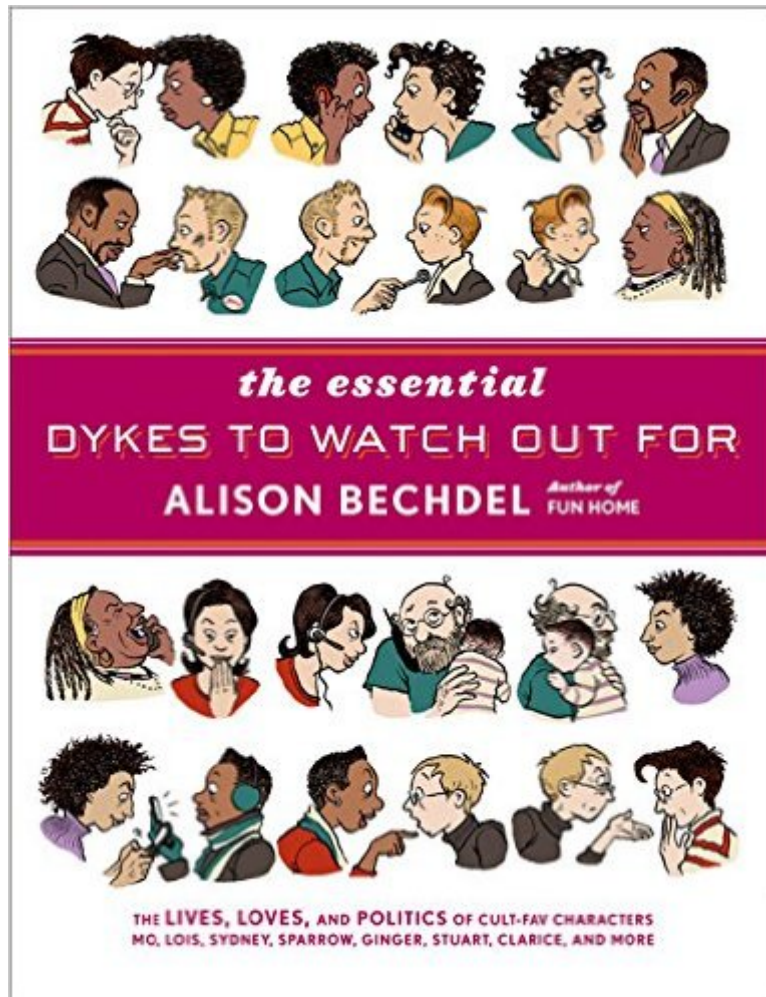


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# The Essential Dykes To Watch Out For



## Synopsis

From the author of *Fun Home* -- the lives, loves, and politics of cult fav characters Mo, Lois, Sydney, Sparrow, Ginger, Stuart, Clarice, and others For twenty-five years Bechdel's path-breaking *Dykes to Watch Out For* strip has been collected in award-winning volumes (with a quarter of a million copies in print), syndicated in fifty alternative newspapers, and translated into many languages. Now, at last, *The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For* gathers a rich, funny, deep and impossible to put down selection from all eleven *Dykes* volumes. Here too are sixty of the newest strips, never before published in book form. Settle in to this wittily illustrated soap opera (Bechdel calls it half op-ed column and half endless serialized Victorian novel) of the lives, loves, and politics of a cast of characters, most of them lesbian, living in a midsize American city that may or may not be Minneapolis. Her brilliantly imagined countercultural band of friends -- academics, social workers, bookstore clerks -- fall in and out of love, negotiate friendships, raise children, switch careers, and cope with aging parents. Bechdel fuses high and low culture -- from foreign policy to domestic routine, hot sex to postmodern theory -- in a serial graphic narrative suitable for humanists of all persuasions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Whether you've been anxiously awaiting the next installment after *Invasion of the Dykes to Watch Out For*, or have lost track of our favorite lesbian heroines and want to get caught up, this is the book for you. Hardcore fans will be delighted to see that we have an entire new book's worth of

fresh, unpublished comics to get us up to date. I looked at how many comics each of the previous books has had, and we have an equal amount of new content in this one. But, for only a little bit extra, you get this thick, glorious retrospective which takes us through the entire series, giving us clips and the best highlights from over the years. If you missed the last couple books - no worries - this will catch you up enough to enjoy the latest comics at the end. And if you've read everything and just want the latest book - you won't be disappointed with everything else included. I've read every book multiple times, and I enjoyed reading the entire thing as a lead-up to the new comics at the end. Bechdel is my number one favorite cartoonist ever, and I'm not even a lesbian - I just find her characters are so human and so interesting that I connect with their lives deeply. So if you read Fun House and aren't sure if you might like to move on to this series, I'd encourage you to pick up this book and give it a try.

And there they are on pages 76-77, the first DTWOF strips I ever saw. They were in a student run women's paper in the Fall of 1991, I had just arrived at the university and my life was about to change for the better. Therefore, it's impossible for me to be completely objective when I talk about this strip and its brilliant creator (channeler?), Alison Bechdel. At first I didn't know what to make of the strip - I feel like I walked through my first two decades in a haze because I was not used to a comic strip dramedy. It didn't take me long to fall in love with it. I bought all the collections that were available at the time (three books!), saw Bechdel's slide show when she came around to my school and even wrote her a letter - and she responded. I still have that letter. It's great to see so many strips reproduced here, forming a running narrative of twenty years in the lives of the characters. Not all of the strips are here nor are the nifty little supplements that the older books included but for the first time reader, I don't think they'll feel the loss. They can also go and seek out some of the older books for completion. This is one of the best graphic arts collections of the year.

I began reading Bechdel's strip in college during the George W. Bush presidency. It was a welcome dose of sanity in a world that felt increasingly bizarre and insane. The genius of the strip is that it was fully political but also went beyond it. Bechdel created a whole world in miniature, characters who cared about each other while living their lives side-by-side. The style of lovingly detailed pictures paired with immaculately phrased text that would become familiar to the world through Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic and Are You My Mother?: A Comic Drama was pioneered here, in twenty-seven years of strips. This "essential" collection doesn't include every strip, but it is close enough to get the full sweep of the story. It also doesn't include the bonus materials found in many

of the smaller collections. My hope is that someday we will get a complete DTWOF collection - Bechdel's work is certainly important enough to warrant that treatment. Until that day, this high-quality volume is the best way to experience one of the greatest serial comics of all time.

I've spent many hours enjoying this wonderful compilation of Alison Bechdel's Dykes to Watch Out For • cartoon series. Drawn between 1987 and 2008, the Dykes • strip focuses on the misadventures and foibles of a group of close-knit LGBT friends as they pursue education, work and love affairs while debating personal politics and political correctness. The strip is funny but also thoughtful in tone. It's unique in that it features multi-sexual, multi-racial, multi-ethnic characters and continually comments on the culture and politics of the times: lesbian and gay rights, the AIDS epidemic, the wars in Iraq, 9/11, celebrity culture, transgenderism, the financial crisis, etc. The characters attend many an anti-war protest, Pride parade and women's music festival. They debate and spoof the latest twists in gender theory. The feminist bookstore owner Jezanna rails against Bunnys & Noodle • stealing her business. The protagonist, Mo, is forever analyzing and second-guessing herself (like a lesbian Woody Allen). Her pal Lois is sexually omnivorous and proud of it. Other characters include Harriet, Sparrow, Ginger, Malika, Clarice and Toni and their kid Raffi. They are a lovable, oddball • Our Gang • whose friendships, arguments, love for and exasperation with each other blend into an astute, layered saga of a modern family, with all its warmth and complications. I read this toon when it first ran in alternative newspapers back in the 1990s. Reading it again still made me laugh and think. This would be a great gift for an LGBT or feminist friend.

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