



## Gamers

*Thomas K. Carpenter*

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### **Gamers** Thomas K. Carpenter

Two points for brushing your teeth. Ten points for keeping your room tidy. Seventy-two points for the Bioeconomic Game Design pop quiz on the ride to school in your personal FunCar. Another thirty for making every hurdle in gym class.

Life is a game, unless you're not the one winning.

Gabby DeCorte, top student and reality-hacker extraordinaire, has been doing whatever it takes to keep her best friend, Zaela, from falling behind in LifeGame. Zaela has gifts of artistry that amaze Gabby, but none of those skills translate in LifeGame and with final exams coming up, they can't afford to waste a single minute. But when a mysterious group called the Frags contacts Gabby claiming to know what really happens to the losers of LifeGame, she must choose between winning and what she believes in.

### **Gamers Details**

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Author : Thomas K. Carpenter

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## From Reader Review Gamers for online ebook

### Reena Jacobs says

The style: Mr. Carpenter can be my Game Master any day. The novel mixed the futuristic world with the gaming world. Basically, Gabby's life was a game of racking up points in order to reach the next level. Talk about your rat race.

It totally took me back to my EverQuest addicted days. The game talk, the leveling, the never-ending pursuit to acquire more, whether it be points, gear, etc... I was there. But it was a bit more, especially in the final raid. It took me out of online roleplaying and plunged me into paper DnD.

The plot: The story was well-paced. Once I got into it, I had a hard time putting it down, even going so far as taking it to the bathroom with me. Is that TMI? One thing I will say is Gamers seemed more like the beginning of something big. The major players were introduced but it didn't have a sense of finality to it. It was more as if it set me up for the end of one adventure while opening the door for a whole new adventure. I haven't read the full trilogy yet, but I definitely would say Gamers isn't the book to stop on.

Okay... I really want to ruin this book for you with sentences that start with "like this one time..." But I know you'll hate me for it. So... let's talk about...

Characters: The novel was told from Gabby's POV. She started out very much a part of the system, very focused on the end game, which in her case happened to be getting into the grand university. She reminded me a lot of the AP straight-A students I'd encountered while working in the high school. She knew what she wanted, how to do get it, and didn't slack in reaching her goals. Yet she never acted like she was better than everyone else. She was just a regular kid (except for being a super genius) with typical problems.... well typical until the poo hit the fan. I liked her.

The other characters were rather fleeting. They didn't take up much of my time, but each played important roles which pushed the plot forward or gave insight to an aspect of Gabby's character of the total story. To be honest, if you quizzed me, I wouldn't remember a single name. That doesn't say a lot though. I'm horrible with names and even had to read the blurb to remember Gabby's. Still, I love the cohesiveness the characters brought to the entire story. Each was rememberable (not so much the names for me but the personalities definitely). I've snapped a photograph of each of them in my mind's eye.

Final thoughts: Gamers had a few loose ends which gave the first book a cliffhanger feel to it. You all know how much I hate cliffhangers. Yet at the same time, I was satisfied with the ending, especially knowing the next two books are already available.

My score? 4.5 – 5 out of 5 stars. HIGHLY recommended for RPG-ers.

I received my copy from the author in exchange for an honest review.

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### Alanna (The Flashlight Reader) says

This synopsis from Amazon does NOTHING for the book. Nothing. About 30 pages in to the book I realized I was reading something that reminded me of Scott Westerfield's Pretties series. I don't mean the story sounded familiar (because it didn't), but the creepy "Big-Brother-is-out-to-get-you" aspect felt similar--

which is a good thing.

The idea of LifeGame is like a job placement test for aspiring University students. The highest scorers get the best jobs, while the others get lesser jobs. Except that's a complete lie. The winners do get top jobs, but the losers disappear forever. It's not certain whether or not they get killed or moved to some top secret facility, but they definitely disappear for good. Gabby didn't realize any of this was occurring until she meets a group of refugees/outcasts called Frags. This odd group of misfits teach her the truth about her altered reality, and the truth is haunting.

The majority of this book is fast paced action. It starts off with a nice world building aspect so you can understand LifeGame and Gabby, but then it quickly gets to the heart of the plot. I was engrossed with the story line. The characters felt a little flat, with the exception of Gabby. You could tell she was conflicted about her choices and current situation. But since so much of the book was built around this team aspect, I would have liked to have known the others more. Especially Mouse and the Frags. Of course, I have a feeling that I will get that opportunity in the next book.

One of my complaints with the book (and sci-fi in general) is some of the invented terminology. I still have no idea what "debuff" means. When I thought I had it figured out, I would see the word used in a different context that threw me for a loop. Of course, that's pretty minor in the grand scheme of a novel. There was also one scene with one of Gabby's dreams that seemed to pop out of nowhere. Again, this was probably just me. I read this book pretty late at night when my eyes wanted to close, but I refused to cooperate because I wanted to finish the book.

If you're a fan of science fiction, you'll love this book. Especially if you like Scott Westerfield's Pretties series. If you're like me, and not a big fan of sci-fi (but you liked the Pretties), then you will also like this book. The action keeps the story alive and makes it hard to put down. Plus, the concept behind life being a live or die game is highly original, which makes the book all that much better.

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## Kelly says

There's something to be said about a book that can entertain. Does Gamers suffer from shotty world-building and weak characterization? Most definitely. But did I mind while I was reading it? Not really.

A gifted hacker, Gabby has been "grinding points" for her LifeScore by performing mundane tasks (like brushing her teeth) and playing games to ensure she gets in to University, something that would guarantee her a good job. This is referenced repeatedly throughout Gamers, but exactly what job University will get you, is never explained. Other than being a Coder – someone who designs LifeGame – and a few vague references to a military, no other jobs are ever mentioned. Considering the plot depends on Gabby's rude awakening about the truth for those who don't get in to University, one would think that the types of jobs available would be better explained. This hole was made even more glaringly obvious when Gabby was left answerless after being asked what she thought the minor jobs were. How can you be so desperate to avoid the non-University jobs when you don't even know what they are?

There were many such questions that I wished Gabby had asked, or explored a little deeper, that were implied and then given no attention. Her lack of curiosity about the truths shown to her by the Frags was something I had a really hard time overcoming. After the leap of faith it took for her to trust the Frags enough to even listen to their side of the story, I was surprised by how few questions she asked and how

quickly she believed their version of events. And then once it was apparent that she was going to believe what they had shown her, she kind of meandered through Gamers without the urgency I felt her situation demanded. While she did rush back, it was only because she realized they had started Final Raid early and she was falling behind in points. Not once did she consider telling her teammates the truth about what she had learned from the Frags, nor did she confide her secrets to her best friend, Zaela. Rather, she played Final Raid to the best of her abilities, and hoped that Zaela would earn enough points on her own to end up safe at University with her.

But, while I had all of these thoughts swimming around in my head, I was also enjoying reading Gamers. Gabby's constant checking of her LifeScore added a lot of suspense, as you worried she wouldn't be able to catch up, and I loved the Dungeons and Dragons style gameplay used for Final Raid. I did have a hard time with some of the gaming terms used, and found myself wikking many of them – which generally, didn't provide much clarity if I'm honest. But the concept behind LifeGame and Final Raid was pretty neat – you controlled your future, depending on how invested you were at learning how to play better. And personally, I really liked how some popular gaming characters were used as slang.

*“It's so Bowser that they made the Raid worth so many points.”*

*“What in Mario's name is that thing?”*

But, I can also see how some of the slang used might put off others. It took a couple uses of the word “debuff” and “twinked” in context for me to slightly understand what they meant.

And then, of course, there's the question of what playing games has to do with running a successful society...

But, my issues with Gamers aside, I really enjoyed reading it. There's definitely room for improvement, and I think the ending was slightly rushed and anticlimactic, but it was entertaining. And sometimes, that's enough.

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## Usman says

Disclosure: I was given a free copy of the book by the author for review also Mild spoilers alert.

I am not really a fan of Young Adult fiction as I am not really that young anymore and the genre unfortunately lends itself to simplified plot lines, one dimensional characters and pedestrian prose. Gamers is no exception to the rule but it is not as bad as some of the other books in the area which are a lot more prominent. I am looking at you hunger games.

The story follows a high school student named Gabby who lives in a dystopian future where our entire lives are just a game. There are points to be won for showing, skill, intellect or any other characteristic deemed positive by the LGIE (Life Game Integrity Engineers) and points are taken away for going against their wishes. The game has real consequences as those with the highest scores will be accepted in University while the fate of those with lower scores is a little bit murky but they will presumably be relegated to more menial tasks, or worse. The gamers are immersed in the game which are basically augmented reality using ocular implants and connectors which fake input to nerves (called sense webs). However having this level of control over what people perceive is obviously open to abuse and that is where the story gets interesting.

First, the good; I find the premise really interesting, as a Computer Scientist and one working the gaming industry I have often thought that game theory could be applied to real world problems to lead to a better

outcome. This book takes that hypothesis to its logical conclusion and explores the dangers inherent in such an approach. The recent announcement of Google's Project Glass adds a whole new level of menace to the story. The story moves at a fair clip and remains interesting, the main characters are well fleshed out by the end of the book and have some depth to them. They are not all clearly good or bad guys as is the case with many books in this genre. There is also a little bit of intrigue where the motives of some of the characters are called into question which keeps the story interesting.

I get the feeling the author is World of Warcraft fan and this comes across in the book, The school has a final "Raid" which you must perform with a guild of fellow class mates and most of the action takes place in what is essentially a dungeon. As a gamer I liked finding little references and nods to the gaming heritage of this book and its author. However, the jargon got a little obscure for me and I had to have the urban dictionary open. The use of gamer jargon was a nice touch but I feel it should be only used inside dialog. Having the narrator use the same jargon detracts from the readability of the story I feel.

The not so good. I mentioned the book has depth to characters and intrigue but so far that has been fairly blunt and direct. I often make reference to the Game of Throne books as an example of how to do intrigue with the requisite subtlety. I feel this book was a little heavy handed on the intrigue and plot twists and also some felt a little contrived at times. \*SPOILER\* When Gabby is partnered with her arch enemies it would have been more believable if those arch enemies had been introduced prior to that point. Perhaps an anecdote earlier in the book or an antagonistic run in. There were some problems in the descriptions especially with regards to scale, at one point Unthar blocks a sword attack from a Sand Giant and a later stage that sand giant is described to be a 100ft tall. There is a similar problem with distances, the raid are supposed to happen inside school grounds but the students are shown wondering in the simulated world for days. Further there are some weird descriptions; "Baleful eyes like a million rotten galaxies", I am really not sure what rotten galaxies look like and why they are baleful.

I am giving a rating of 3 in relation to other works in this genre as the story was interesting and I will certainly read the next installment. However, against all the books I read it probably deserves a lower rating. If you are a more serious reader this is probably not the book for you. I wanted to like this book because I find the subject matter interesting and it has enough substance that I was able to overlook its short comings. However, I could have just as easily hated it if I was not making an effort to like it.

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### **Laura Martinelli says**

Is there anything more disappointing as reading a book with an interesting premise and realizing in the first chunk how *bland* it is? There were several points while I was reading this and thinking back to Sword Art Online and that I should really ought to just find the translations of those books. *Gamers* isn't as horrible that I was tempted to chuck my Kindle at the wall, but it's so by the numbers.

Starting with the world-building, which is easily the worst part of the book. I feel like the whole mantra of "The real world isn't real!" is just a lazy cop-out to avoid any real description of the setting. There is no clear distinction between the real world and what Gabby is seeing when she's online. And for the record, how is the online overlaid onto the real world in here? I'm assuming ocular implants, but Carpenter never takes the time to make this distinction. Also, the time-frame of the world-building. If this form of society where gaming is your life and if you don't have enough points, you literally lose... wouldn't people start catching on that their children and loved ones are disappearing? Also, apparently there's no medical advancement in

this future, because if you get sick and miss one day of gaming, you're screwed! I hate to be the cynic here, but it feels like the author read *Extras* and *Ready Player One* and decided he's going to write a book just like those! And then missed the points of both.

The characters and plot are so boring and cookie-cutter. 'Ordinary' high school girl with a special talent sees mysterious boy at school. She wants to learn more about mysterious boy, and instead learns about grand conspiracy, which—DUN DUN!—she is a target of, despite being oh-so normal! It also doesn't particularly help that half of the book is taken up by this "Final Raid" Gabby has to navigate. Apparently, there are high stakes involved, but I never got that she was playing for her life. Nor did I get any inkling that Gabby was willing to die for her friend Zaela, since the latter only appears for a handful of pages. The pacing is **terrible**, so much of the first half is info-dumping this grand conspiracy, and the second half is the Final Raid, which just reads like a transcript of WoW quest (with occasional interlude to remind you of the plot).

At best? This reads like a very, *very* early draft of a Nanowrimo book that just got a rough polish and then put online. (Speaking as an experienced Nano veteran who did self e-pub, that is a **huge** no-no.) The whole "Life as a game" has been done before, but it's still an interesting concept that, in the right hands, could be really well-done. This is just feels like a rip-off of much better works, and I could find better things to recommend.

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## Jennifer (Bad Bird Reads) says

From <http://readingandwritingurbanfantasy...>

3.5 stars

### At A Glance

This was my first substantial gamer book and I was surprised by how much fun it was.

### The Good

In essence, life is a game. Everything you do earns you points. You need to have enough points by the end of your schooling to be able to go to University. If you don't, you are given the lowliest jobs, or so we assume. But with the approaching of the Final Raid, the last big game and way to earn points, Gabby, a top gamer, starts to find out the truth about LifeGames and how nothing is as it appears. She now has to save her friends from what truly lurks behind the world of gaming.

Let me start off by saying that I am not a gamer. The most gaming I do is Yoga on the Wii and watching PewDiePie on YouTube. So I think it says something that I really enjoyed *Gamer*, a heavy gamer book. I'm not saying it will be like that for all non-gamers, but I think this book is worth the try. The dialogue was fun and witty, the premise was scary and exciting, and the gaming was fascinating.

I loved Gabby as our heroine. She is a hacker which made things even more interesting. She is extremely loyal and protective of her friends. She truly does everything and anything to keep her friends safe. I felt bad for her during the Last Raid. She had so many obstacles, it wasn't even fair, but she took them on with perseverance and tenacity. She never let the bad guys bring her down.

What I loved most about this book was the surprises. I really didn't know who was good or bad until Carpenter wanted me to. And the people who became heroes shocked me even more. I think the first half of this is going to appeal the most to the general public. The second half, which is all gaming simulation, is fun

but not for everyone.

I loved how real everything felt with Carpenter's amazing descriptions. I could totally visualize every game. The dragons and giants, it was all easily believable and life like. It all made sense to me too. I never felt lost with the gaming descriptions and lingo. Actually, the creativity of the language was the most appealing part.

The action was pretty much nonstop once we got to the last game. I loved that feeling I got while reading Gamers, like I wouldn't be able to relax until the very end. This is the kind of book you remember.

#### The Bad

There is something about Gamers that didn't sync well. I almost felt like I was reading three different novels. The first part has Gabby and her school life, the second part is her meeting the Frags and having an adventure, then the last part is all gaming. It was a bit disjointed.

The ending is a major cliffhanger, which really didn't bother me until I realized pretty much nothing got resolved or answered. I felt like the reader is left hanging when it comes to even a little closer.

#### The Snuggly

There is a peek of possible romance between Gabby and Michael but not even enough to talk about it. I suppose we will see them more together in the second book.

#### Final Thoughts

In my personal opinion, non-gamers can easily fall in love with this book. It reads like a gaming dystopian with lots of action and great dialogue. I would continue this series for sure. I'm interested to see what will happen next. Recommended.

"Now if you still want to meet with us, rub this lamp--" He held out a genie lamp. "--three times."

She shook her head. "Why would I have to do something lame like that? Why can't I just tell you I'm ready to go?"

Guybrush shrugged. "Them's the rules. Just be glad we didn't use Leisure Suit Larry like I wanted to."

"Okay, fine."

A horrible grin appeared on Guybrush's face and the cartoonish character stuck the genie lamp into his pants. Guybrush now sported an obscene bulge.

\*Free book from author for honest review\*

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## Candy says

Tron meets Scott Westerfeld's world of Ugliers and has a blast!

Most virtual gaming stories follow the same script: people's minds are hooked up to machines while their bodies lay still and useless (think Matrix or Total Recall). Carpenter takes things to a whole new level; like upgrading from Wii to Xbox Kinect kind of level. Sitting on your butt (getting strikes in bowling just by flicking your wrist) will get you nowhere in LifeGame...unless you count 'dead' as a place to get to. Guaranteed? Not quite. That's the problem. No one knows where the losers of LifeGame go and through a

chaotic and thrilling course of events, our MC Gabby is determined to find out.

Extremely creative and thoroughly entertaining, Gamers is a sure hit for science fiction and dystopian fans alike. With detailed world building and a steady pace, readers are able to immerse themselves in Carpenter's universe and hang on for the ride until the end...which is NOT the end. Thank goodness because I would *not* have been happy. That said, I very much recommend this book and have added the sequel, Fraggs, to my TBR pile. I usually do not recap or summarize a book since the authors/publishers have their own but reading some people's reviews, it seems the printed 'blurb' was not enough to pique their interest or that the story is very different than what is implied. For this reason, I have come up with a summary/blurb of my own, including a couple quotes and my two cents. Ahem:

Gabby's world is earth with a virtual layer; everything you see may or may not be real. Confusing huh?

**Normally, the games painted over the objects that were already there. This one had painted over the whole world so she couldn't actually see what was there. Gabby had the sudden feeling that she was about to run into a wall and had to steel herself to take the next step.**

Thomas Carpenter. Gamers (Kindle Locations 1841-1843). Thomas Carpenter.

Having the knowledge that you are blind doesn't make it any less unsettling. So what are they not seeing and why?

Day and night, Gabby is subjected to endless games to defeat and earn points. Points determine a persons' intelligence and usefulness in society. The education system is specifically geared towards improving one's success in the games.

**"The first rule is what can be gamed can be improved. The second rule is that everything can be a game and the last rule is to never look backwards because the past is a game that's already been decided."**

Thomas Carpenter. Gamers (Kindle Locations 99-100). Thomas Carpenter.

School is fueled by competition which makes for shallow and fake friendships. Having one true friend, Gabby will do anything to keep Zaela by her side; even if that means risking everything and hacking into the system to help Zaela stay ahead. After a suspicious and violating request is made by the LifeGame Integrity Engineers (LGIE), Gabby's dreams come to a halt. Enduring interrogations from the school Administrator and her parents, seeing a boy no one else can see, and following a group called the Frags into the unknown, Gabby doesn't know who to believe. As more characters are introduced, doubts of who to trust increase and panicked decisions are sure to be made. When Gabby and friends participate in the "Final Raid" to decide their future careers, she comes to realize that this is so much more than a game. If not played just right, Gabby wont get to live her dream life...or live at all. **This is life. Welcome to the Gamers.**

That was it. Any thoughts? Well I like it ^.^ I won an e-copy of Gamers through the Library Thing giveaway and spoke my true thoughts...or wrote them...typed them...I posted (there we go!) an honest review. Thank you Mr.Carpenter!

## Penny says

Initial reaction: That's it? It's over?

All cliffhangers (!) aside, *Gamers* was quite a ride. The premise of the book, though it's been thoroughly explored in other novels, seemed fresh, and though the mod slang caused a bit of confusion (Debuff? I can guess... But I wasn't sure) the author did a good job of making it seem like the reader was actually *in* the future, not in the present thinking about the future.

I couldn't have guessed the ending from the beginning, which I find rather refreshing in a dystopian trilogy, and the romance levels weren't off the charts ridiculous, though they were there, thankfully sans the awkward third point to tip it to triangle status.

All in all, *Gamers* was a solid three point four star novel, and mostly only because I round down naturally. I liked the characters, though some of them confused me (as all realistic characters should), and I found the three or four hours of reading time I got out of the 313 pages fun and easy to blast through.

**Disclaimer:** Thank you to Thomas K. Carpenter and the Goodreads First Reads program for the free promotional copy I received. Y'all are the best :D

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## Lindley Walter-smith says

I now officially have a book to point people to when they want something to read after *The Hunger Games*. Sometimes I just enjoy a book so much that it's pointless picking flaws. Love the heroine, love the storytelling, love the world building, love the teen female antagonist. Great dystopian read.

I picked this up as part of a StoryBundle and it took ages to get around to reading it. My mistake. But at least I don't have to wait for the sequels.

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## Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

*Gamers* is one of two self-pubs I have on my list to read for Dystopian February. Though I'm generally skeptical of self-published books, Thomas K. Carpenter sent me a real review request, one where he'd looked up my name and read some of my work. I appreciate when the requesters have done their due diligence before contacting me, and his book actually fit within the broad swath of genres I enjoy, which happens surprisingly rarely.

Like a few other dystopian novels I've read, *Gamers* considers a society where life is like a video game, the average person a mere player moving about in an artificial reality. The construct is a fascinating one, which is no doubt the reason it's proved so popular with authors. What's cool about it, though, is that, even though I've read at least four books which used this basic premise, they all have been able to do unique things with it, because the landscape and functioning of the gaming world can vary so widely.

The gamers get points for everything they do, from taking tests to personal hygiene to leisure activities.

These points add up to a Life Score, a number which determines your ranking and whether the person will be able to attend college. This is LifeGame, where people walk around collecting points like Mario collects little gold coins from his car in MarioKart.

What's really cool about Gamers are the layers of gaming. From within LifeGame, the players can enter another game. It makes me wonder where real life actually begins. There's a sort of Inception-like quality to it, in that there's no way to say where the game ends. Every aspect of your life can be peered into and affected by a hacker or coder. It's a really scary thought.

The first half of Gamers reads like a science fiction novel, setting up the world and establishing how LifeGame works. Once that's done, you learn the inevitable dark underbelly of the world. At about the midway point, there's a sort of genre change when, from within LifeGame, Gabby and the other students enter a game as their final test to determine whether they will get into college. The game has the feel of a high fantasy video game. I found both parts entertaining, and fast-paced.

The characters never really grabbed me, and do not develop all that much over the course of the novel. I do appreciate, though, the complex relationships between Zaela, Gabby, and Avony. They could have been a bit more deftly-handled, but I like that they're not black and white, and none of the girls is demonized or placed on a pedestal. No one in Gamers comes off as utterly perfect, which is a nice change from so many idealized YA heroines.

So far as the editing goes, I do think Gamers could benefit from a bit more editing. I noticed several errors, but they weren't on every page by any mean. The strangest errors were misspellings with double letters, like scrapping instead of scraping, chaffed instead of chafed, and gripped instead of griped.

Gamers is a quick, enjoyable, fast-paced dystopian read. I think it is best-suited perhaps for a younger teen, even middle grade, audience or for more reluctant readers. As of 2/12/13, the Kindle edition is free temporarily on Amazon, on sale from \$5.99, so if you're curious there's no better time!

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## **Richard says**

I won the second book in this series "Frag's" in a Goodreads giveaway so I went ahead and purchased this book.

Life is a game, no REALLY it is. The concept of this book is fascinating; everyone is constantly plugged into a computer game known as LifeGames. You can earn points by doing chores, playing computer games that have been designed to give you life skills or by doing well in tests at school. Points can be used to purchase the latest fashions or designing your home. Only the top scoring gamers get to go on to university and the best jobs, everyone else gets reassigned. It reminded me somewhat of what life would be like to be in "The Sims". The story soon starts to unfold and a government conspiracy is discovered. The last part of the book has the characters running around inside a computer game on an adventure where they have to battle against giants, specters and a dragon and solve puzzles in order to complete their quest, now that's a final exam I would have loved to have participated in!

There is a huge amount of world building in this book especially at the start. The first part of the book there was so much world building going on that I was just getting my head around one concept when another one was introduced, it settles down after a while and gets on with the story. I did enjoy all the world building, it just seemed so crammed together at the start it could get confusing.

Being a fan of computer games certainly helps to understand and enjoy this book but I don't think it is essential. It was fun to see references to some classic games such as Mario, Monkey Island and Leisure Suit Larry.

Sometimes the story itself was confusing, mostly it was due to the world language, they have a number of words that the use that aren't used in the real world. But some sequences were just not well written and hard to follow.

The main character is very well written, she's your typical YA heroine. Strong willed, talented, kind to her friends but fierce to her enemies. The other characters are good as well, with their own personalities, although most of them only appeared in small parts of the book and didn't really get much time to be developed before they left the story and a new group of characters came in.

I read the Nook version of this book, and there were a couple of problems with it. Firstly the page count was messed up, whenever I turned a page the page number went up 2-4 pages, it wasn't skipping pages, but the count was not correct. Also the index doesn't recognize the chapters so you couldn't find them easily or know how many pages were left in a chapter.

An excellent and original book that is suitable for fans of fantasy and/or dystopian novels.

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### **Laura says**

When life is a game high school takes on a whole new purpose. Learning the skills needed to play LifeGame and earning points are the main aims. After all, only the top scoring 15 girls and boys from each high school will get to go to university, all the others will be placed in the jobs that nobody wants. Or will they? When top student Gabby DeCorte meets a group of people who call themselves Frags, she discovers what really happens to those who lose the game. Now the stakes have been raised, and with the schools final raid drawing ever closer, Gabby must make sure that both her and best friend Zeala have enough points to be in the top 15. Or they might disappear, forever. And to make things even harder, it's starting to look like someone wants Gabby to lose.

This was an enjoyable book. It was an interesting read and a good opening to a trilogy. The world of Gamers is well developed and there is lots of description of all the technology and the games. The characters felt a little underdeveloped and lots of questions were asked in the book that remained unanswered by the end. This is the first in a trilogy though, so it is likely that those two small problems will be resolved in the next book, and there is also the start of a romance that I hope to see developed.

A large percentage of this book focuses on the final raid; a game designed like a fantasy complete with giants and a quest to kill a dragon and I loved the change into a more fantasy based book that this brought. This book felt like a cross between Ugliers by Scott Westerfeld and Divergent by Veronica Roth, so fans of those books will enjoy Gamers. I would also recommend this book to fans of dystopian fiction and fantasy.

reviewed for readers favourite

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### **Erik Sapp says**

The setting is interesting, though it could be better developed. The first part of the book is pretty good, and I really liked where the author was going.

Then we got to the Final Raid, and the book went downhill. The new characters that were added were stereotypes and poorly developed. The idea behind the Final Raid (think an MMO raid, except instead of sitting at a keyboard, you are in the game) is interesting, but the way the Raid was rigged was rather dumb. (Avoiding spoilers, so no more details.) Plus, it went on too long (about 30% of the book, give or take).

Finally, we get to the ending. Or rather, what passes for an ending, as the book just ends and almost nothing is resolved. I want to know what happens, but don't want to have to read the next book in order to find out.

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## **L. M. Warren says**

### **What an interesting read**

Lots of gamer lingo. Luckily I'm a gamer! For a YA book I found this to be really enjoyable. Not focused on sexuality. I mean it is a book about gamers so personally I would not think that would be a focus. Yet you never know.

I found the plot to be pretty interesting. Blending a few elements in a well written way. It's virtual reality meets rpg/simulation games meets a matrix dystopian world. Yes it's teens, but they are pretty intelligent for the most part. Yes there is awkwardness, but not overly so.

Mystery, action with gamer elements will definitely read the next book!

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## **Frank Errington says**

### Review Copy

Some time ago, I was contacted by the author of Gamers, Thomas K. Carpenter, and was asked to read his book and provide a fair and honest review. I tend to worry when that happens. A few times it's lead to bad experiences and I'm not fond of giving any book a poor review. The good news is, I liked the story and will likely, at some point, get around to reading the other books in the trilogy, Frags and Coders.

It did take me a while to find the time to read this, things just kept getting in the way, but I'm very happy I finally squeezed it in.

In the not to distant future, LifeGame has become an all inclusive competition where scores separate those who will earn their Life Class and get into University and those who would get lesser, meaningless jobs. Jobs that don't have as much responsibility, a title, or many benefits within LifeGame.

Some explanation about LifeGame from the text of the story...

"Why was LifeGame introduced? Because the Greater States of America was losing it's competitive edge. The first rule is what can be gamed can be improved. The second rule is that everything can be a game and the last rule is to never look backwards because the past is a game that's already been decided."

Gabby and Zaela are best friends and are getting ready for the upcoming Final Raid which will go a long way in determining who gets to go on to University. There are a lot of very imaginative peaks into the future in Gamers. For example, you don't drive, but there are "FunCar lots with hundreds of bubble shaped cars with four puffy tires." The cars would drive themselves while the occupants played games.

Of course we soon learn, from a subversive group called the Frags, that there may be more sinister intentions behind the LifeGame and our heroine Gabby winds up right in the middle of the action.

Gamers is what it is, a YA dystopian thriller that may not be as good as say, the Harry Potter series or The Hunger Games books, but it's certainly a completely entertaining entry into this particular market and I would highly recommend the book for the younger audience or for any adult who enjoys this type of story.

All three books in the trilogy are currently available in paperback and e-book from a number of online retailers. Gamers is actually available for FREE from Amazon.com, so you can check this one out before deciding to spend money on the other two books.

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