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*Banyan Moon* by Thao Thai

Meeting date: Wednesday, April 24th, 2024

Time: 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.

Discussion Questions

**1.**The story of Chú Cuội has been passed down through the Tran family and holds special significance to them. How does this legend relate to the Tran women, and why does it resonate with them so deeply? Are there any folk tales or stories that were passed down through your family?

**2.**How do Minh, Hương and Ann each show their love for their family members? How do their ways of showing love differ, and how are they similar?

**3.**Of the three Tran women, was there one you related to most?

**4.** When Ann returns home, she rebuilds her relationships with Wes and Crystal. How have their relationships changed over the years, and in what ways do they fall back into similar patterns? Have you had a similar experience with your high school or childhood friends?

**5.** Because the story is told through the perspectives of all three women, we often see moments through different peoples’ eyes and also get each of their perspectives on their relationships. How did this affect your view of the characters?

**6.**Why do you think Ann chooses not to tell Hương the secret that she discovers about her parentage? Do you think she should have told her? Does Hương deserve to know?

**7.**Through conversations with Hương and particularly Crystal, Ann starts to realize that perhaps her beloved Minh wasn’t always as perfect as she thought. How does this shatter her worldview? Have you ever had a similar moment with someone you revered as a child?

**8.** In what ways does Minh’s experience growing up during the Vietnam War affect her? How does the legacy of war hang over her throughout her life?

**9.** Did you feel sympathy for Phước? To what extent do you understand his actions and motivations? Do you think he burned down the house intentionally?

**10.**Compare the three women’s relationships with the men in their lives. What similarities do you see between their respective romantic relationships? What, if anything, do you think each woman learned from watching their parents’ relationship?

**11.**How, if at all, does becoming a mother help Ann see her own mother differently?

**12.**Why do you think the Banyan House had such a pull on the Tran women? Do you think the house needed to burn down in order for them to feel free to start over? Do you have a similar relationship with your home?

**13.**There’s a hint of magic to the Banyan House --- Ann feels Minh’s presence after her death, and we the readers also see Minh continuing to watch over the house and her family. To what extent do you think there’s some kind of true magic here, and to what extent do you think it’s a manifestation of Ann’s love and grief for her grandmother?

**14.** What were your thoughts on the ending? Were you happy with where each character ended up? What do you think the future holds for them?