



Magic Words: The Extraordinary Life of Alan Moore

By Lance Parkin

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For over three decades comics fans and creators have regarded Alan Moore as a titan of the form. With works such as *V for Vendetta*, *The Watchmen* and *From Hell*, Alan has repeatedly staked out new territory, attracting literary plaudits and a mainstream audience far removed from his underground origins. His place in popular culture is now such that major Hollywood players vie to adapt his books for cinema, regardless of his contempt for their attempts.

Yet Moore's journey from the hippie Arts Labs of the 1970s to the bestseller lists was far from preordained. A principled eccentric, who has lived his whole life in one English town, he has been embroiled in fierce feuds with some of the entertainment industry's biggest corporations. Just when he could have made millions ploughing a golden rut he turned instead to performance art, writing erotica, and the occult.

Now, as Alan Moore hits sixty, it's time to go in search of this extraordinary gentleman, and follow the peculiar path taken by a writer quite unlike any other.

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Magic Words: The Extraordinary Life of Alan Moore By Lance Parkin Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Magic Words* is a highly readable biography, never becoming too embedded in its comic book history elements to alienate the reader who isn't interested in its minutiae, but still providing plenty of food for thought."

"Parkin, a British writer specializing in science fiction and pop culture, goes back to Moore's childhood in the Midlands town of Northampton (where he still lives), teasing out some unexpected influences. There's a strong focus on Moore's early work in British comics, where his technique of juxtaposing the images in comic book panels in "ironic counterpoint" to their captions was honed to the fine point of *Watchmen*. Even as that book was transforming the comics market, though, Moore's relationship with its publisher was falling apart; Parkin addresses this and many other acrimonious disputes with clear sympathy for Moore, but also an evenhanded recognition that the other parties are rarely acting in bad faith. That combination of respect and skepticism also characterizes the discussion of Moore's self-transformation into a ceremonial magician whose occult philosophies have informed several comic books (as well as performance art pieces and a long-anticipated novel). Some fans might want to see more discussion of the content of the comics, but *Magic Words* is a biography, not a literary study. As such, it helps us recognize why Alan Moore matters while leaving plenty of room to discover his work for ourselves." - ***SHELF AWARENESS*** Holiday Gift Guide 2013 - ***FORCES OF GEEK***

"Alan Moore's brilliant, messy career as a creator of comics has deserved a comprehensive survey for some time. Here it is....the wealth of detail in Parkin's book makes it the best study of Moore we have so far...Parkin really has done an excellent job of laying out the facts of Moore's career. And that makes *Magic Words* valuable for anyone interested in keeping up with one of the geniuses working in fantastic literature." - ***The New York Review of Science Fiction***

"A remarkably lavish thing, with black-tipped pages, a purple spine, inset illustrations, cartoons, and photos... This is quite literally the book that fans have been starving for over the course of decades to take its place alongside the more art-based books and interview collections that have appeared in recent years. Here you have a book that places Moore alongside other great cultural movers and shakers well beyond the sphere of comics and it's an excellent resource for gaining a wider understanding of the man and his work." - ***Bleeding Cool*** (Hannah Means-Shannon)

"Lance Parkin's *Magic Words* feels like the definitive Alan Moore study because it provides a little bit of everything and does it all well. For what it's worth the physical book itself is also gorgeously designed with

an intriguing/hilarious cover image of Moore smoking a mysterious substance and very pretty, durable black pages. It's a wonderful piece of work for Alan Moore aficionados that also doubles as a fascinating introduction of the man, myth, and legend for those somehow unfamiliar with the subject." â?? *CG Magazine*

".. probably the most beautifully packaged book of the year. The colors on the cover jump out at you and captivate you before you even know what you're opening yourself up to. The black, purple and green color scheme on the outside and inside covers are just gorgeous. The edges of the pages (top, side, and bottom) are black. .. Gorgeous. The images of Moore's work and other exciting things throughout the book, while in black and white, also bring this book to life. I just absolutely love the packaging of this book. Job well done. This is one of the most insightful, in depth biographies I've ever read. Call it an encyclopedia or even a bible for Alan Moore fans. .. Alan Moore fans, this one is for you." - *Hollywood the Write Way*

"This biography is a great success and by far the finest book on Moore in existence (not to mention that it's probably the most beautiful hardcover I've ever seen) ... Colloquial, smart and often funny, the book will appeal to multiple audiences — scholars, fans, and general readers who want to know about the Magus and his mediums."

"In *Magic Words* Lance Parkin has crafted a biography that is insightful, scrupulously fair-minded and often very funny, a considerable achievement given its unrelentingly grim, unreasonable and annoying subject. Belongs on the bookshelf of any halfway decent criminal profiler."

"Superbly researched and lucidly argued, *Magic Words* encourages the reader to step back from the gallery of supposedly Manichean controversies and ossified preconceptions. With a determination to focus on the light rather than the heat of things, Parkin lends many of the most apparently unchallengeable aspects of Moore's career a new perspective; the portrait of its subject that emerges is enticingly fresh and repeatedly contrary to received wisdom; the disconnected expressions of genius and bloodmindedness are reframed as the product of one fascinating individual and his fiercely held principles and aspirations. It's a well-played accomplishment that makes Parkin's smart-minded analysis of Moore's work all the more compelling; I can only suggest that you drop everything and search out a copy of 'Magic Words' right now." - *toobusythinkingaboutcomics.blogspot.co.uk*

About the Author

LANCE PARKIN is a British author, best known for writing fiction and reference books for television series, most notably Doctor Who. He is an Alan Moore completist, having followed the comics maestro's career since the 1970s, and in 2001 he wrote an acclaimed guide to Moore's work, which has since been updated and reissued. In addition to contributing pieces to magazines such as TV Zone, SFX and Doctor Who Magazine, he is also the co-author of *Dark Matters*, a guide to Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*

trilogy. He lives in the USA.

Users Review

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John Casale:

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