



A Quiet Place

By Seicho Matsumoto

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"A master crime writer . . . Seicho Matsumoto's thrillers dissect Japanese society."—The New York Times Book Review

"A stellar psychological thriller with a surprising and immensely satisfying resolution that flows naturally from the book's complex characterizations. Readers will agree that Matsumoto (1909–1992) deserves his reputation as Japan's Georges Simenon.—Publishers Weekly

While on a business trip to Kobe, Tsuneo Asai receives the news that his wife Eiko has died of a heart attack. Eiko had a heart condition so the news of her death wasn't totally unexpected. But the circumstances of her demise left Tsuneo, a softly-spoken government bureaucrat, perplexed. How did it come about that his wife—who was shy and withdrawn, and only left their house twice a week to go to haiku meetings—ended up dead in a small shop in a shady Tokyo neighborhood?

When Tsuneo goes to apologize to the boutique owner for the trouble caused by his wife's death he discovers the villa Tachibana near by, a house known to be a meeting place for secret lovers. As he digs deeper into his wife's recent past, he must eventually conclude that she led a double life...

Seicho Matsumoto was Japan's most successful thriller writer. His first detective novel, *Points and Lines*, sold over a million copies in Japan. *Vessel of Sand*, published in English as *Inspector Imanishi Investigates* in 1989, sold over four million copies and became a movie box-office hit.

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Editorial Review

Review

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY STARRED REVIEW:

Why would a woman with a serious heart condition risk her health by climbing a steep hill in an area where she knew no one? That conundrum obsesses Japanese bureaucrat Tsuneo Asai, the hero of this stellar psychological thriller from Matsumoto (*Inspector Imanishi Investigates*). Asai, a section chief in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, is on a business trip with his boss when word reaches him that his wife, Eiko, who had a heart condition, has died suddenly in Tokyo. Despite the emotional distance in their relationship, the tragedy is a shock to Asai, though not enough to make him put aside his professional obligations before he arranges travel home. Asai questions the official version of her death—that she suffered a heart attack in the street, and collapsed inside a nearby cosmetics store—and figures out that her fatal collapse was triggered by Eiko overexerting herself elsewhere. His pursuit of the truth becomes all-consuming, building to a surprising and immensely satisfying resolution that flows naturally from the book's complex characterizations. Readers will agree that Matsumoto (1909–1992) deserves his reputation as Japan's Georges Simenon.

About the Author

Seicho Matsumoto: Seicho Matsumoto (1909–1992) did not see his first book published until he was in his forties. He was a prolific author, producing in four decades more than 450 works. He is considered Japan's most accomplished writer of mystery and detective fiction.

Matsumoto's first full-length detective fiction, *Ten to sen* ('Points and Lines'), after running as a newspaper serial from 1957 to 1958, was a big hit as a book in 1958, selling over a million and a quarter copies. In 1961, *Suna do utsuwa* ('Vessel of Sand', 1961, published in English as *Inspector Imanishi Investigates*, 1989) sold four and a half million copies and became a movie box-office hit. 'A Quiet Place' was originally published in Japan in 1971 as *Kikanakatta basho*. This is the first time it has been translated into English. It was written about half way through Matsumoto's writing life.

Louise Heal Kawai: Louise Heal Kawai comes from Manchester. She has spent the past twenty years in Nagoya, Japan, as a translator and teacher. Her published translations include Daido Tamaki's *Milk*, Tendo Shoko's best-selling autobiography *Yakuza Moon*; and most recently *Building Waves*, a novel by Tomioka Taeko.

Users Review

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Angie Dean:

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