



She's Such a Geek!: Women Write About Science, Technology, and Other Nerdy Stuff

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She's Such a Geek is a groundbreaking anthology that celebrates women who have flourished in the male-dominated realms of technical and cultural arcana.

Editors Annalee Newitz and Charlie Anders bring together a diverse range of critical and personal essays about the meaning of female nerdhood by women who are in love with genomics, obsessed with blogging, learned about sex from Dungeons and Dragons, and aren't afraid to match wits with men or computers. More than anything, *She's Such a Geek* is a celebration and call to arms: it's a hopeful book which looks forward to a day when women will invent molecular motors, design the next ultra-tiny supercomputer, and run the government.

She's Such a Geek!: Women Write About Science, Technology, and Other Nerdy Stuff Details

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From Reader Review She's Such a Geek!: Women Write About Science, Technology, and Other Nerdy Stuff for online ebook

Jeff says

With no real introduction or epilogue to close the work, it read like a collection of essays. This threw me off at first, as they were hit or miss. The book was loosely organized into sections of interest. All women.

Looking upon engineering school and interacting with female engineering students, I would say that this book provides a good cross-section of the population. I would also have to agree that there definitely is a problem with the nature of our culture that more women are not found in scientific disciplines. That is, not only in higher education, but also in the workforce. It seems to be rooted deeper than higher education, possibly in the strange mickey-mouse fantasy land that is high school, middle school, or cultural socialization in general.

Seeing it from the other side of the fence, you catch glimpses between the pickets of the mental/emotional hardship/paranoia that an "outsider" can go through. These circumstances are always something to be on the lookout for, and its up to mathematicians/scientists/engineers to enforce policies that make these fields open and welcoming to all races/creeds/genders/etc.

Agne says

In the begining I thought this book is going to be very useful for me as a female scientist. It was useful to some extent, however, I had higher expectations. This book is a collection of memoir of the women who tried pursuing a career in sciences, and either managed or came to realise their true passions, or something in between. Some of the collected memoir were really interesting and catchy, while others were boring and I just skipped them. In the end, I read selectively- that is, only the texts from the contributors who were interesting to me from their introductions given in the end of the book. I think that is one of the good ways to read this book, since there are no strong connections between the given stories, besides the idea "geeky women", and every woman can then read stories she is most interested in.

Tara van Beurden says

Reading this collection of anecdotal pieces remind me of my childhood. Not in a 'I was a maths nut and had no friends as a result' but more in a 'I was a Star Trek and anime nerd and no one else could understand what was so cool about it'. Moreover, one of the most consistent themes that came out and that I could relate to was the notion that being a 'smart' girl does nothing for one's dance card (in a manner of speaking). What I loved the most though was the fact that in most cases, these women didn't let misogynistic men or misguided women (often their mothers) stop them from achieving. It was quite sad though to see how difficult it was for many of these women to juggle a career and a family and often I think that their industries have suffered as a result of losing these women when it became apparent to them that in order to be happy, stable people they needed to seek out employment elsewhere (often outside of research where they could have otherwise

offered much to their industry). It really saddens me that some really important research is being lost out on because performing it is made so unattractive for women. A whole half of the potential field is being excluded and that's a real shame. Besides that, I think the one thing any female geek can take from this book is that you are not alone – there are a lot of talented, smart, 'geeky' women out there achieving every day and it's a much inspiring thing!

Becca says

If you are a woman, a geek, or just a person, please read this book. It is a collection of story-telling-style essays from female geeks. The stories really resonated with me and with everyone else I know who's read it, and made me really glad that I'm at a women's college, where it is expected and encouraged that many of us will be geeks (the book uses the term to refer to technology/science lovers). The more people who understand the situation facing female geeks, the better. Read this book.

Catherine says

This is another one of those books that I wanted to like better than I did. On the one hand, it's groundbreaking as a collection of writings by women that cut across different technological fields and highlight similarities and differences in experience.

On the other, many of the pieces focus on women who no longer work in technology fields due to illness or glass ceilings. Where are the voices of women who continue to work in these fields, often succeeding at them and enjoying their work? They're certainly in short supply here. There's also one too many essays on being dateless because it's so hard to find men/women to date in tech fields, something I'm not buying. There's even a random essay by a woman comic book artist that seems to belong in a different book. On the whole, I'd say this book is worth reading simply because it does break new ground but future works definitely have plenty of room for improvement.

Peter Tillman says

Nice collection of essays. I enjoyed almost all of them. 3.6 stars, recommended reading.

Quinn says

I got this book for my 18th birthday. I'd skimmed it before, but hadn't actually read many of the pieces. I'm actually glad I hadn't read it for the past 6 years, because I can't relate to the stories so much more now than I ever would have then. It was nice to read about women who experienced the same things that I have.

Matthew says

3.5 stars. I'm a guy so my hope in reading books like this is that they'll help me to raise my daughter with a

healthy self-image. I believe the struggles described by each of these authors and it's good to see a book that is attempting to inspire more girls/women to overcome stereotypes.

If I'm totally honest the essays begin to feel a little repetitive. The book is great at giving a play-by-play of what successful women chose to do in following their career paths... it's a book that looks more at past struggle than future alternatives.

I would recommend this book to any girl who is thinking of getting into a specific field (physics, math, video game design, etc.) and thinks it's impossible.

Gabriela Galeano says

As with any collection of essays, the quality of storytelling is variable (hence the 4 stars), but there's no question that all of the women featured here (and I think the editors brought in a wonderful combination of backgrounds) are SO BADASS. Once you accept that you'll enjoy some stories way more than others, you start to focus more on some thought-provoking questions about how gendered the sciences (and science education) really are.

These stories seem to point to the bizarre planes women have to straddle in their science education and careers:

- How do you deal with being an 'insider' as scientist, but an outsider person (due to gender)?
- How do you come to terms with wanting to highlight women's contributions to all 'geeky pursuits' without having to answer exclusively gendered questions - and on behalf of your gender? (I mean, what scientist doesn't want to talk about their work first and foremost?)

And one that I found most poignant:

- How do you convince society that geeky women can be as intelligent as they are sexy and sexual? That being attractive does not diminish one's competence or intelligence? And vise versa! ("Suzy the computer versus dr. sexy" really encapsulates this dilemma).

Pamster says

Awesome! Reading about the specific challenges and experiences of being a woman in the sciences or in math was really interesting and enjoyable to me. But equally enjoyable was just the geeking out about specific science and math stuff they'd worked on and loved! Even if I didn't always understand it, these women time and again got excited about and found beauty in these areas that I have some interest in, but was totally tracked away from as a kid. As a kid with a vagorna. As a pussyhaving kid. Do you think people will not want me to say those words together? Pussyhaving kid? I feel like, yes. They will indeed not want that. Ok, and the girl gamer stuff was super cool too, and the woman who writes Batman comics was cool (first ongoing Batman title to be developed and written by a woman.) I loved these ladies' passion for cool stuff, I loved hearing about labs and early computer love and shit, and I hope with all my heart that every douchebag who ever said something sexist to them sees this anthology and feels like a total nothing piece of shit. I'd totally read a sequel.

Jenae says

"I don't relate to the male stereotypes any better than to the female ones. I have never met any of the people the stand-up comics love to joke about; the stereotypical laconic, farting, butt-scratching, beer-swilling, football-obsessed guys are just as foreign to me as these supposedly ubiquitous chocoholic, shoe-fetishizing, histrionic, red-rose-and-diamond-tennis-bracelet-obsessed ladies. Those aren't gender archetypes; those are idiots. And because they are idiots invented by the same industry (advertising) to be consistently represented in mutually dependent pairs, we should all feel equally irritated with stupid generalizations about both males and females."

Excerpt from Devin Kalile Grayson's essay 'Sidekicks'

The highest praise an apartment-dweller with limited bookshelf space can give to a book is the desire to own a copy. That said, I MUST HAVE THIS BOOK! It was uncanny just how many of these stories resonated with my own experience, regardless of whether the author was older/younger/in a different field than me. It is good to see how much nerdy-lady camaraderie exists in the world! This book is a good opportunity to take heart in how far our society has come, so that we don't lose all hope in the face of the many challenges that lie ahead.

Norabear says

I was wary about this book about female geeks (programmers, mathematicians, gamers) as I thought it would be too feminist for me but instead it's a delightful collection of essays. I especially enjoyed the wide range of relationships they had with their mothers, from You Can Do Anything moms to Leave It To Beaver moms who didn't understand why math problems were preferred to boy problems.

Lani says

Awesome compilation of first-person essays by female geeks of various types. Not overly preachy or girly, just a fun mix of perspectives from a variety of personalities, fandoms, ages, professions, and women. A few stories were a little over my head, and a few were about things that I couldn't really relate to, but that's to be expected and part of the beauty of the book.

Curtis says

I really enjoyed this. Very fun to get so many different perspectives on life in tech from some many different levels of writers. All were well-written, but the styles varied so much - that is what made it so real and engaging.

Bre says

I remember pulling this from the library shelf and thinking, "FINALLY." It had taken a lot of searching on the catalogue for me to find this book and I was NOT disappointed.

While it talks about all aspects of Geek! From minority groups to LGBTQ* (which was amazing and, let's be honest, FINALLY) the one thing I felt could have been expanded on to include were the "science-y" bits.

As awesome as it was to hear about women going into computers, physics, etc. I also yearned for the stories about the ladies who are getting down and dirty in field school for archaeology and paleontology or learning about cultures in cultural anthropology. The closest I could get to cultural anthropology was the essay about "The Frag Dolls".

I know it is my opinion but as a female going into an Anthropology degree I want to see more representation in this area. In all areas of science that have been dominated by males.

C. says

Mathematicians, Engineers, Scientists, Gamers, Computer programmers, Internet geeks, women who play MMRPGs, LARP, write comic books, and play in journal based role-playing games. The essays in *She's Such a Geek* cover the viewpoints, experiences, and worlds of female geeks of a variety of ages. Some women had mothers that encouraged them into the math and sciences, some had mothers that bemoaned them not being cheerleaders. Some women end up in careers in the sciences while for others their paths lead them elsewhere.

The essays are somewhat uneven. I enjoyed the majority of them, but there were a few that I had to wonder why they had been included. Overall, however, I would consider this book must reading for any female or male regardless of background.

If you are a geeky woman, whatever your flavour I suspect you'll find something of your experiences among more than one of the women's stories in this book.

Jess says

After reading *Of Dice of Men* - which entertained and interested me, yet left me grumbling about the white-male-author's acceptance and brush-off of lack of female nerds - I needed to delve further. Namely into books not only on nerd culture, but where that intersected with feminism. And I landed on *She's Not a Geek*.

That said, this book doesn't trip with too much over the top feminism. Instead it is a collection of narrative essays by women geeks about the experiences of womanhood in typically not-female friendly fields and social circles. Most of the book deals with science and technology geeks, a lot of women becoming astronomers, being the only woman in their college math classes, and not receiving the right research grants based on their gender. Despite being more of a book/literature/art/game nerd myself, I still loved those parts. The female struggle (or whatever you'd like to label it) applies to every woman, and the female geek struggle is a new struggle altogether. Other women include journalists, sexologists, programmers and gamers (both video and on the table). The collection left me raged at the wrong done unto some female geeks, but somehow also excited and hopeful for how this can change in the future. It made me happy about what *I* want to do in this world, as a geek myself. More than anything, the book others a large sense of community

and serves as a reminder that there are successful women just like *you* out there.

While a few essays irked me, overall the book was not only entertaining but something that resonated with me as a geek myself. Even if you're not very science-y or on the tech side of the geek realm, you could definitely still identify with this. Even if you're not a geek, I'm pretty sure any woman could identify with this.

Laura says

This anthology showcases essays by women of different ages, professions, and personalities who share a common geekhood. As a female scientist, I live in this world and enjoy reading about the experiences of other women. Predictably, the first section of the book (about women in science, technology, engineering and math) was my favorite. The sections on women with geeky hobbies like video games, RPGs, and comic books were less engaging to me because I don't share those interests. The broad range of topics covered in this collection means that there's likely to be something in it for everyone, but to truly satisfy my feminist nerd cravings I may seek out more explicitly science-focused material that incorporates hard facts in with the anecdotes.

Opal Treloore says

I was really disappointed in this book. I had very high expectations when I ordered it, but it was very uneven when I actually read it. Basically, it's a series of brief memoirs by women in "geeky" fields (science, math, gaming, etc). None of the pieces are particularly well-written and several of them end with "and then I left that field because it wasn't what I wanted" which I guess is fine but comes off as very unempowering. Especially when those pieces were about how intellectually challenging and/or competitive their fields are. I mean, if that's what happened, then that's what happened, but it leaves me wondering what the overall purpose of the book is. Is it meant to be inspirational and empowering? It's certainly not a critique of "the way things are." It's sort of in between those two (maybe).

Anyway, that, coupled with the fact that one of the essays was about experiences with high tech sex toys, nixed my idea of graduating this one to my classroom library.

Jyotika Bahuguna says

This book evoked a gamut of reactions, which is not surprising because the essays are very diverse. In fact, it can be safely said, that no two stories are same. Some describe serious problems,(A physics professor openly declaring that females can never be as good males at his course), the objectification and others not-so-serious ones (where a student insists of carrying her own chair and wearing a dress on field trips). Misplaced chivalry is annoying, but if that is the only problem (she never mentions her advisor discriminating on work), it can safely be ignored. The general tone of resignation in Ramamoorthi's essay was heartbreaking, whereas the one on "Teledildonics" was an absolute delight.

Read it for the diversity and to contemplate the damage that reckless stereotyping could cause.

