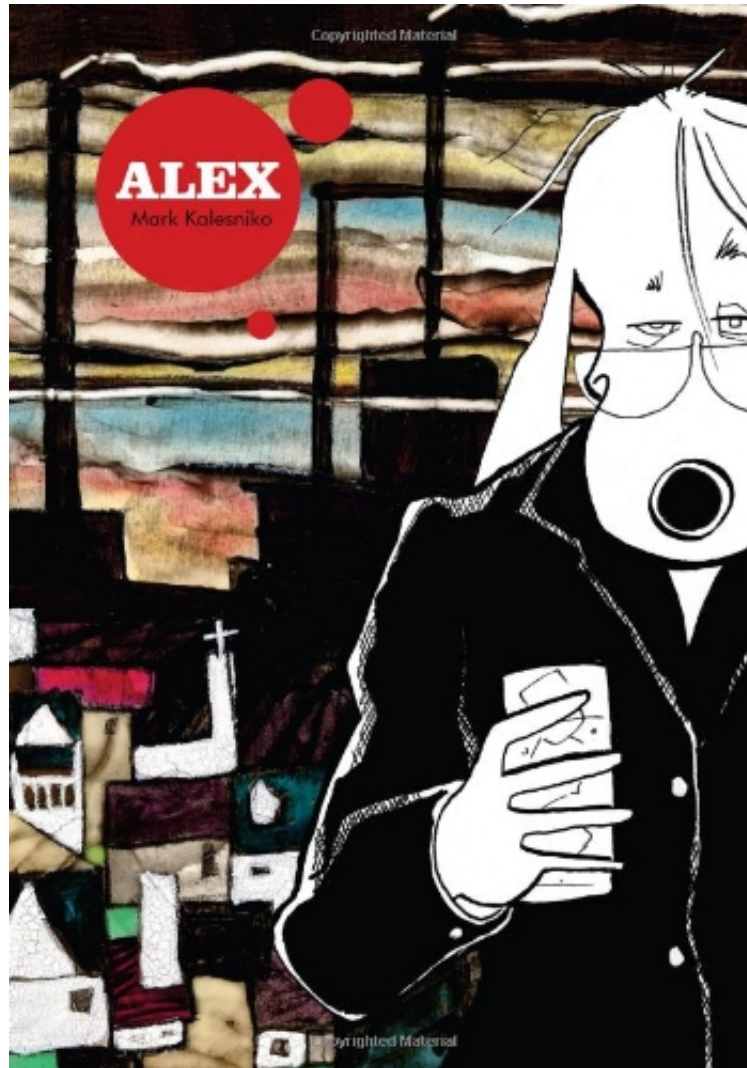


(Mobile ebook) Alex G/N

## Alex G/N

Mark Kalesniko

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**Mark Kalesniko : Alex G/N** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Alex G/N:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Booze and bunniesBy Keris NineI don't know how autobiographical 'Alex' is, but since he's an artist and the personal themes explored through the character recur in other works, it would suggest that there is probably more than a little of Mark Kalesniko in Alex Kalienko. And if the writer's first graphic novel, originally published as a 6-issue series by Fantagraphics in 1994 (his only previous work the single issue, nearly word-free S.O.S. in 1992, again featuring a fascination for an oriental lady, as does the later Mail-order Bride), doesn't delve back into childhood as intensively as the subsequent Alex graphic novel 'Why Did Pete Duel Kill Himself?',

formative influences and high school memories play a large part in the frank and soul-searching exploration of himself/his character in 'Alex'. The portrait painted of Alex Kalienko isn't a particularly flattering one, the story opening with Alex waking up on the streets of Bandini, a small rural town in Canada, with a bottle in his hand and no memory of the night before. When he gets back to his home however - which is inevitably a complete mess - he discovers that, in marked contrast to the cute bunnies he normally draws from his former occupation as an employee for the Mickey Walt animation studios in L.A, he has during his blackout painted a dark landscape of his hometown in a way that reflects his own inner torments and conflict. If the painting can be seen as an expression of Alex's state of mind, coming to a realisation of the short-sightedness of his high-school ambitions once they have been achieved, leaving him back home in a backwater town, struggling to avoid old acquaintances - 'ghosties' - on visits to the liquor store and blocking out everything else, including health problems, through alcoholism and reruns of Gilligan's Island on television, 'Alex' could perhaps be seen as Kalesniko's own expression of his own frustrations. The artwork is fluid, accomplished and controlled, sparse and expressive with less shading than his later work, its depiction of the real-life locations (if the photographs on the back of the individual issues of the original series are anything to go by) is accurate and evocative in establishing the sense of space and the oppressive environment the story works in, but it also lets loose to dynamically capture the sense of frustration and failure that Alex struggles to deal with. Alex is not a complex story and it can be read through very quickly, but the expressiveness of the artwork, the environment it evokes and the tone it establishes in its switching of moods between self-degradation and comedy, between frustration and self-realisation, between optimism and the most bleak and downbeat pessimism leaves deeper impressions and has resonance.

The author of Mail Order Bride explores the worlds of animation and alcoholism. It's morning in Bandini. In a small park near the river, Alex sleeps on a bench. When he awakens, we can see that he's a mess. He is coming off a colossal bender. As he stirs, a book falls out of his coat: a high school yearbook. He flips through the pages and finds himself. "Alex Kalienska: Alex likes watching T.V., drawing cartoons, and doing nothing. Future places: Sunny California and Mickey Walt Cartoon Studios." Alex closes the book and vomits in the river. Alex is the story of failed dreams and the consequences faced by a man who discovers that accomplishing his career goals are no route to inner peace. It is a story about the redemptive power of art, and about how fleeting those chances for redemption can be in a society that emphasizes different values. This existential, 250-page exploration of depression and the healing power of art was originally published over ten years ago as a six-issue comic book series and is collected here as one book for the first time. Kalesniko is a former Disney animator with credits including The Prince and the Pauper, Mulan, The Lion King and The Little Mermaid. He has also created the graphic novels Why Did Pete Duel Kill Himself? and Mail Order Bride.

From Booklist\*Starred \* Alex is a thirtyish artist who has retreated from a successful career as an animator in Los Angeles to his forlorn hometown. Depicted as a dog-headed man in a world of humans--symbolic of his alienation from those around him as well as of the anthropomorphic animals he once drew--he spends his days drinking, watching TV, and laboring over drawings he ultimately destroys in drunken despair. Reminders of his unhappy adolescence (devastatingly portrayed in Kalesniko's Why Did Pete Duel Kill Himself? 1997) surround him in the persons of his childhood pal and only friend, Jerome, whose life is even more pathetic than Alex's (he still lives at home with his religious-fanatic mother); his high-school crush, who's returning to town; and his former art teacher, now a homeless alcoholic presaging a similar fate for his rudderless student. Former Disney animator Kalesniko possesses a wonderfully distinctive visual style consisting of delicate but assured line work, simple yet dynamic compositions, and effective variation of panel shapes; perhaps his nearest peer is French comics master Guido Crepax. He expertly deploys that style in the service of a touching, compelling portrait of a life immobilized by personal and artistic frustration. Gordon Flagg Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Kalesniko is a great artist who has a masterful grasp of the comics medium. -- The Arizona Republic Kalesniko is an expert at sophisticated, visually efficient narrative renderings of complex emotions. -- Publishers Weekly Less celebrated than contemporaries such as Clowes, Ware, Sacco...but his nuanced linework has virtually no equal in the medium. -- The Onion About the Author Mark Kalesniko is a former Disney animator (his credits include The Little Mermaid, The Lion King, Mulan, and Atlantis) born in British Columbia and now living in Los Angeles, CA. with his wife, Jennifer. His books include Alex, Mail Order Bride and Freeway.