

BOOK CLUB IN A BOX

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOST

BEFORE YOUR DISCUSSION

- Email an invitation to your book group members
- The Following bookstore is offering 10% off the purchase of this book:
 - *King's English Bookshop in Salt Lake City*
- **Roots of Comedy with Jesus Trejo** is available to stream at pbs.org/show/roots-of-comedy-with-jesus-trejo/
- Join the 'Book Club in a Box Discussion Group' on Facebook for ideas, helpful links, etc.

DURING YOUR DISCUSSION

- Make PBS Utah materials in the box available to your group
- Show clips of the film if applicable

- Take photos of your book club members, the food you prepare, and anything else you find meaningful to your discussion

AFTER YOUR DISCUSSION

- Share photos and ideas with others on the Facebook group
- Invite your book club members to join the Facebook group via email
- Complete host survey and send to participants (Link will be emailed to you after your discussion)



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GET INVOLVED!

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness**
nami.org
- **Latino Behavioral Health Services**
latinobehavioral.org
- **Project Healthy Mind**
projecthealthyminds.com
- **Seize the Awkward**
seizetheawkward.org

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- **The Children's Center Utah**
childrenscenterutah.org
- **Live On Utah**
liveonutah.org
- **Be Better Utah**
bebetterutah.org
- **Mental Healthy F.I.T.**
mentlhealthyfit.org
- **Encircle**
encircletogether.org



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FILM & FILMMAKER BIO



ROOTS OF COMEDY

Part comedy, part social commentary, part travelogue, the series **Roots of Comedy** follows host Mexican American comedian Jesus Trejo as he embarks on telling the “stories behind the laughs,” revealing how the most memorable comedy traces back to the roots of a community. Along his journey, Trejo visits Denver, Portland, Minneapolis, Austin, Los Angeles and Chinle, Arizona, where he meets with local rising comedians who explore the mosaic of our nation through the lens of stand-up comedy.

FILMMAKER BIO | JESUS TREJO

Jesus Trejo is a stand-up comedian hailing from Long Beach, CA, known for his distinctive style and sharp wit. Audiences may recognize him from his first comedy special *Stay At Home Son* featured on Showtime, as well as his second special *Practicing?*.

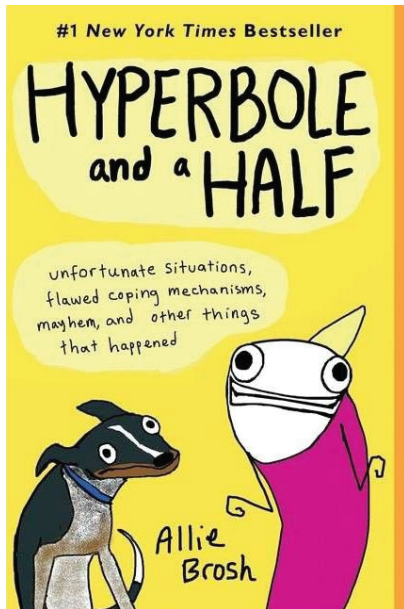
In addition to his stand-up career, Jesus has made notable appearances in popular television series such as Netflix's *Mr. Iglesias*, portraying the recurring character Mr. Trujillo, and in Hulu's *This Fool* as Efrain. He also contributed his writing talents to the second season of *This Fool* on Hulu. Jesus is an accomplished author, with his first book, [Papá's Magical Water Jug-Clock](#) receiving 2 Pura Belpré Honors for both Author and Illustrator. This bilingual book is available in Spanish and English, with another book slated for release in Fall 2024.

Beyond entertainment, Jesus is the host and executive producer of the web series *Tacos con Todo*, where he explores LA's vibrant taco scene alongside celebrity guests. Jesus appears regularly at international comedy festivals and stand-up venues across the country.



BOOK CLUB IN A BOX

BOOK & AUTHOR



HYPERBOLE AND A HALF

Allie Brosh's book *Hyperbole and a Half* combines her signature blend of humor and introspection through a collection of autobiographical stories and comics. With a distinctive style featuring illustrations, Brosh recounts moving and often hilarious anecdotes from her life, exploring themes of childhood, identity, and mental health. The book delves into Brosh's personal battles with depression and ADHD, offering candid insights into these struggles that resonate deeply with readers. Through vivid storytelling and self-deprecating humor, Brosh navigates complex emotions and experiences, capturing moments of absurdity and vulnerability with remarkable honesty. *Hyperbole and a Half* is celebrated not only for its comedic brilliance but also for its poignant portrayal of the human condition, making it a beloved and influential work in the realm of memoir and graphic storytelling.



AUTHOR | ALLIE BROSH

Allie Brosh is an American blogger, writer, and comic artist, renowned for her creation of *Hyperbole and a Half*, a blog and webcomic that debuted in 2009. Raised in various small towns across the U.S., Brosh attended the University of Montana, where she launched the *Hyperbole and a Half* blog. Combining straightforward narratives with deliberately crude illustrations, she captivated readers with humorous and poignant stories from her life. Brosh's unique style resonated widely, leading to the publication of two New York Times bestselling books. Throughout her career, Brosh has openly shared her personal struggles with severe depression and ADHD. Her candid and insightful comics depicting these challenges have garnered recognition and praise from mental health professionals, educators, and advocates alike. Brosh lives in Bend, Oregon, with her husband Duncan, her two dogs, and six pet rats.



1. Comedian Jesus Trejo in **Roots of Comedy** would like the cross-section of mental health and comedy to be explored more in depth because according to him, the mind is a comic's most important asset. What is it about humor that seems to draw comedians to tell their (sometimes difficult) life stories through this lens?
2. In *Hyperbole and a Half*, Brosh wrote a letter to her future self, filled with hopes and questions. What message might your small self have written to you, or what message would you like to send to your small self? In what way do Brosh and the comics highlighted in **Roots of Comedy** use their art to connect with their younger selves?
3. When Brosh experiences depression, she mentions a voice of shame that accompanies lack of motivation. If you have experienced this yourself, where is that voice or message coming from? The author writes, "Fear and shame are the backbone of my self-control." How do you differentiate fear/shame and self-control? Have you ever labeled a personal action "self-control" when it was really driven by fear or shame?
4. When young Allie Brosh was fixated with her grandfather's cake, she was left in the backyard by herself to calm down. How might co-regulation (when trusted adults provide support in the form of soothing and modeling healthy coping) have changed the outcome of this story for everyone involved?
5. Animal shelter workers advised against adopting the "helper" dog. How does Brosh's decision to adopt align with other stories she tells in the book? How are the author and her dogs alike, especially as related in the chapter Dogs' Guide to Understanding Basic Concepts?
6. Depression causes the author to follow herself around like a bully, taunting herself and minimizing the ennui and despair she experiences. Mental health professionals often advise us to counter this by asking what you would say to a best friend in the same situation. Thinking back to a time when you might have experienced something similar, what would you have said to a best friend in your place?
7. The metaphor "My fish are dead" (pgs. 133-135) is used by Brosh to explore the myriad ways people respond to depression that are unhelpful. Brosh mentions wishing someone would say "Sorry about how dead your fish are" instead of going into fix-it mode. What does this section inspire you to do differently next time you converse with someone you know is depressed, grieving, or struggling in some way? Reading the author's section about her suicidal thoughts and feelings, does this change the way you view others experiencing suicidal thoughts? How have your thoughts on suicide evolved over your life?
8. Jesus Trejo comments several times in the series that the "debts" of life can become "credits" and that setbacks can become assets. How have the comics in the series and Allie Brosh embraced this concept?
9. Having a microphone, or perhaps a pen, according to Ali Sultan in **Roots of Comedy** can give you a chance to talk about things you haven't been able to before. Which topics in the series and in *Hyperbole and a Half* may never have been expressed without their public platforms? What are some things you could express about your own life if you had a microphone?



KRISTEN ULLRICH-HODGES

Kristen Ullrich-Hodges is a former Russian teacher-turned-school therapist. While she enjoyed helping students with verb conjugations and vocabulary, she realized she wanted to help them with more immediate concerns impacting their daily well-being such as stress, anxiety, trauma, and depression. Kristen currently works in Salt Lake City schools as a clinical social worker and is passionate about supporting the growth of young people as they process challenges they face. Her internship at the Utah State Prison highlighted how important it is to help people while they are young to understand and cope with big emotions. Being able to provide mental health services without insurance or long waitlists is a source of pride for her. Kristen also enjoys family time, outdoor time (especially in the desert), and live music.

To marry the Yemeni influence of Ali Sultan and the chili pepper story of Brosh the recipe we present is fasoolia nashif, which translates to “dry beans”. It can be made with either kidney or navy beans. Some people like to add eggs to this as well. The trick to nailing this dish is using a nonstick pan. Don’t be afraid to get a nice char on this either, that’s what makes it fasoolia nashif! Make sure you have some tea and a nice flatbread ready to eat this with.



INGREDIENTS

- 15.5oz can navy beans, strained and rinsed
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 chilli
- 3 tbsp chopped cilantro
- 1 cup finely diced onions
- 1 cup finely diced tomatoes
- 1.5 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 tbsp ghee
- 1 tbsp cumin
- 1 tsp coriander
- 1 tsp black pepper corn
- 1/4th tsp curry
- 1/4th tsp paprika

DIRECTIONS

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1. Heat up a nonstick pan and drop 2 tbsp ghee in.
2. Throw in your onions, season with salt and sauté until golden brown.
3. Toss in the tomatoes, garlic, and chili. Cook until tomatoes are soft and broken down.
4. Add the tomato paste, spices, cilantro, and 1 tbsp of ghee. Cook this down for 2 more minutes.
5. Incorporate the beans and start mashing them. Cook it down until all the moisture dries out.
6. On a medium low flame, carefully char the mashed beans. Transfer to a plate and enjoy with your flatbread of choice.