



# Chainmail Bikini: The Anthology of Women Gamers

*Hazel Newlevant, Sarah Winifred Searle (Contributor)*

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Chainmail Bikini is an anthology of comics by and about female gamers! 40 cartoonists have contributed comics about the games they're passionate about—from video games to table-top role-playing to collectible card games. The comics in Chainmail Bikini explore the real-life impact of entering a fantasy world, how games can connect us with each other and teach us about ourselves.

## **Chainmail Bikini: The Anthology of Women Gamers Details**

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## From Reader Review Chainmail Bikini: The Anthology of Women Gamers for online ebook

### Emma (howlsmovinglibrary) says

This was a great anthology! All the artwork is lovely and the comics range from autobiographical experience to mini-critique essays.

There's lots and lots and lots of comics (although they are typical 2 double page spreads in length), so it's a substantial graphic novel to read.

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### Stewart Tame says

Chainmail Bikini, as the subtitle says, is an anthology of comics revolving around the theme of women in gaming. Pretty much all types of gaming are represented, board and card games, computer and video games, tabletop RPGs, LARPs ... The overall tone of the book is empowering. “Gaming made me the success I am today” is a recurring theme.

Stories range from autobiography to more poetic and allegorical pieces. In all, it's an impressive array of talent. Probably the most memorable story for me was “Absolute Dominion” by Diana Nock, but that's largely due to Dominion being one of my favorite games. In general, I enjoyed this book quite a bit, but I'm a gamer, so I'm certainly biased.

All in all, this is a decent alt comics anthology. Recommended!

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### Chad says

A collection of women-penned short stories about gaming, whether it be video games, tabletop gaming or even LARPing. Several stories also deal with gender identity. As with any anthology some stories are great, while others are found lacking.

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### Ben Mariner says

I'm definitely not the target audience for this book, but it sounded interesting so I read it anyway. It wasn't exactly what I was expecting. For the most part, it's just women sharing memories of how gaming made them feel accepted or themselves. I thought it would be a bit more narrative driven. I'm giving it this high of a rating not because I really enjoyed the stories (again, I'm not really the target audience), but because I thought it was really cool to see how something as simple as a video game made someone feel ok with themselves. It's not easy to be a woman in...well, any day and age, really, but being a female gamer is a particularly tough path given the nature of most male gamers. These stories were sweet, and funny, and heartwarming, and while I didn't and can't quite connect on the same level with them as a female gamer could, it was still an enjoyable read.

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### **Jamie says**

2 1/2 stars

Overall, I was not impressed with this. It was a jumble of very short stories (3-6 pages) focusing on girls and gaming. The stories aren't fulfilling. It was more a blog compilations of girls entries for there daily life, comic style. Very little substance

Yet I did like some of the references. This book touches on all times of games- Console, PC, arcade, board, card, LARPing, Tabletop RPG, etc. I got mentions of SNES Mario, Street Fighter, The Sims, Diablo 2 (with a reference to the cow level-that made me very happy), etc. So I did like all of that quite a bit.

The artwork was not to my style. A lot of it seemed rush and left me unimpressed. Other times it seems too much was being crammed in and others not enough. Not a bad read, being how quick it is, but I was hoping for a bit better.

\*I was loaned a digital copy of this book in exchange for a fair, honest review.

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### **Melissa Hernandez says**

It was fun, definitely relate, and good. I would definitely recommend to other women gamers and others, too! It's a mixture of women gamers from young to adult, variety of races and ethnicity, trans and cis folks, and so much more!

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### **Steve says**

There's a bigger focus on tabletop gaming and LARPing than I expected, but that's a neat side of gaming to explore as well. Easily my favorite of the bunch was "She's the Backbone of this Facility" by Laura Lannes - I'd never examined the Portal games as closely as she does, and it's utterly fascinating and cool reading her analysis. The rest are hit and miss, though I'd say more hit than miss. Provides a much-needed perspective on a pastime that I love.

... not a huge fan of the cover though. :|

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### **Peacegal says**

The whole gaming culture passed me by, but I can respect this anthology created by young women on what video, computer, and role-playing games mean to them. Many of these girls were outsiders amongst their peers as teenagers--something I can surely relate to--and found solace and community in the world of games.

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### **Derek Royal says**

A top-notch collection of comics from a wide variety of creators. This anthology incorporates a whole world of styles, approaches to storytelling, and perspectives on gaming. What they all have in common, though, is that they're all created by female gamers who love both media: gaming and comics. But "gaming" here is handled broadly, not just video gaming. Another reason to love this book. I've recommended this to all my students, most of whom are in the ATEC program for some aspect of game studies.

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### **Beth Cato says**

I supported the Kickstarter for this, and I was happy to have the final result arrive this week. It took me a little over an hour to read, and I found it thoughtful, engaging, and laugh-out-loud amusing at times. The focus is on women gamers, and there are also several strips that delve into gender identity; the universal theme is a sense of belonging through gaming, whether it's Pokemon, AD&D, or LARPing. Since it has over 40 contributors, there's a lot of variety and diversity; that meant that even if some artwork or subject matter didn't grab me, that would likely change with the next comic.

Some of my favorite sections were "She's the Backbone of This Facility" by Laura Lannes (a thoughtful analysis of Portal 2's feminist themes), "Achievement Unlocked" by Jade F. Lee, "Here Comes a New Challenger" by Kinoko Evans, and "Hermia" by Miranda Harmon (\*sniff\*). When you support a Kickstarter, you're never quite sure how the end product will turn out, but I think this is excellent. Sure, I wish some of my own influential games had been shown more (Final Fantasy and Dragon Warrior/Quest series), but at the same time, I was charmed to see how games like Pokemon and Animal Crossing influenced this generation of artists.

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### **Hollowspine says**

What a great collection of comics about girls who game. So many stories that I could relate with, having been the sole girl at the gaming table for a long time myself. One of my favorites was about 'GLaDOS' from the Portal series of games. That comic alone was worth the library check out, I'd highly recommend it. I also loved the parental approval in the comic about the Sims computer game, it's just like playing house, suitable for girls! I did the same thing with my Sims, I'll never forget the first time I saw one of them get consumed by flies. Although most of the comics were related to table-top gaming/Larping there's a good representation of video/computer gaming too.

Most of the comics deal with a discovery of identity narrative, which is something that isn't well recognized in gaming at all, let alone as something that is important for girls in particular. Gaming gives everyone the chance to try out different identities and start forming ideas of who we are and what our goals in life are, even if it's just the realization that we are awesome at figuring out the logistics of equipping a wagon train. There, of course, is an overarching feminist tone to the anthology, which is highly refreshing.

Another reason that this anthology really works is the diversity of the creators represented. Trans and non-binary voices are included as well as people from all walks of life, I would be seriously surprised if someone reading this couldn't identify with at least one of the stories. I personally identified with many of them, some of them bringing up ideas and feelings that I'd never thought I'd see outside my own brain.

For all gamers out there, this is highly recommended.

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### **Val says**

I really loved this collection of women's experiences with games and in different gaming communities. Not gonna lie, I even cried at some of the stories because they were so similar (and true) to my own experiences and thoughts. I also especially enjoyed the inclusion of trans women and non-binary femme storytellers in this gendered anthology, they need to be included more! :)

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### **Danika at The Lesbrary says**

I loved this! Tons of queer and trans contributors, lots of different takes on gaming, a wide variety of art styles. Highly recommend.

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### **ChrisVigilante says**

I liked a lot of this but also not a fan of a lot of it. The comics are short so you get through the not so great ones quick but it still had a lasting effect. I also wasn't a fan of a lot of the art styles. Some were really hard to even get through. However, I loved the messages behind many of the comics in the anthology.

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### **Patrick says**

Content: Lots of good, some not as good.

On the plus side, everything's short, so the less good stuff is over quickly; on the minus side, everything's short, so the good stuff is over too quickly.

This is mostly interesting on merit, because it's women making comics about games, and that's (to my knowledge) not a project that has previously existed. There are voices in here that aren't heard in other places, and I think that's awesome.

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