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### Lesbian Love Stories, Aren't They Great?

The two films “Go Fish” and “The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls In love” are very similar in their depictions of queer characters. They both focus on the specific experiences of lesbians in positive ways. Where they divert is where the conflict of the story is. Both movies are very inherently queer, with the relationships that the characters have being the main driving force of the conflicts. “Go Fish” takes a look at the conflicts within the lesbian community, while “The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love” takes a respectful look at the experiences of lesbians in the public-school setting.

“The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love” is inherently queer, that is a given. Even from the name of the film, the filmmakers are very clear in that. This film is about two girls in love. The plot is centered around this fact. It follows Evie and Randy, Randy is an out of the closet butch lesbian and has all sorts of personal conflicts that are a result of that. Randy's home life is supportive of this aspect, at least, as Randy's home family also includes other queer individuals. Randy's aunt and role model is also a lesbian, who is acting in a maternal role for her. Randy is on the receiving end of lots of verbal hate for her sexuality, which contributes to her troubled social life at school. In the first act of the film, Randy has a chance encounter with Evie and essentially falls in love instantly. Evie is almost a mirror image of Randy in a lot of ways. Where Randy is less fortunate, open about exploring her sexuality, and generally living a troubled but liberated life, Evie is wealthy, sheltered, and deeply closeted.

Evie's story arc finds her struggling with developing feelings for Randy after their encounter and coming to terms with the fact that she's a lesbian. This culminates in a scene where she literally has all 3 of her close friends walk out on her after she comes out to them. A friend says, "God, Evie if you were going to turn gay, you'd think you could at least choose someone's who's pretty." The plot of this film is inherently queer to the highest degree, and the representation is also very positive.

The representation of queerness in this film is very positive, as it goes a long way towards normalizing lesbians and their sexuality. A frequent trap that films can fall into is treating the queer characters like circus attractions, treating their issues as far more dramatic than they should be. The representation in this film was simply real, it felt genuine. The characters were people first and foremost, and they acted in realistic ways, and their sexuality was simply an important part of their characterization without being shallow. The romance between Evie and Randy was done exceedingly well. This brings the film to a higher level of representation by normalizing their relationship. They act like you would expect teenagers to do, they sneak over while their parents are away, they drink all the parents' alcohol, and they make an absolute mess of the place. Never once throughout the film does the way they act feel disingenuous.

"Go Fish" is very similar in a lot of ways. It is inherently queer as well, with all the main characters being lesbians. It follows a lot of the same romantic beats as *Two Girls in Love*, but it focuses on adults in Chicago's lesbian community. The film treats the quest for love as though it were any other romance film, which is the goal of normalization.

"Go Fish" positively represents the queer community as well, for similar reasons to what was described for "*The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love*." Beyond it just being a romance film that was about lesbians, it also addressed some internal conflicts within the

community. There's specifically a scene where various lesbians interrogate the main character about her previous sexual habits with men. They fight over the notion that a lesbian can still be a lesbian if she has sex with men. This is the kind of conflict that the community is still facing to this day, and it is worthy of exploration. This film does so respectfully and effectively.

These two films are wonderful examples of lesbian cinema. Not only are they not derogatory representations or caricatures of lesbians, but they're both actively great representations. They simply both focus on the beauty of queer lesbian love and let the conflicts flow naturally because of that. Both films' greatest strengths are perhaps how standard they felt. If they were made today, they would be completely uncontroversial and maybe even criticized for being too safe. But they were both incredibly important pieces of media for recognizing and normalizing lesbian love that was not made for the male gaze.