

Morsels for the Mind Book Group

Date: May 28, 2014

Book Title: Peony in Love by Lisa See

Hostess: Nancy Dausman

Food Served: Chinese cucumber salad, fried rice & ham, melons: watermelon, cantaloupe & honey dew, pistachios, banana apricot pastries with french vanilla ice cream

Book Synopsis: The story takes place in 17th Century China, where young Peony lives a sheltered life. She becomes obsessed with the opera "The Peony Pavilion" and a handsome young man she meets in her family's gardens. Peony suffers from love-sickness and dies before she is married. In the afterlife Peony becomes a hungry ghost, and wanders the earth for many years before her ancestor tablet is dotted.

Review:

Everyone enjoyed reading the book and learning about life in 17th Century China. Talking with the author gave us a new perspective on the opera, which lasts 25 hours!

Highlights of Discussion: Laura arranged a phone conversation with the author that began our discussion of dotting the ancestral tablet. The author stated it was difficult to describe this in the book, but was a mark to complete a character to let others know the person has died.

>(this being a Chinese character in Chinese writing)
We also discussed ghosts and the similarities and differences in ghosts of Eastern & Western cultures and religions. Footbinding was discussed with photos shown of a bound foot and the very small shoes that were worn by women who had their feet bound.

Attendance:

Julie C, Nancy D, Mary G, Anne H, Laura L, Nancy M,
Ginny M, Sandy O, Nancy S, Anne S

Suggestions/ Business:

No book will be read for July, so time can be spent choosing books for the next few months, rather than discussing a book.