

# The Crippling Fear of Silence

Only in Silence are with ourselves, comfortably with ourselves, and only in silence do we come to know ourselves. Yet many people avoid its Presence, as the following passage shows.

“I didn't know any other person who paid as much attention to the symphony of the Garden Apartments as I did. They were too busy making their own noises to listen to anyone else's and rarely did an hour pass in their homes when silence wasn't broken. Silence, I learned early on, frightens people, or at least makes them feel very uncomfortable. The worst punishment imposed on my school friends seemed to be keeping them in detention, forcing them to be still and shutting them off from any communication. They squirmed, grimaced, put their heads down and waited as if spiders had been released inside them and were crawling up and down their stomachs and under their chests. When the bell that dismissed them finally rang, they would burst out like an explosion of confetti in every direction, each talking louder than the other, some even screaming so hard that veins strained and popped against their skin in their temples.

Mama wasn't any different. The moment she entered the apartment, she turned on the radio or clicked on the television set, crying, 'Why is this place like a morgue?'"

**V.C. Andrews *Ice* 16**