

Fun Home Book Summary, by Alison Bechdel

by Allen Cheng

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Video Summaries of Fun Home

We've scoured the Internet for the very best videos on Fun Home, from high-quality videos summaries to interviews or commentary by Alison Bechdel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGVMR3FZGA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1PV2F-mRHw>

1-Page Summary of Fun Home

Overview

Fun Home is a graphic novel by Alison Bechdel. It focuses on her parents, Helen and Bruce, and how they influenced her life. The story begins with the death of Alison's father when she was young.

Alison Bechdel lives in Pennsylvania with her family. Her father is a funeral home owner and his business inspired the memoir's title. He also takes care of the house, which was an old Gothic revival mansion. The relationship between Alison's parents is volatile at times, but they are still together for their children.

Alison was born with a deep desire to dress like a boy, and at the age of 19 she discovered that she's gay. She came out while in college and soon after learned from her mother that Bruce had been having affairs for years. Her mother also told her about how Bruce had an affair with his gardener and their babysitter, which shocked Alison. Not long after Alison found out about all this, Helen asked Bruce for a divorce.

Two weeks later, Bruce Bechdel was killed by a Sunbeam Bread truck while crossing the street. He may have intentionally committed suicide because he felt like his sexuality had made him a shame to his family and himself. His daughter, Alison Bechdel, regrets that she didn't get to talk about this with her father before he died. She wanted to know why he never came out of the closet when it would have been

easier for him and less harmful for everyone else in his life. As a result of these thoughts, *Fun Home* follows Alison as she tries to unravel the mysteries surrounding her father's death and how it relates to herself.

"Old Father, Old Artificer"

Alison Bechdel begins her memoir by describing a game she played with her dad when she was young. She uses this scene to show how much of an influence he had on her life and compares it to the myth of Icarus and Daedalus.

Bruce Bechdel is a man who loves restoring his family's old house. He finds and restores furniture, often enlisting the help of his children to clean and restore it. However, he also has a job as an English teacher. Using *It's A Wonderful Life* as an analogy, Bruce compares Jimmy Stewart's frustration with his family to that of Bruce when he gets angry at them for not helping him fix up the house enough. Alison often takes walks outside in order to avoid her father during these times of anger because she knows that if she stays around him then they will argue about how much work needs to be done on the house before it can be considered finished.

Alison's father had a very different approach to life from hers. He was interested in aesthetics and "embellishments" (16). She points out that this was just another way of trying to make the Bechdels' lives look beautiful on the outside, even though they were deeply dysfunctional.

Bruce is insecure about himself and has trouble accepting criticism. Therefore, he gets angry when people comment on his appearance or behavior. His anger creates tension in the house that makes it uncomfortable to live there. Alison feels hurt by her father's aloofness because she knows what it's like for him to be nice and warm toward her. To describe this contrast, Bechdel uses a metaphor of giving herself a bath: the warmth of love (the hot water) contrasts with the coldness of his usual demeanor (when she stands naked).

In this passage, Bechdel describes her father's suicide. She tells us that it was difficult to imagine her childhood without looking back through the lens of his death and how it affected her.

In the myth of Icarus and Daedalus, the son is a risk-taker who wants to do something new. His father, however, has seen many failures in his life and doesn't want his son to be reckless. The father warns him about what can happen if he flies too close to the sun or too low. However, the son ignores his father's advice and dies because of it. Bechdel uses this story as an analogy for her relationship with her own father; she compares herself to both characters in various parts of *Fun Home*.

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