



IAM READERS GUILD

Discussion Guide

***Silence* by Shusaku Endo**

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The questions below are merely prompts to get your discussion going. Keep a brief record of the most interesting ideas that come up during your discussion, and after the meeting, send us a summary (around a paragraph long) to post to the Readers Guild blog! (Email your summary to readersguild@internationalartsmovement.org.)

1. What were your initial impressions of the story and the style of writing? Which characters did you like or dislike? Which characters did you identify with? Has your impression of the book evolved since you finished reading it?
2. What function does Kichijiro (the traitor) serve in the novel? Do you know anyone like his character? Have you ever felt like him?
3. In some ways, *Silence* is a book about West meeting East. How do those two cultures interact in the book? How do you feel about the interaction?
4. Rodrigues's character is based on a real person - Giuseppe Chiara, a missionary who secretly entered Japan with nine others in 1643. What, in the end, does Rodrigues's apostasy mean for the people to whom he ministered? How closely does it match your idea of apostasy? How do you think you would have acted if you were in Rodrigues's shoes?
5. Why is the book called "Silence"? Who is silent? What significance does that silence have?