

Marlborough Public Library Adult Book Club

October 14 or 16 2025

*The Fox Wife* by Yangsze Choo

Questions abridged from: <https://images.macmillan.com/folio-assets/rgg-guides/9781250266019RGG.pdf>

1. 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*?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. 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?
6. 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?
7. 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?