



Crying in H Mart

Michelle Zauner

A tender memoir about food, family, and grief, where Michelle Zauner traces her Korean American identity through the meals she shared with her mother. It is the kind of book that makes you want to call someone you love.

Reading level: Easy

Best for: Clubs who love memoirs with heart, big feelings, and even bigger snack tables

Discussion

WARM-UP

1. What is a food from your childhood that instantly transports you somewhere, and who is standing in that memory with you?
2. Was there a passage or scene in the book that made you want to put it down for a minute, in the best way? What were you feeling?

DIGGING IN

1. Michelle finds comfort in the aisles of H Mart. Where is your version of H Mart, the place that wraps around you like a hug?
2. The book treats cooking as a love language. What dish has someone made for you that felt like being cared for, and what would you cook for someone you love?
3. How did the book sit with you when it talked about feeling caught between cultures or identities? Did anything resonate with your own life?
4. Grief in this memoir shows up in unexpected, everyday moments. Did the book gently shift how you think about loss, missing someone, or holding onto them?

GOING DEEP

1. Without spoiling anything, was there a moment between Michelle and her mom that softened you or stayed with you after you closed the book? What about it lingered?
2. If you could tuck a note into this book for Michelle, or for someone in your own life it made you think of, what would you want it to say?

On the table

- 🍴 **Build-your-own kimbap or rice bowls**
Hands-on, shareable, and nods to the Korean home cooking that anchors the book
- 🍴 **Jjigae or doenjang stew with rice**
Warm, brothy, and the kind of dish Michelle writes about as deeply comforting
- 🍴 **Tteok or a simple honey-drizzled hotteok-style treat**
A soft, sweet bite to pass around while the conversation slows down

To sip

- 🍵 **Barley tea (boricha), served warm (no alcohol)**
Gentle, toasty, and a staple on Korean family tables
- 🍵 **Yuja (yuzu) honey citron tea (no alcohol)**
Cozy, floral, and a sweet hug in a mug
- 🍷 **Soju and grapefruit highball**
Lightly bubbly and easy sipping for a relaxed night in

Run of show

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 7:00 | Soft landing
Welcome guests with warm barley tea and the playlist already humming. No rush. |
| 7:15 | Snack and settle
Gather around the food, do introductions, and use the warmup questions while plates fill up. |
| 7:40 | Into the book
Move to the cozy seating area with blankets nearby. Work through the theme questions gently. |
| 8:15 | Tea refill and trivia
Pour seconds, pass out the trivia cards, keep it playful and low-stakes. |
| 8:35 | Deeper waters
Light a candle, slow the pace, and move into the deep questions. Let silences be okay. |
| 9:10 | Sweet send-off
Share scorecards, swap bookmarks, and offer leftovers to take home. |

HOST TIPS

- Set the table before guests arrive so the night feels welcoming the moment they walk in.
- Keep tissues nearby. This one can sneak up on people, in a good way.
- Skip strict timing if a conversation is flowing. Cozy nights breathe better when you let them.

Playlist

Soft, glowing indie with a tender ache underneath

01 Paprika - Japanese Breakfast

03 Road Head - Japanese Breakfast

05 Through the Night - IU

07 Liability - Lorde

02 Be Sweet - Japanese Breakfast

04 Till Death - Japanese Breakfast

06 Heather - Conan Gray

08 Mythological Beauty - Big Thief

Trivia

1. Crying in H Mart began as what kind of piece before becoming a book? (An essay in The New Yorker)
2. Michelle Zauner is the lead of which indie band? (Japanese Breakfast)
3. In what year was Crying in H Mart published? (2021)
4. H Mart is a chain of grocery stores specializing in what cuisine? (Korean (and broader Asian) groceries)
5. Michelle grew up primarily in which U.S. state? (Oregon)
6. What city is her mother's family from in Korea? (Seoul)
7. Japanese Breakfast released an album that shares a feeling with this book's title. What is it called? (Jubilee)
8. What does the H in H Mart stand for? (Han Ah Reum (meaning 'one arm full of groceries'))

Rate the book

Coziness ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Emotional pull ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Made me hungry ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Sentences I want to reread ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Would press into a friend's hands ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

One word for how this book made me feel: _____

A dish I want to make after reading this: _____

Someone I want to call tonight: _____

YOU'RE INVITED

Come Cry a Little, Eat a Lot

We are gathering for a soft, snack-heavy night with Crying in H Mart. Bring your appetite, your softest sweater, and a memory of someone who fed you well.



Plan your own book club night

Scan the code or visit bookclubnight.com

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