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Book Club Kit Discussion Guide

Gamer Girl

by

Mari Mancusi

(New York: Dutton Childrens Books, 2008)

Author:

Mari Mancusi used to wish she could become a vampire back in high school...But she ended up in another blood sucking profession --journalism -- instead. Today she works as a freelance TV producer and author of books for teens and adults. When not writing about creatures of the night, Mari enjoys traveling, cooking, goth clubbing, watching cheesy horror movies, and her favorite guilty pleasure--videogames. A graduate of Boston University and a two time Emmy Award winner, she lives in Austin, Texas with her husband Jacob and their dogs Mesquite and Bowie. [From marimancusi.yolasite.com]

Summary:

After Maddy's parents' divorce, she's stuck starting over at a new high school. Friendless and nicknamed Freak Girl, Manga-loving artist Maddy finds refuge in the interactive online game Fields of Fantasy. In that virtual world, she reinvents herself as Allora, a gorgeous elfin alter ego, and meets a true friend in Sir Leo. Maddy can't hide behind Allora forever, especially as a real-life crush begins edging in on her budding virtual romance. But would anyone pick the real Maddy, gamer girl and Manga freak, over the fantasy?

This fresh, geeky/cool novel includes online chats and exciting gaming, and features Maddy's Mangastyle artwork.

Questions:

1. Talk about the author's use of language/writing style. Have each member read his or her favorite passage out loud. (You might want to warn them ahead of time that they'll be doing this so they'll be prepared.) How does this particular passage relate to the story as a whole? Does it reveal anything specific about any of the characters or illuminate certain aspects of the story?
2. How important is the setting to the story? If applicable, discuss the time period in which the book is set. Does the author provide enough background information for you to understand the events in the story?
3. Is the author equally invested in both character and plot? Or did the author put more effort into developing the story than in creating compelling and believable characters?

Were the motivations of the characters believable, or did their actions feel like a means to further the plot?

4. Would you recommend this work on the basis of its literary merit? Would you endorse it purely because of the skillful writing and the well-developed characters?
5. Is your group familiar with the author's previous works? If so, did this book live up to or exceed your expectations of the author?
6. What did you like or dislike about the book that hasn't been discussed already? Were you glad you read this book? Would you recommend it to a friend? Do you want to read more work by this author?

[Questions from Reading Group Guides

<http://www.readinggroupguides.com/content/index.asp> and Library Staff]