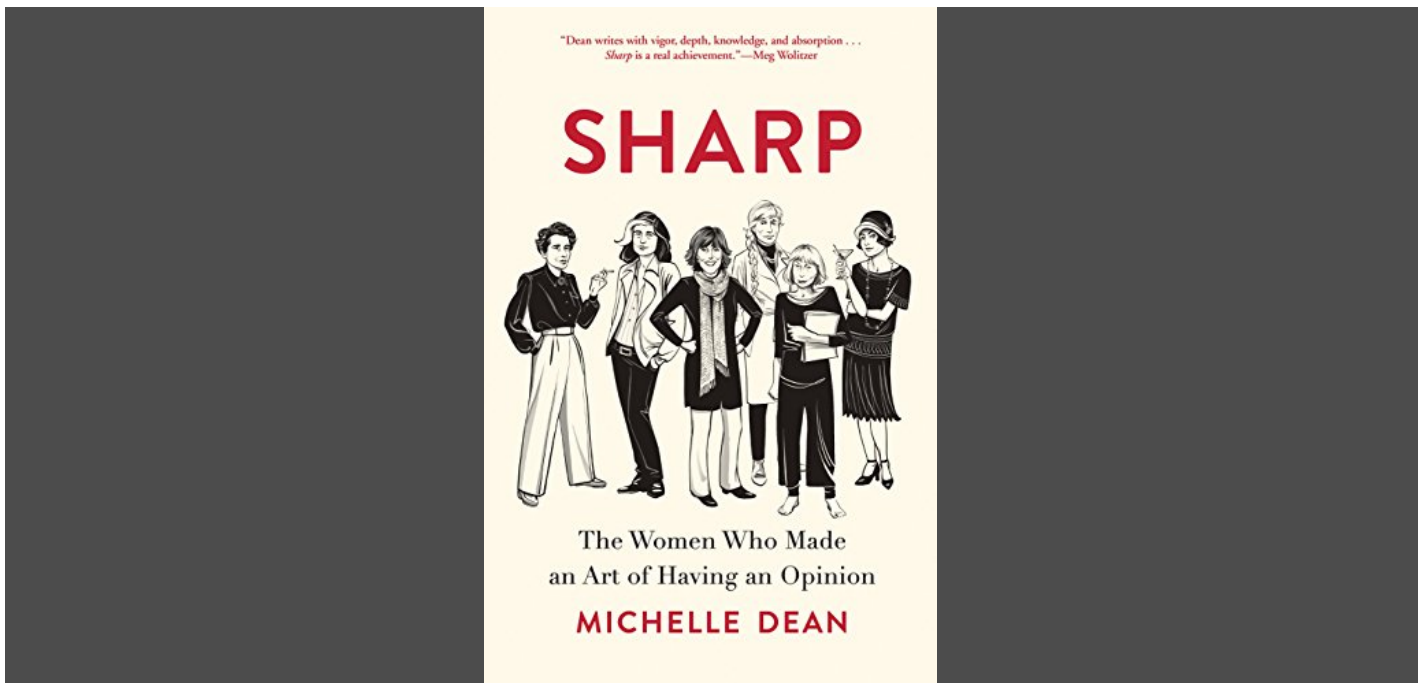


# PDF | Sharp

by Michelle Dean



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The ten brilliant women who are the focus of *Sharp* came from different backgrounds and had vastly divergent political and artistic opinions. But they all made a significant contribution to the cultural and intellectual history of America and ultimately changed the course of the twentieth century, in spite of the men who often undervalued or dismissed their work.

These ten women—Dorothy Parker, Rebecca West, Hannah Arendt, Mary McCarthy, Susan Sontag, Pauline Kael, Joan Didion, Nora Ephron, Renata Adler, and Janet Malcolm—are united by what Dean calls “sharpness,” the ability to cut to the quick with precision of thought and wit. *Sharp* is a vibrant depiction of the intellectual *beau monde* of twentieth-century New York, where gossip-filled parties at night gave out to literary slugging-matches in the pages of the *Partisan Review* or the *New York Review of Books*. It is also a passionate portrayal of how these women asserted themselves through their writing in a climate where women were treated with extreme condescension by the male-dominated cultural establishment.

Mixing biography, literary criticism, and cultural history, *Sharp* is a celebration of this group of extraordinary women, an engaging introduction to their works, and a testament to how anyone who feels powerless can claim the mantle of writer, and, perhaps, change the world.



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