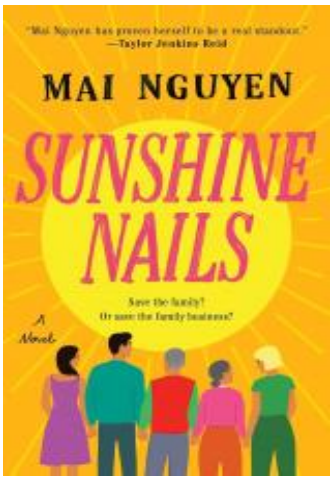
Sunshine Nails

by Mai Nguyen



About the Book

A tender, humorous and page-turning debut about a Vietnamese Canadian family in Toronto who will do whatever it takes to protect their no-frills nail salon after a new high-end salon opens up --- even if it tears the family apart. Perfect for readers of OLGA DIES DREAMING and THE FORTUNES OF JADED WOMEN.

Vietnamese refugees Debbie and Phil Tran have built a comfortable life for themselves in Toronto with their family nail salon. But when an ultra-glam chain salon opens across the street, their world is rocked.

Complicating matters further, their landlord has jacked up the rent, and it seems only a matter of time before they lose their business and everything they?ve built. They enlist the help of their daughter, Jessica, who has just returned home after a messy breakup and a messier firing. Together with their son, Dustin, and niece, Thuy, they devise some good old-fashioned sabotage. Relationships are put to the test as the line between right and wrong gets blurred. Debbie and Phil must choose: Do they keep their family intact or fight for their salon?

SUNSHINE NAILS is a lighthearted, urgent fable of gentrification with a cast of memorable and complex characters who showcase the diversity of immigrant experiences and community resilience.

Discussion Guide

1. SUNSHINE NAILS is told through the different points of view of the Tran family, alternating between chapters from Debbie, Phil, Jessica, Dustin and Thuy. How were each similar or different?

2. What were your first impressions of the Take Ten owner, Savannah?

3. The Tran Family is broken into two generations --- the parents, Debbie and Phil, along with their adult children,

Jessica and Dustin, and niece, Thuy. How do both generations differ?

4. There are many funny scenes throughout the novel. Which moments made you laugh, and how did they make you feel about these characters?

5. Why is the golden Buddha statue at the salon such an important symbol to the family? What do you think it represents?

6. Both Dustin and Jessica seem somewhat listless in the beginning of the novel. How do they each evolve and grow up as the story nears its conclusion?

7. Compare how Phil tries to fix the family?s financial troubles with Debbie?s actions. Did you think one was more extreme than the other?

8. Jessica?s high school friendships appear throughout the story and eventually become central to the drama between Sunshine Nails and Take Ten. Do you think these relationships are significant to her growth in the story? Discuss how these friendships change as the events unfold.

9. Do you agree with Thuy?s choice to work at Take Ten? Discuss what events and actions led her to this decision.

10. Though set in Toronto, does SUNSHINE NAILS feel like a universal story that could be set in another city? Why or why not?

11. Each character brings something different to the story. Did you relate to any of them? If so, please explain who and why.

12. How did the conclusion make you feel? What do you think the Trans learned, if anything? Were you happy with where each family member ends up?

Author Bio

Mai Nguyen is a Vietnamese Canadian author whose debut novel, SUNSHINE NAILS, was longlisted for Canada Reads and named one of the best books of 2023 by NPR and CBC. Her journalism has appeared in *Wired*, *The Washington Post* and *The Toronto Star*. Raised in Halifax, she now lives in Toronto with her husband, daughter and French bulldog.

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