

Going Home, Coming Home Summary and Excerpt

Summary of the beginning and middle of the story

Adapted from *Going Home, Coming Home*, by Truong Tran (2003)

In Going Home, Coming Home, Ami Chi takes a trip to Vietnam, where her parents are from. Her mother and father left Vietnam because of the war, which was a painful and difficult experience for many Vietnamese.

Ami Chi loves her ruby red house in America and feels blue on the way to Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, is very busy, but the house where her mother was born is a small, quieter house near rice paddies. There, Ami Chi meets her grandmother, Ba ngoai, for the first time and feels uncomfortable. They don't understand each other's language.

Ami Chi still wishes she was home in America. Then, her family goes to a huge market where Ami Chi makes new friends named Tuan and Thao. She plays a game with Thao and is excited to show her mother the game. Ami Chi feels sad to leave her new friends.

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Excerpt from the end of the story

1 When Tuan drops me off, *Ba ngoai* is home alone, combing her hair and singing in a tone that is both lovely and sad. Her hair is a flowing river of silver. Her skin looks as if the sun has polished it.



2 When I come in, she brings out a plate of fruit and gestures for me to eat. She sits by me, very close. I want to ask her the meaning of her beautiful sad song, but instead I just smile.

3 When Mom, Dad, and Uncle Binh finally return from the market, *Ba ngoai* is still singing and I am combing her hair.

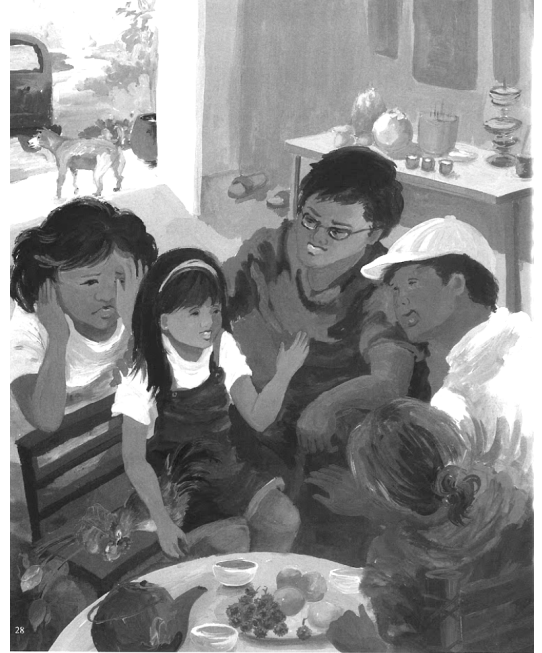
4 “We were so worried,” Dad says. “We looked for you everywhere!”

5 I hug him and say, “I thought I’d never find my way home.”

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6 "Home?" Dad asks.

7 I tell them about Thao and about the fried canaries and pick-up sticks. "And I was thinking she and *Ba ngoai* could come to America next summer," I add.



8 "I'm afraid *Ba ngoai* is too old to travel so far, and besides, this is where she belongs. Vietnam is her home," Dad explains.

9 "Well, it's my home too," I tell him, "My home away from home! We'll just have to come back."

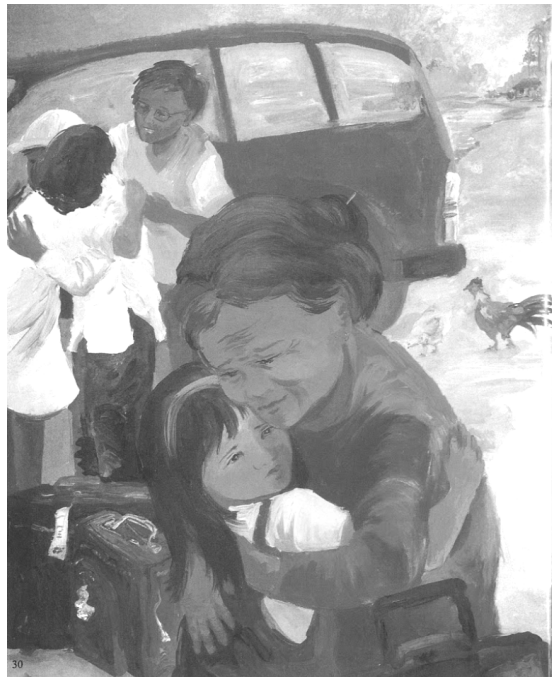
10 At this everyone laughs, even *Ba ngoai*. Even me.

11 Two weeks later we pack up and all load into Uncle Binh's van. At the airport Uncle Binh says, "Be a good girl," and pinches my cheek. I don't even mind.

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12 *Ba ngoai* stuffs dried bananas into my pockets, and hides rivers of tears behind her hands. We don't need to say the words for good-bye. She touches my heart with her hand, and I kiss her cheek. And then we're on our way back home to America.

13 Before I came to Vietnam, I knew I was American. Here I learned that I am both Vietnamese and American. I am from the East and I am from the West. My home is here. My home is there. Home is two different places, on the left and right sides of my heart.



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