



# Larisa Oleynik



**This is an old revision of this page, as edited by Anton Kryvoruchko (talk | contribs) at 22:55, 31 October 2017 (→ *Early life and education: There isn't such a thing as "Russian Ukrainian". One is either Russian or Ukrainian. Her last name is certainly Ukrainian.*). The present address (URL) is a permanent link to this revision, which may differ significantly from the current revision.**

**Larisa Romanovna Oleynik** (/ləˈrɪsə oʊˈleɪnɪk/; born June 7, 1981) is an American actress. She is known for starring in the title role of the children's television series *The Secret World of Alex Mack* during the mid-1990s. She has also appeared in theatrical films, including *The Baby-Sitters Club* and *10 Things I Hate About You*. During her period as a teen idol, she was described as "one of America's favorite 15-year-olds",<sup>[1]</sup> and "the proverbial girl next door".<sup>[2][3]</sup>

## Early life and education

Oleynik was born in Santa Clara County, California. Her mother Lorraine (née Allen) is a former nurse, and her late father Roman Oleynik (1936–2003) was an anesthesiologist.<sup>[4]</sup> Her father was of Ukrainian ancestry, and she was raised in the Eastern Orthodox Church.<sup>[5]</sup> Oleynik grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. She attended Pinewood School in Los Altos, California. As her acting career flourished, she would "divide her time between normal childhood experiences in Northern California and auditions in Los Angeles."<sup>[6]</sup>

After the success in her role as Alex Mack, Oleynik decided to attend college.<sup>[7]</sup> She attended Sarah Lawrence College and described her time there as "the best decision I've made".<sup>[8]</sup>

## Career

Oleynik began acting in a San Francisco production of *Les Misérables* in 1989 after seeing an audition ad in a newspaper when she was eight years old. She obtained two parts in the production (young Cossette and young Eponine), both with singing roles. After appearing in the musical, she contacted an agent and began taking acting lessons. Her onscreen acting career began at age 12, in a 1993 episode of the television series *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*; the same year she also appeared in the made-for-television film *River of Rage: The Taking of Maggie Keene* and in 1996 made a cameo on *The Adventures of Pete & Pete* as a nurse at the beginning of the episode "Dance Fever".<sup>[9]</sup> Later in 1993, she was subsequently cast in the lead role of the series *The Secret World of Alex Mack* where she portrayed a teenage girl who receives telekinetic powers as the result of an accident. She won the role of Alex Mack over 400 other aspirants. The series ran on Nickelodeon from 1994 to 1998 and was one of the network's top three most watched shows,<sup>[2]</sup> becoming quite a favorite among the child and teen audiences and turning Oleynik into a teen idol. During the show's heyday, children who met Oleynik

### Larisa Oleynik

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|---------------------|--|
| <b>Born</b>         | <div>Larisa Romanovna Oleynik</div> <div>June 7, 1981</div> <div><span><span></span></span> <u>Santa Clara County, California, United States</u></div> |
| <b>Occupation</b>   | Actress  |
| <b>Years active</b> | 1993–present   |

(and were too young to understand special effects) would often ask her to "morph" for them. Rather than try to explain things, she would quickly glance around, then tell them "Not here – everybody would see!". Oleynik reprised the role in an *All That* sketch, although the name was changed to "Alex Sax". She later made an appearance in the 100th episode of the show.

Also during her time on *The Secret World of Alex Mack*, she played one of the lead characters in the 1995 feature film *The Baby-Sitters Club* (opposite Rachael Leigh Cook and Schuyler Fisk), appeared in several episodes of *Boy Meets World*, wrote an advice column for *Tiger Beat* magazine,<sup>[10]</sup> and was involved in Nickelodeon's The Big Help charity, *Hands Across Communication*, *Surfrider Foundation* and the *Starlight Children's Foundation*.<sup>[10]</sup> She has also hosted the *CableACE Awards*, *Daytime Emmy Awards*, *YTV Achievement Awards*, *The Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards* as well as *The Big Help*. She has commented that she stayed "grounded" during her period as a teen star, mainly through the help of a "strong network of people" that she is close to.<sup>[11]</sup>

After *The Secret World of Alex Mack* ended its run, Oleynik had a starring role in the film *10 Things I Hate About You* as Bianca. The film was released in April 1999 and did fairly well at the box office, grossing a total of \$38 million domestically.<sup>[12]</sup> From 1998 to 2000, Oleynik appeared in twenty-one episodes of the *NBC* series *3rd Rock from the Sun* as Alissa Strudwick. During 2000, she also appeared in two independent films: *100 Girls* (opposite Emmanuelle Chriqui, Katherine Heigl and Jonathan Tucker) and *A Time for Dancing* (opposite Shiri Appleby); neither film received a theatrical release in the United States. She has appeared in *Malcolm in the Middle* as Reese Wilkerson's lesbian army buddy who develops a crush on *Lois Wilkerson*.

Oleynik had a supporting role in the film *An American Rhapsody*, which received a limited release in August 2001, and appeared in *Bringing Rain*, a low-budget film. Oleynik was cast in a supporting role in the series *Pepper Dennis*, which began airing on *The WB* in April 2006, but was not picked up by *The WB*'s successor *The CW*. In March 2008, Oleynik guest-starred in episode 13 of *Aliens in America*. In 2009, she provided audio commentary for the *10 Things I Hate About You* 10th Anniversary Edition Blu-ray. In March 2011, Oleynik started appearing in a recurring role on *Hawaii Five-0* as *CIA* analyst Jenna Kaye until her character was later killed off.<sup>[13]</sup> Oleynik appears as *Ken Cosgrove*'s girlfriend (and later wife) *Cynthia Baxter* in several episodes on the *AMC* television show *Mad Men*.

## Personal life

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In January 2013, according to *TMZ*, Oleynik was granted a *restraining order* against one of her fans, who she claims was so obsessed he changed his last name to hers, as well as leaving gifts for her at her mother's apartment.<sup>[14]</sup>

She resides in Venice, California.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Filmography

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### Film

| Year | Title                                    | Role                  | Notes              |
|------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1995 | <i><u>The Baby-Sitters Club</u></i>      | <u>Dawn Schafer</u>   |                    |
| 1999 | <i><u>10 Things I Hate About You</u></i> | Bianca Stratford      |                    |
| 2000 | <i><u>100 Girls</u></i>                  | Wendy                 |                    |
| 2001 | <i><u>An American Rhapsody</u></i>       | Maria Sandor (age 18) |                    |
| 2002 | <i><u>A Time for Dancing</u></i>         | Jules Michaels        |                    |
| 2003 | <i><u>Bringing Rain</u></i>              | Ori Swords            |                    |
| 2006 | <i><u>Pope Dreams</u></i>                | Maggie Venable        |                    |
| 2007 | <i>Relative Obscurity</i>                | Claire                |                    |
| 2008 | <i>Broken Windows</i>                    | Sara                  |                    |
| 2008 | <i>Together Again for the First Time</i> | Brenda                | Direct-to-video    |
| 2009 | <i>I Have It</i>                         | Emily                 | Short film         |
| 2011 | <i>Inconvenient Interviews with Risa</i> | Interviewee           | Video short        |
| 2012 | <i>Born Yesterday</i>                    | Elyse                 | Short film         |
| 2012 | <i><u>Atlas Shrugged: Part II</u></i>    | Cherryl Brooks        |                    |
| 2013 | <i>OJ: The Musical</i>                   | Regina                |                    |
| 2014 | <i>BFFs</i>                              | Chloe                 |                    |
| 2014 | <i>The Mamet Women</i>                   | Polly                 | Short film         |
| 2014 | <i><u>Jessabelle</u></i>                 | Sam                   |                    |
| 2014 | <i>Horrible Parents</i>                  | Jill                  | Short film         |
| 2017 | <i>Animal Among Us</i>                   | Anita Bishop          | In post-production |
| 2017 | <i>Accommodations</i>                    | Natalie               | In post-production |
| 2017 | <i>Wandering Off</i>                     | Amanda                |                    |

### Television

| Year      | Title   | Role                     | Notes             |
|-----------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1993      | <i><u>Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman</u></i>                 | Susie                    | Episode: "Heroes" |
| 1993      | <i><u>River of Rage: The Taking of Maggie Keene</u></i> | Gail Keene               | <u>Movie</u>      |
| 1994–1998 | <i><u>The Secret World of Alex Mack</u></i>             | Alex Mack / Barbara Mack | Lead role         |

| Year      | Title   | Role                             | Notes  |
|-----------|---|----------------------------------|--|
| 1996      | <i><u>The Adventures of Pete &amp; Pete</u></i>     | Nurse                            | Episode: "Dance Fever"   |
| 1996–1998 | <i><u>Boy Meets World</u></i>                       | Dana Pruitt                      | 3 episodes   |
| 1998–2000 | <i><u>3rd Rock from the Sun</u></i>                 | <u>Alissa Strudwick</u>          | Recurring role (21 episodes)                                   |
| 2005      | <i><u>Malcolm in the Middle</u></i>                 | Abby                             | Episode: "Army Buddy"  |
| 2006      | <i><u>Pepper Dennis</u></i>                         | Brianna                          | 2 episodes   |
| 2008      | <i><u>Aliens in America</u></i>                     | Zoe                              | Episode: "Community Theater"                                   |
| 2009      | <i><u>Without a Trace</u></i>                       | Liza Miller                      | Episode: "Voir Dire"   |
| 2009      | <i><u>Psych</u></i>                                 | Willow Gimbley                   | Episode: "Let's Get Hairy"                                     |
| 2010      | <i><u>Backyard Wedding</u></i>                      | Renee                            | Movie  |
| 2010–2015 | <i><u>Mad Men</u></i>                               | <u>Cynthia Cosgrove</u>          | Recurring role (5 episodes)                                    |
| 2011–2012 | <i><u>Winx Club: Enchantix</u></i>                  | Icy / Various                    | Voice role (28 episodes)                                       |
| 2011–2014 | <i><u>Hawaii Five-0</u></i>                         | Jenna Kaye                       | Recurring role (7 episodes)                                    |
| 2012      | <i><u>Mike &amp; Molly</u></i>                      | Allison                          | Episode: "The Dress"   |
| 2012      | <i><u>Fairly Legal</u></i>                          | Officer Glacki                   | Episode: "What They Seem"                                      |
| 2012–2013 | <i><u>Winx Club: Beyond Believix</u></i>            | Icy / Various                    | Voice role (24 episodes)                                       |
| 2012–2014 | <i><u>Pretty Little Liars</u></i>                   | Maggie Cutler                    | Recurring role (7 episodes)                                    |
| 2013      | <i><u>Remember Sunday</u></i>                       | Lauren                           | Movie  |
| 2013      | <i><u>Ghost Ghirls</u></i>                          | Megan                            | Episode: "Will You Scary Me?"                                  |
| 2013      | <i><u>American Dad!</u></i>                         |                                  | Voice role; episode: "Steve and Snot's Test-Tubular Adventure" |
| 2013      | <i><u>Winx Club</u></i>                             | Icy                              | Voice role   |
| 2014      | <i><u>Robot Chicken</u></i>                         | Alex Mack / Cheetara / Classmate | Voice role; episode: "Rebel Appliance"                         |
| 2014      | <i><u>Stolen from the Womb</u></i>                  | Diane King                       | Movie  |
| 2014      | <i><u>Extant</u></i>                                | Phillips                         | Episode: "Ascension"   |
| 2014      | <i><u>The Michaels</u></i>                          | Katherine Bixby                  | Movie  |
| 2015      | <i><u>Wish Upon a Christmas</u></i>                 | Amelia                           | Movie  |
| 2016      | <i><u>Law &amp; Order: Special Victims Unit</u></i> | Lizzie Bauer                     | Episode: "Assaulting Reality"                                  |

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## External links

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- Larisa Oleynik (<https://twitter.com/loleynik>) on Twitter
- Larisa Oleynik (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0646351/>) at IMDb
- Larisa Oleynik ([https://web.archive.org/web/\\*/https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/person/144487%7C\\*](https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/person/144487%7C*)) at the TCM Movie Database

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