



Frequently Asked Questions

Favorite color?

Lipstick: Green.

Dipstick: Orange.

Favorite classic of lesbian literature?

Lipstick: *The Well of Loneliness* is great, and *A Heart's Progress*. It's a memoir of evolution, and in reading it I was able to identify for the first time that I wanted to be a writer to help connect people.

Dipstick: I really like the classic pulp novels, stuff by Ann Bannon and Paula Christian.

Favorite singer/band?

Lipstick: There are three: Sarah McLachlan, Barry Manilow and Anne Murray.

Dipstick: Indigo Girls...I'm a total lesbian!

Favorite TV show?

Lipstick: *Six Feet Under*, *Nip/Tuck*, *The L Word* and *Californication* I cannot live without it.

Dipstick: *The L Word*.

Favorite character on *The L Word*?

Lipstick: Alice.

Dipstick: Alice.

Most romantic place?

Lipstick: The Shakespeare Garden in Washington Park—it's where my wife and I got married.

Dipstick: Yachats.

Best way to say "I'm sorry" to your girl?

Lipstick: Speaking words with sincerity and admitting you're wrong.

Dipstick: I never have to!

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them to write one. But it wasn't just any solicitation: The publisher contacted them through their Web site, sending the inquiry to them just as any of their advice seekers would.

Daggett and Belge signed on and went to work. But they had barely started the book when their editor departed, leaving them with little direction. "We had laid down tracks before we started," says Daggett.

Without an editor, they moved forward, working from the places they already knew. The two had already generated chapter headings and ideas and proceeded from there, spending the summer writing. It took about six months from start to finish to complete the project.

The conversational tone of the book makes it feel as if the two spent the whole time generating it by working on the same computer, reading over each other's shoulder. But they would actually meet once or twice a week, brainstorm and then go off and write separately.

"We know each other's voices so well," says Daggett.

"We're firm in our opinions, and very rarely do we sway each other. We'd kill each other in the same room," says Belge. "My ass hurt from sitting so much."

Pulling from their own lives gave the book its earnest core, but not without a bit of anxiety about disclosure. "We started looking at ourselves and our friends for a place to start," says Daggett. "It's scary to draw on your life."

In the book they both write about their wives as well as old girlfriends, cataloging moments both lovely and awkward—and, in doing so, establish their credentials for dispensing advice in a nonthreatening, see-I-lived-through-this

way that resonates with readers. The length of the book, as opposed to their usual columns, proved to be a slight challenge.

"It became work where it hadn't before, and I got a little sick of it. But it was fleeting," says Daggett. "We had each other. I can't imagine having done it on my own."

Lipstick & Dipstick's Essential Guide to Lesbian Relationships is the fruit of their labor. Separated into four parts—"The Honeymoon," "Cohabiting," "Intimacy and Sex" and "Taking It to the Next Level"—the book is a walk through every taboo and pedestrian aspect of girl/girl life. Name the topic, it's in there: "I Overheard Her Say We're Just Dating," "Lipstick's Preliminary Pussy Period (a.k.a. Triple P)," "Dry as a Bone," "She Talks to Her Softball Coach Seventeen Times a Day," "Keeping Love Alive" and "Start That Roller Derby League."

No topic is off the table, and the duo's shoot-from-an-honest-hip tone makes the trip through the ups and downs of loving women an entertaining ride. In addition to personal stories and anecdotes both sentimental and awkwardly painful, the two banter back and forth, offering distinct takes on the world around them. In the "Cohabiting" section, they walk through all of the pitfalls of money in coupledness, touching on credit cards and loan cosigning, disagreeing as a butch and femme might the whole way. It's practical advice peppered with lively banter and digs at each other. The book is also stocked with humorous quizzes for those of the *Cosmo* ilk, along with a "Gay Girl's Glossary" for those who might be new to the duo's witty turns of phrase.

When the book was released in November, the authors ran to the bookstore to see it on the shelf for themselves. "It was really great to see it there at Powell's on the shelf next to Leslie Feinberg," says Belge.

*"What a butch is to me
isn't what it is to anyone else.
The beauty of our community
is that we can have identities
and not fall into boxes."*

—Kathy "Dipstick" Belge



Daggett (left) and Belge host a talk-show-style event to celebrate National Coming Out Day at Nike's World Headquarters. One of their guests was Nike CEO Mark Parker, a prominent queer ally.

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