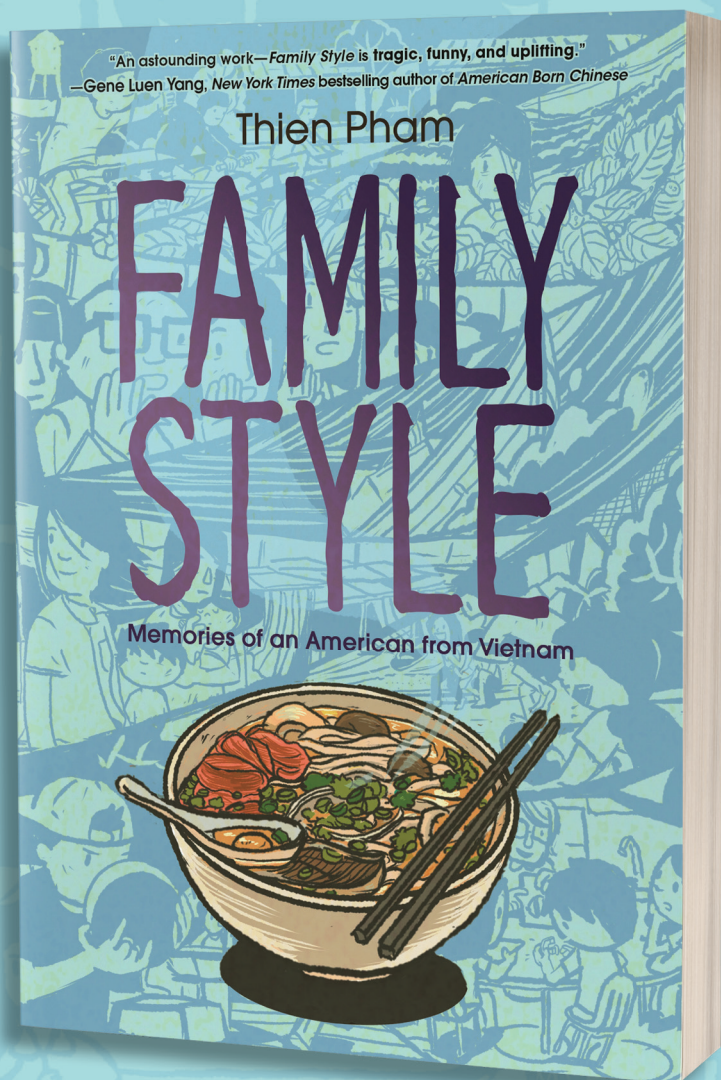


# FAMILY STYLE

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



**A moving young adult graphic memoir about a Vietnamese immigrant boy's search for belonging in America, perfect for fans of *American Born Chinese* and *The Best We Could Do*.**

Thien Pham's first memory isn't a sight or a sound. It's the sweetness of watermelon and the salt-iness of fish. It's the taste of the foods he ate while adrift at sea as his family fled Vietnam.

After the Pham family arrives at a refugee camp in Thailand, they struggle to survive. Things don't get much easier once they resettle in California. And through each chapter of their lives, food takes on a new meaning. Strawberries come to signify struggle as Thien's mom and dad look for work. Potato chips are an indulgence that bring Thien so much joy that they become a necessity.

Behind every cut of steak and inside every croissant lies a story. And for Thien Pham, that story is about a search—for belonging, for happiness, for the American dream.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Thien Pham** is a graphic novelist, comic artist, and educator based in Oakland, California. He is the author and illustrator of the graphic novel *Sumo did the art* for the middle-grade graphic novel *Level Up*, by Gene Luen Yang, and is an ongoing comic contributor to *Eater SF*. Currently Pham is working on his next graphic novel, teaching, and eating. A lot.

# FAMILY STYLE

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Every chapter is divided into different types of food. How does each dish apply to the chapter itself, and what do you think is the deeper meaning behind each dish?
2. Think about your connection with food. Does it bring up certain memories, remind you of who you were in the past, of other people, of certain places? Is this sentiment similar to the author's relationship with food?
3. Which foods evoke the most memories for you?
4. In what ways did the author portray isolation in his art and the speech bubbles? How did this portrayal change throughout the book?
5. When the Pham family finally finds an apartment, they are surrounded by a Vietnamese community that works hard to support one another. In what ways did this community impact the Phams? Do you have a community that you lean on for support?
6. What are the differences and the similarities in how the children face the realities of the American dream versus how the adults do?
7. The idea of "the dream" is always present, whether this means the American dream or going to Chuck E. Cheese. How does "the dream" change throughout the book?
8. How does the Pham family change and grow?
9. When Thien is a teenager, he asks his friends, "Do you think I'm Vietnamese enough?" How does Thien's relationship with Vietnamese food and identity change throughout the book?
10. What is the significance of Thien's flashbacks to his parent's experience and his own when he applies for citizenship? What do you think about the connection and significance of this with the beginning of the book?

