

Gamer Girl

Mari Mancusi

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Maddie moves with her mom and sister to her grandma's house in the suburbs after her parents decide to divorce; unfortunately, that's the least of Maddie's problems. Her grandma is obsessed with unicorns (!?) and ensures Maddie's downfall in her new school—she is labeled a misfit right away. To escape, Maddie spends a lot of time drawing mangas and creating her manga role-playing character in an online game. A teacher at school starts a manga club with Maddie's help and Maddie gets some relief when she meets other kids with her interests. Things are looking up by the end of the book as Maddie meets a guy, wins a drawing contest, and becomes the face of manga at her new school.

For anyone who likes manga, this book is for them. The cool drawings at the beginning of each chapter set the mood for the chapter. The format between the chatting and the role-playing is very realistic. The way the author sets up the interchange is very believable. There are the stereotypical characters—the goodie-two-shoes little sister, the popular cheerleaders, the friend of the meanest, coolest dude who gets the girl. However, I guess they drive the story and make the unexpected twists and turns stand out.

This book is definitely for middle and high school students who would come into contact with manga, online gaming, chatting, and alternative lifestyles. I bought the book from a book fair in middle school and have read it many times since then. I haven't really seen it in my local library. Anyway, here are more like it you might want to read:

Recommended Titles:

The Astonishing Adventures of Fan Boy and Goth Girl by Barry Lyga

ttyl by Lauren Myracle

Goth Girl Rising by Barry Lyga