

Allen

Jack Kent

The Wit, Whimsy, and Wisdom of a Comic Storyteller (Hardback)

Jack Kent (1920–1985) had two distinct and successful careers: newspaper cartoonist and author of children's books. For each of these he drew upon different aspects of his personality and life experiences. From 1950 to 1965 he wrote and drew King Aroo, a nationally syndicated comic strip beloved by fans for its combination of absurdity, fantasy, wordplay, and wit. The strip's DNA was comprised of things Kent loved—fairytales, nursery rhymes, vaudeville, Krazy Kat, foreign languages, and puns. In 1968, he published his first children's book, Just Only John, and began a career in kids' books that would result in over sixty published works, among them such classics as The Fat Cat and There's No Such Thing as a Dragon. Kent's stories for children were funny but often arose from the dark parts of his life—an itinerant childhood, an unfinished education, two harrowing tours of duty in World War II, and a persistent lack of confidence—and tackled such themes as rejection, isolation, self-doubt, and the desire for transformation. Jack Kent: The Wit, Whimsy, and Wisdom of a Comic Storyteller illuminates how Kent's life experiences informed his art and his storytelling in both King Aroo and his children's books. Paul V. Allen draws from archival research, brand-new interviews, and in-depth examinations of Kent's work. Also included are many King Aroo comic strips that have never been reprinted in book form.

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