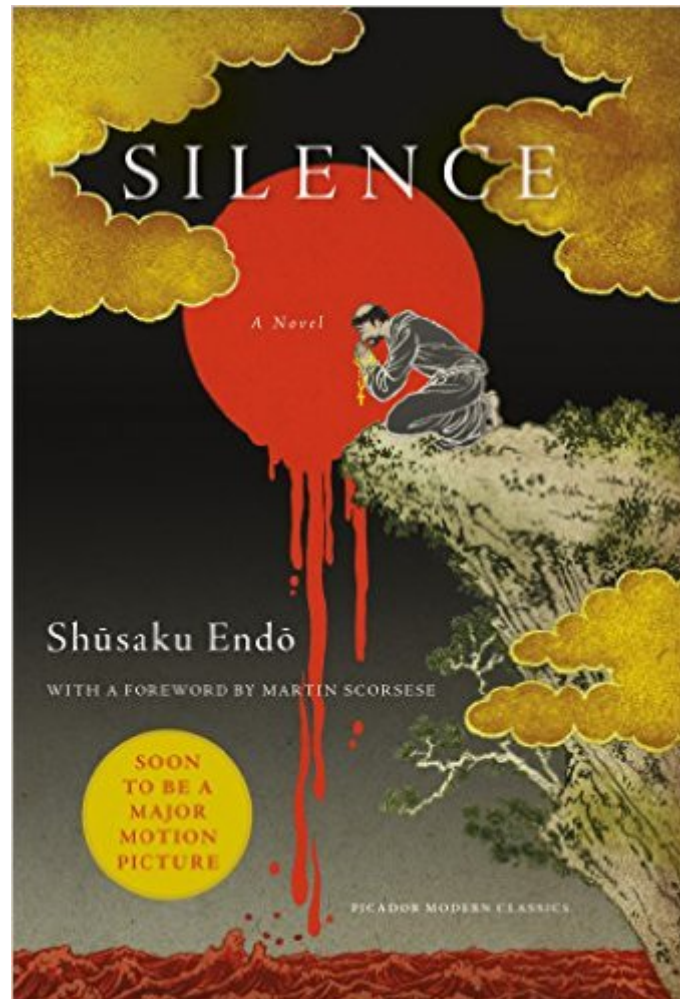


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Silence: A Novel (Picador Modern Classics)



Synopsis

Shusaku Endo's classic novel of enduring faith in dangerous times, soon to be a major motion picture directed by Martin Scorsese, starring Andrew Garfield, Liam Neeson, and Adam Driver "Silence I regard as a masterpiece, a lucid and elegant drama." -The New York Review of Books
Seventeenth-century Japan: Two Portuguese Jesuit priests travel to a country hostile to their religion, where feudal lords force the faithful to publicly renounce their beliefs. Eventually captured and forced to watch their Japanese Christian brothers lay down their lives for their faith, the priests bear witness to unimaginable cruelties that test their own beliefs. Shusaku Endo is one of the most celebrated and well-known Japanese fiction writers of the twentieth century, and *Silence* is widely considered to be his great masterpiece.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Silence" is an excellent novel. Comparisons between Shusaku Endo and British novelist Graham Greene are apt, as both deal with the relationships that develop between individuals, Catholicism, and the world. "Silence" is an extremely intense historical novel. While knowledge of Catholicism may be helpful for some of the situations and terminology, the issues of doubt and faith, in God and in people, are readily available to any reader. "Silence" is set in sixteenth century Japan, where Portuguese missionaries must contend with traders from rival European nations and the persecution of Christians by Japanese feudal lords. The feudal lords want to drive Christianity out of Japan, and try to do so by torturing priests into apostasy, denying their faith. This is done symbolically by

stepping on a "fumie," a Christian image, like a picture of Mary or a crucifix. Two Portuguese priests, Sebastian Rodrigues and Francis Garrpe, make a dangerous journey to Japan, both to locate and comfort Japanese converts, and to discover the truth about a supposed apostate priest, Ferreira. "Silence" makes use of several narrative approaches, third person omniscient at the beginning and ending, while the middle portion of the novel is written in the style of a diary and letters from Rodrigues' point of view. The main protagonist, Rodrigues must deal with the validity of his faith, the propriety of the Christian mission in Japan, the suffering of Japanese converts, and the silence of God in the midst of so much hardship. Rodrigues' trials are exacerbated by his physical and cultural isolation, as he and Garrpe are forced to conceal themselves in a small hut dug out of the side of a mountain near Nagasaki.

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