

# THE FOX WIFE

BOOK  
CLUB  
KIT

*a novel*

# YANGSZE CHOO

*New York Times* bestselling author of *The Night Tiger*



Welcome to the Book Club Kit for

# THE FOX WIFE

Please note: In order to provide book clubs with the most informed and thought-provoking questions possible, it is necessary to reveal aspects of the story, as well as the ending. If you have not finished reading *The Fox Wife*, you may want to wait before reviewing this guide.

1. What folklore/myths/stories were you told as a child? Have you ever encountered folklore from other cultures? Would you like these folktales to become reality? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever heard of fox spirits? Have you ever seen a fox in the wild? Did you have any particular preconceived notions about foxes or fox spirits before reading *The Fox Wife*?
3. Consider the following quote: “Whenever humans encounter something strange and novel, their first instinct is to kill it.” (page 64)

Do you agree with this sentiment? Why or why not? Have you seen this instinct play out in real life?

4. On page 36, after encountering Shiro for the first time in a long while, Snow thinks: “That’s the problem of living a long life. One can’t help running into old acquaintances.” Both Bao and Snow encounter people from their past. How do these interactions shape and change their journeys? Have you personally ever experienced a chance encounter with an old acquaintance which has altered your path?

5. Throughout the novel, Snow breaks the fourth wall and talks to the reader with the use of 'you.' How did Snow's direct address to the reader enhance or change the telling of the story? Did you like being directly addressed? Did it make you uncomfortable? If so, why?

6. Consider this passage from Bao's perspective:

"Truth is a green garden hedged thickly with bamboo that he can't escape. At times he envies those who seem unfettered by it. Hearing lies is painful and lonely, especially when no one else can." (page 68)

Would you like to have Bao's ability to detect lies? Why or why not?

7. *The Fox Wife* takes place during a volatile period in Manchuria, a region that is now part of Northeast China. What did you learn about this region of the world? Did you leave the story wanting to know more? If so, what specifically?

8. Read the following passage from Snow's perspective about revenge:

"Revenge is a terrible dish to consume. It eats one from the inside out, no matter what they say about it best being served cold. As the Chinese saying goes, 'When a gentleman takes his vengeance, ten years is not too late.' But you and I know that chilled food inevitably leads to an upset stomach." (page 117)

Do you agree with Snow's assessment of vengeance? If you were in Snow's position, do you think you'd feel differently or the same?

9. Were you satisfied with the end of Bektu Nikan? Was this what you were expecting? How did the reality of his death coming at the hands of someone other than Snow change the trajectory of the novel?

10. Did the death of Chen and the subsequent interrogation of the crew who traveled to Japan together surprise you? Was this how you thought the three storylines would weave together?
11. Were you rooting for Bao and Tagtaa to end up together? What do you envision the lives of these characters to look like outside of the ending we're given?
12. Did Kuro's identity as Snow's partner and father of her child surprise you? Did you have the feeling there was more to him than the narrator was letting on?
13. Author Yangsze Choo visited China and toured many famous historical garden villas of the literati that inspired *The Fox Wife* and the vivid imagery throughout the book. Is there a particular setting or image from the book you liked the most? Why? If you were writing your own story, what travels would you pull inspiration from?