



Sitcom: A History in 24 Episodes from I Love Lucy to Community

Saul Austerlitz

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The form is so elemental, so basic, that we have difficulty imagining a time before it existed: a single set, fixed cameras, canned laughter, zany sidekicks, quirky family antics. Obsessively watched and critically ignored, sitcoms were a distraction, a gentle lullaby of a kinder, gentler America—until suddenly the artificial boundary between the world and television entertainment collapsed.

In this book we can watch the growth of the sitcom, following the path that leads from *Lucy* to *The Phil Silvers Show*; from *The Dick Van Dyke Show* to *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*; from *M*A*S*H* to *Taxi*; from *Cheers* to *Roseanne*; from *Seinfeld* to *Curb Your Enthusiasm*; and from *The Larry Sanders Show* to *30 Rock*.

In twenty-four episodes, *Sitcom* surveys the history of the form, and functions as both a TV mixtape of fondly remembered shows that will guide us to notable series and larger trends, and a carefully curated guided tour through the history of one of our most treasured art forms.

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