

The Complete Funky Winkerbean, Volume 5, 1984-1986

By Tom Batiuk



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Volume 5, 1984–1986

By this point in its evolution, *Funky Winkerbean* is resonating with its readers and its popularity is growing. Crankshaft, the irascible bus driver, and Betty, Westview High School's secretary, are introduced. Crankshaft quickly became a fan favorite, with many readers responding to the trauma-inducing, surly old curmudgeon. Not since the introduction of band director Harry L. Dinkle had a new character received such a positive response. Betty soldiers on at Westview until Batiuk finally sends her off to the cartoon character's retirement home.

Almost unnoticed, another new character appears quietly and without fanfare. She didn't have a name at this point but is little by little insinuated into the strip. The students at Westview High have reached their junior year, and the prom is looming. Les needs a date, and this new character is perfect. Lisa and Les go to the prom together and continue to date. Eventually they break up when Lisa transfers to another school. It turns out that this is only the beginning of the journey with Lisa in *Funky Winkerbean*. Lisa returns to the strip, and when Les sees her again, she is pregnant. With this teen pregnancy story arc, Funky starts on its path to becoming an outlier on the comics page.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

A graduate of Kent State University, Tom Batiuk has been recognized for his humorous and entertaining portrayals of students and staff at Westview and acclaimed for his sensitive treatment of social and educational issues. His Funky Winkerbean and Crankshaft comic strips are carried in more than 600 newspapers worldwide and have an audience of more than 60 million readers.

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