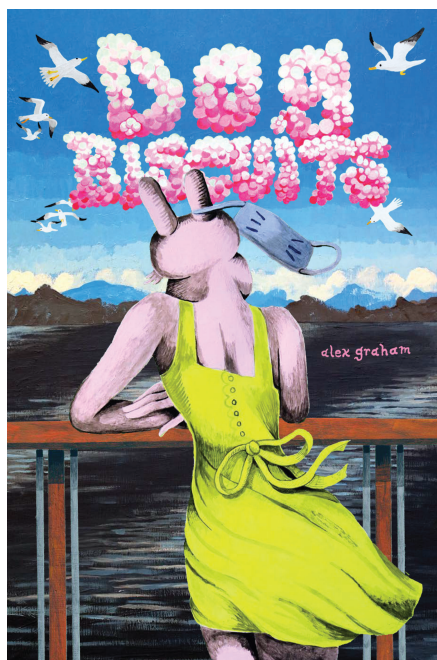


## Review: *Dog Biscuits*

by Alex Graham. Fantagraphics, June 2022. 416 p. ill. ISBN 9781683965527 (h/c), \$34.99.

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First published as a webcomic from June 2020 through January 2021, *Dog Biscuits*, by Alex Graham is backdropped by the Coronavirus pandemic and police brutality in Seattle, WA. Still, the narrative of the book remains on an intimate scale, examining romantic entanglements growing and fading between the main characters, Rosie, Gussy, and Hissy, and a small circle of friends, coworkers, and roommates. Graham's interweaving of macro concerns with matters of the heart is a particular accomplishment, as when Gussy, the owner of an artisanal dog biscuit shop, laments over his crush on Rosie, his younger employee. Immediately following an internal litany of reasons why this attachment is unwise, Gussy admonishes himself to "concentrate on health code protocol," (8). This knee-jerk oscillation of the subconscious between day-to-day concerns and existential dread permeates *Dog Biscuits*, and relatably represents the unique anxieties of the micro-era of 2020 and 2021.

The characters are drawn as an eclectic mix of anthropomorphized animals. In addition to text boxes representing speech and verbose internal monologues, the characters' eyes are a potent device for storytelling. In place of pupils, hearts show romantic interest, while spirals indicate sexual appetite. Eyes resembling targets denote rage and are seen in the faces of Seattle Police Department officers, lurking as threatening specters. Dotted lines appear as representations of characters' gazes, doing more than language alone could do to show the particulars of how they see each other.

*Dog Biscuits* is distinctly adult in tone and content, with swearing, drug use, graphic representations of sexual encounters, and occasional frightening scenes of police violence. With this in mind, the book would be most appropriate for adult sections of public libraries and academic libraries that maintain graphic novel collections or collect in areas related to police violence, social sciences, or sexuality studies.