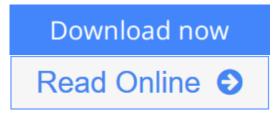


Gamer Girl

By Mari Mancusi



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Maddy's life couldn't get much worse. Her parents split and now she's stuck in a small town and at a new school. Most of the time, she retreats into her manga art, but when she gets into the Fields of Fantasy online computer game, she knows she's found the one place she can be herself. In the game world, Maddy can be the beautiful and magical Allora and have a virtually perfect life. And she even finds a little romance. But can Maddy escape her real-life problems altogether, or will she have to find a way to make her real world just as amazing as her virtual one?



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Gamer Girl By Mari Mancusi Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 7–10—Maddy feels as though her life just keeps getting worse and worse. Because her parents have divorced, she has had to leave her friends in Boston and move with her mother and younger sister to live with Grandma in New Hampshire. She has developed a mad crush on handsome, unattainable Chad, whose friends refer to her as Freak Girl. Maddy's only consolations are her beloved manga drawings and the online game Fields of Fantasy, which her father gave her for her birthday. As Maddy becomes more involved with the game, she creates a new identity for herself as a magical Elfin maiden named Allora, and meets the handsome knight Sir Leo online. Eventually Maddy realizes that she cannot continue to use gaming as a refuge from her real-life problems, and she finds the courage to confront both the clique at her school and her neglectful father. And even more importantly, she begins reaching out to potential friends by starting a manga club and entering *Gamer Girl* in a prestigious writing contest. This is a fun, quick but predictable story. Readers will guess the identity of Sir Leo long before Maddy does, and her grandmother is stereotypically fussy and interfering. However, the manga and gaming themes will appeal to many teen girls, including reluctant readers.—*Kathleen E. Gruver, Burlington County Library, Westampton, NJ* Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From **Booklist**

After her parents' divorce, Maddy has to leave her ultra-hip Boston life for a New Hampshire suburb, where she, her mother, and her sister stay with Grandma. Not only does Maddy have to deal with missing her friends and father, but Grandma ruins her first day at school by insisting she wear a unicorn sweatshirt and then by embarrassing a popular boy with stories of his childhood bed-wetting. Bullied by the in-crowd ("the Haters"), crushing on the wrong guy, and stuck with the nickname Freak Girl, Maddy escapes into her drawing and the online game Fields of Fantasy, where she can vanquish enemies and make friends far easier than at school. After encouragement from a sympathetic teacher, Maddy makes friends by starting a manga club. But just when things are improving, the Haters strike again. Mancusi believably captures the hopes, disappointments, and awkwardness of high school life. While the trendy elements may eventually become dated, the story of a girl finding her inner strength will always resonate. Grades 6-10. --Krista Hutley

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