

LGBT Reading Group

March/April 2008



The Read... Fun Home by Alison Bechdel

In this autobiographical tragic-comic, illustrator Alison Bechdel explores the life and death of her father and chronicles her own growing-up years within an unusual family. The family funeral home business serves as an accidentally apt metaphor for the emotional austerity of a home where Alison's father is gay, closeted and often unhappy with himself and others; and where, seemingly unnoticed, the young Alison is growing into her own sexuality and her identity as a lesbian. ISBN: 978-0224080514



The Author... Alison Bechdel

Alison Bechdel was born Pennsylvania in 1960 and is a cartoonist best known for her *Dykes To Watch Out For* comic strips. Her parents were teachers but her family also owned and operated a funeral home. *Time* magazine named *Fun Home* number one of its "10 Best Books of the Year" and it was a finalist for the 2006 National Book Critics Circle Award, in the memoir category. It also won the 2007 Eisner Award for Best Reality-Based Work.

Our Opinion...

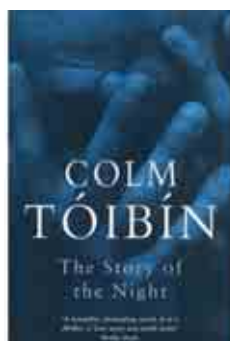
Despite the apprehension experienced by many readers when this graphic novel was presented to the group, everybody truly enjoyed it. You discover the bones of the story early on... the Bechdel's live in the family-run funeral home; Alison is coming out as a lesbian; her mom wants a divorce; her father is gay.

Bruce Bechdel's life is a sham. He's a sensitive, creative, reserved man who, in a flash, can become cold, belligerent and driven. Shortly after he is run over by a truck, Alison finds out that her father has been having sex with young men and has been in trouble with the law.

The story pendulums through time as Alison delves deeper and deeper into the main events of her family history to reveal her tragic yet fascinating upbringing.

Although some of the themes could be regarded as heavy, they are lifted by Alison's unique and clever style - her monochrome illustrations tell her story in a remarkable way that just words never could. It seems too simple to announce that this is a really good book, but it is!

Image © Alison Bechdel - Fun Home dykestowatchoutfor.com



What Next? Story of the Night

Richard Garay quietly lives with his mother, hiding his sexuality from her and from those around him. Stifled by a job he despises, he finds himself willing to take considerable risks. Set in Argentina in a time of great change, this book is a powerful and moving novel about a man who, as the Falklands War is fought and lost, finds his own way to emerge into the world.

The Story of the Night is, in the end, a love story of the most serious and difficult kind, which Tóibín tells with profound artistry and truth. It won the Ferro-Grumley Prize for the Best Gay Novel of 1997.

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www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/lgbt

01902 552025 libraries@wolverhampton.gov.uk