



The Seduction of Silence

By Bem Le Hunte
ISBN: 9780060573683

Introduction

The Seduction of Silence is a richly woven epic set over five generations in an Indian family. From the Spiritual Church of Great Britain to the breathtaking Himalayas, this book takes readers on an enchanting journey that explores spirituality, birth, death, love and hope. Unforgettable characters float across the pages of this book, human and fully sentient. Eunuchs, aghoris, sages, soldiers and nuns add their magic, their stories and their images to the grand scope of this debut novel. Meet Aakash, venerated sage and healer in the Himalayas, and founder of Prakriti, an abundant ayurvedic farm. While Aakash is a beloved leader, his unyielding wife Jyoti Ma is the fierce presence at Prakriti whose stubbornness eventually drives her children far away from the lush farm, setting in motion an astonishing chain of events that will profoundly affect the lives of future generations. Son Ram abandons home and family for a spiritual quest, while daughter Tulsi Devi, yearning for her own escape, sneaks out of her convent school and learns that one rash decision can lead to life-altering consequences. Rohini, Aakash's granddaughter, marries an Englishman and immerses herself in the London of the 1960s. With Rohini's daughter, Saakshi, the search for enlightenment comes full circle, and the great-granddaughter returns to her spiritual home - the magical Himalayas, where the story first began. Seamlessly weaving the stories of five generations of seekers, *The Seduction of Silence* is a gorgeous, provocative meditation on the search for enlightenment.

and the great-granddaughter returns to her spiritual home - the magical Himalayas, where the story first began. Seamlessly weaving the stories of five generations of seekers, *The Seduction of Silence* is a gorgeous, provocative meditation on the search for enlightenment.

Questions for Discussion

1. Characters like Aakash and Ram are strongly motivated to renounce the world and devote themselves single-mindedly to spiritual practice. To what extent is spiritual progress possible 'in the world.' How do the spiritual and profane realms work together in life and in this book?
2. To what extent do the births explored in this novel create turning points in the story?
3. Rohini observes that life and death are part of the same continuum. Do the themes of birth and death work as parallels or opposites in *The Seduction of Silence*?
4. To what extent do the spiritual beliefs of the characters dictate their destinies?
5. How do the different characters reflect the theme of Silence?
6. What is the importance of 'belief' in this story? Is it necessary to share the same belief systems as the characters in order to understand the ideals represented in this book?
7. *The Seduction of Silence* takes place over 100 years in time, across different nations and different levels of consciousness. What are the threads that tie this story together and make it cohesive?
8. How do the past and the present work together in *The Seduction of Silence*? To what extent does history make an impact on the experiences and emotions of the characters?
9. To what extent do the women in *The Seduction of Silence* break the patterns of their mothers? How easy is it to break patterns that are handed down?
10. The Himalayas are described by the author as the perfect setting for the soul. How important is the landscape to the spiritual sentiment of this book?
11. To what extent is *The Seduction of Silence* bound by time and place, and to what extent is its message universal?
12. Which parts of the book seem to be based on truth? Which parts are obviously 'magical'? How is magic presented as real and how is reality presented as fiction? Is the difference between the two of any significance?
13. In your opinion, which event is the most magical and memorable in *The Seduction of Silence*, and why?

About the Author: Bem Le Hunte was born in Calcutta in 1964 to an Indian mother and English father. She moved to England as a young girl and was educated at the same school as Saakshi, one of the novel's characters. She started writing *The Seduction of Silence* during an extended period of time in the Himalayas and Delhi, while she was pregnant with her second child. Much of this book comes from her own exploration of Silence and a long term fascination with Indian mysticism and universal laws.