

The Guest Cat by Takashi Hiraide

Book Club Questions

1. The cat Chibi is technically not owned by the narrator and his wife, yet it becomes central to their lives. How does this “in-between” relationship shape the story?
2. The novel pays close attention to small, ordinary moments—watching Chibi, noticing the garden, observing neighbors. How did this pacing affect your reading experience?
3. How does the house and the surrounding property function almost like its own character in the book? What does the physical space represent?
4. The narrator and his wife seem somewhat emotionally reserved. In what ways does Chibi change or reveal aspects of their inner lives?
5. Much of the novel explores impermanence and transition. Where do you see themes of change, loss, or impermanence showing up beyond the cat itself?
6. How does the novel portray urban life in Japan? Did the setting feel isolating, comforting, or something in between?
7. What role does silence play in the book? How much is communicated through what is not said?
8. The story is based loosely on the author’s own experience. Did the autobiographical feeling add to the intimacy of the novel for you?
9. The ending is subtle and understated rather than dramatic. How did you interpret the ending, and did it feel satisfying?
10. Why do you think such a seemingly simple story about a visiting cat resonates so deeply with readers? What larger ideas is the novel exploring through this small premise?