than anyone else.



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But as her hand trailed down to grasp his, her mind faltered.

Is this real? Or am I just afraid of the silence if he's gone?

Her heart tightened, as though it wanted to speak against the moment, to remind her of the doubts and bruised memories she'd tried to ignore.

The forest seemed to hold its breath with her. The gentle rustle of leaves gave way to a tense stillness. Somewhere high above, a single mockingbird called out—its tone discordant, uneasy.

Alexandra pulled back, her green eyes flickering toward the trees. Her thoughts turned to the unspoken fears she could never quite shake.

The momentary hush carried a strange tension, as if the forest had gone still to watch. The blissful serenity transformed into a gut-wrenching jolt.

From the forest, a figure erupted forth like a demon materializing from the abyss of the underworld. Before Alexandra or Frank could draw breath to scream, the phantom assailant swung a jagged rock with violent fury, smashing it directly into Frank's skull.

At the sickening crunch, Frank crumpled instantly—a marionette with its strings suddenly cut.

In that heartbeat, time collapsed into a suffocating hush.

Alexandra stood awestruck, panicked in the eyes of horror, frozen. Too shocked to scream. Too terrified to move.

The figure's hand, gloved in cruel intent, brandished a knife and drove it into Alexandra's abdomen.

Agony screamed through her nerves as she collapsed beside Frank, her hand instinctively clutching the wound.

In that horrific moment, an explosion of avian chatter filled the air. From the high branches of the surrounding trees, a flock of mockingbirds descended. Their flight was erratic, as if each wingbeat

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was a thrum of rage and each cry a note of lament.

They swirled around the hooded figure who, even in veiled malevolence, seemed taken aback, disoriented.

Like a resurgent spirit with spine straightened, the attacker stepped away from Alexandra's fallen form.

The executioner looked down, beholding something on the grass beside Alexandra's hand.

With a difficult breath, she lifted her curiosity as the figure leaned closer to the torn page from her journal, carried perhaps by the wind or, improbably, placed there by fate.

On it was a drawing of a mockingbird, detailed in its elegance and simplicity, wings spread in flight, but eyes forever watchful.

As Alexandra's vision faded, she thought she saw the mockingbirds retreat into the sky, surrendering the way to an even darker force—a blinding darkness. She felt the forest closing in, a creeping dread, as if the trees had eyes and the wind had ears.

As Alexandra's consciousness slipped into nothingness, a single mockingbird remained on a branch—silent, watchful, still.

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