

***All the Quiet Places* by Brian Thomas Isaac**

CITY LIBRARY BOOK CLUB READING GUIDE

About the book

"It's 1956, and six-year-old Eddie Toma lives with his mother, Grace, and his little brother, Lewis, near the Salmon River on the far edge of the Okanagan Indian Reserve in the British Columbia Southern Interior.

"Eddie's mother is determined to have him learn the ways of the white world by sending him to school in the small community of Falkland, while she challenges the Indian Agent and writes futile letters to Ottawa to protest the sparse resources in their community. His father returns to the family after years away only to bring chaos and instability. Old friends Isabel and Ray join them in an overcrowded house. Through the turbulent, unpredictable years of his childhood and adolescence, it is only when he is in his grandmother's company does he find solace and true companionship" [publisher].

About the author

"Brian Thomas Isaac was born in 1950 on the Okanagan Indian Reserve, situated in south central British Columbia. As a teenager he had a short career riding bulls in local rodeos until common sense steered him away, then went on to work in the Northern Alberta oil fields and retired as a bricklayer. Writing is something he has done all of his life. A lover of sports, Brian has coached minor hockey and played slow-pitch, and when he's not spending time with his three grandchildren you can find him on the golf course. His bestselling debut, *All the Quiet Places*, is longlisted for the 2022 Scotiabank Giller Prize, won an Indigenous Voices Award, was a finalist for the Amazon Canada First Novel Award, longlisted for CBC Canada Reads, and named an Indigo Best Book of the Year. He lives with his wife in the Salmon River Valley near Falkland, BC" [publisher].

Interviews and articles

- **CBC Books:** "[Laughter is medicine': Brian Thomas Isaac reflects the healing power of writing fiction](#)" [January 2022; article]
- **CBC Radio:** "[This 71-year-old writer's coming-of-age novel is a debut like no other](#)" [May 2021; article & radio interview]
- **The Walrus:** "[2022 AFNA Shortlist: Five Questions for Brian Thomas Isaac](#)" [May 2022; video, 5 minutes]
- **Scotiabank Giller Prize:** "[Giller Prize Book Club: All the Quiet Places](#)" [May 2023; video, 52 minutes]

Discussion questions

1. How does Eddie grow as a person throughout the novel – from a 6-year-old to a teenager? On the other hand, what are some of the ways that he stays the same?
2. How would you describe the relationship between Eddie and his grandmother? What is your understanding of the way he acted after she died?
3. Several men come in-and-out of Eddie's life, most notably Ray and Jimmy, his dad (in addition to his Uncle Alphonse who lives nearby). What is the role of these adult men in Eddie's life? How do they impact the way that he grows up and views the world?
4. What do you think is the most impactful moment in Eddie's life? How come? How did the moment affect him?
5. Brian Thomas Isaac said in an interview that the novel is about "joy, love, hope and survival" – and that he doesn't want it to just be seen as a sad book. Did you notice these themes? What are some of the ways that they appear?
6. The novel's description includes the line "All the Quiet Places is the story of what can happen when every adult in a person's life has been affected by colonialism." What are some of the ways that these impacts are shown?
7. The description also says that the book is told through Eddie's "wide-eyed observations of the world around him." What are some of the observations that he makes? Which ones are the most impactful on his understanding of the world?
8. What would it be like if the novel was told from the point-of-view of Eddie's mother, Grace? What are her motivations throughout the book? What is her view of the world?
9. What is the role of Eva Cluff in the story? What is her relationship to Eddie and his family? Why does his family disapprove of the time when she cleaned their house (Chapter 14)?
10. What is the significance of the book's title, *All the Quiet Places*? Why do you think that Isaac chose this title?
11. What is your interpretation of the book's ending? What emotions did you feel during the final chapter?
12. What do you think is the overall message that Isaac is hoping to get across to readers in *All the Quiet Places*?