

Weightless: Book Guide

About the book

Virginia Duan's second novel, "Weightless," is also set behind-the-scenes in the K-pop world. It is a slow burn story about messy people grappling with their inherent worthiness. Three years ago, Katie Wu disappeared on Park Jae-sung and broke his heart. Now, she's back in Seoul with a tell-all memoir. When pop singer Katie Wu returns to Seoul, her ex-boyfriend rapper Park Jae-sung demands closure. Where did she go? Why did she ghost him? Is he a monster? And why is she back?

Katie knows she has a lot to answer for, except all she wants is to reconnect with her old friends in Jae-sung's band DOYEN, move on with her life, and explore anything other than music—like acting. But when Jae-sung's bandmate Park Dae-jung is cast in a movie with Katie, sparks fly between the two leads. Will Dae-jung pursue Katie even if it could tear their whole band apart?

How will Katie, Jae-sung, and Dae-jung overcome their feelings of guilt and choose forgiveness for themselves and each other?

Glimpse into the world of K-pop, and join Katie as she seeks healing and purpose in the clever and sexy "Weightless," part of the Her Multiverse series.

For discussion

- 1) A big theme of the book is forgiveness. What do Katie, Jae-sung, and Dae-jung feel guilty about? How does their guilt affect their choices and prevent them from living? How do they forgive themselves and release their guilt?
- 2) Another big theme of the book is how we allow ourselves to be vulnerable and known. How did Katie's choices to be vulnerable or invulnerable play into her relationships and friendships?
- 3) What role do "found families" (the people we choose to bond with) play in "Weightless"? What are the bonds of these friendships, and how are these bonds tested?
- 4) The book starts off in the SB Entertainment offices where Jae-sung sees Katie for the first time since she ghosted him. Why do you think the author chose to begin the story at this moment in time?

- 5) The story is told non-linearly and from three different perspectives. Why do you think the author structured the narrative in this manner? What do you think the author was trying to accomplish through asynchronous storytelling? Do you think it is effective?
- 6) We don't find out details about why Katie ghosted Jae-sung until Chapter 5. Why do you think the author chose to withhold this information? Did knowing the details change the way you viewed Katie?
- 7) Katie often makes decisions to protect people—even if they're not asking for it. Do you find Katie's actions selfish or selfless?
- 8) Katie's younger brother Mattie scolds Katie for being a martyr—that he would rather she be alive than kill herself trying to fix everything for him. Why do you think Katie insists on paying off her father's debts? How much of her culture and personal moral code play into this sense of responsibility? Do you relate to or understand Katie's choices?
- 9) What roles did the social media quotes, review excerpts, album tracklists, music, lyrics, and music video reactions play in providing context and commentary on the narrative of this story? Did this make the story more immersive in the world of K-pop, or did you find it distracting?
- 10) How do you think Katie being Taiwanese American—as well as how people viewed her—informed her experiences of belonging to a particular country (America, Taiwan, Korea), what made a country home, and how she operated depending on the country?
- 11) How does Katie's understanding of her father and his behavior and actions change throughout the book?
- 12) What function does music play in both the novel and also Katie's life?
- 13) There are many examples of romantic relationships in the book. How do the characters' beliefs about who they are impact and shape these relationships? What ways did characters use or withhold information about themselves or their partners? Which characters and their actions do you relate to the most?

- 14) Katie cites the power imbalance as a why she doesn't consider dating Jae-sung again or never considered dating Alton. What role do you think power plays in relationship? How do these power dynamics manifest in the relationships illustrated in "Weightless."
- 15) How do you think Katie and Jae-sung's breakup, as well as Katie and Dae-jung's situation, affected the group dynamics of DOYEN? Do you think these dynamics (and general involvement of DOYEN members) were healthy or unhealthy?
- 16) Do you believe the relationship between Jae-sung and Mi-ran or is it a little too neat/convenient? How was the relationship between Jae-sung and Katie different?
- 17) Why do you think Katie ultimately chooses Dae-jung?
- 18) There are many kinds of love displayed in "Weightless," and a lot of the love is sacrificial, often at the expense of the individual (e.g.: Katie sacrificing for her family, Dae-jung deferring to his group members, Alton and Ha-joon taking care of Katie, etc.). How do you think the characters handle the sometimes conflicting needs of their selves vs. the community?
- 19) "Weightless" is the second of at least 8 books set in the Her Multiverse. The author has mentioned that the series can be read in any order, and that each book will follow pop singer Katie Wu and K-pop band DOYEN through multiple timelines, exploring how Katie's tough choices drastically change her future. If you have read "Illusive," what are some similarities you sense in themes, characters, and choices?

Bonus question

- 20) This book is actually an excuse for the author to namecheck as much music as possible in an effort to seem cooler than they are. Agree or disagree?

For author visits to your book club

If your book club or library is interested in booking Virginia for a meeting, she is available for in-person meetings in the Bay Area, Calif. or via Zoom for other locations. To book Virginia, please send inquiries to virginia@virginiaduan.com and see requirements at <https://virginiaduan.com/book-club-bookings>.