

# THE FANGIRL'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

a handbook for GEEK GIRLS  
by SAM MAGGS





# Contents

## INTRODUCTION

***One of Us! One of Us!***

## CHAPTER ONE

***It's Good to Be a Geek***

## CHAPTER TWO

***[Fandom Intensifies]: Geek Girls Online***

## CHAPTER THREE

***Geronimo! How to Survive Conventions***

## CHAPTER FOUR

***Aim to Misbehave: Geek Girl Feminism***

## RESOURCES

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# Engage! Become an Active Member of Your Fandom

---

Fangirling on your own behind your computer screen is fine and dandy, but once you've seen the most popular fan blogs and fansites, the Tumblrs with the most followers, or the message boards where everyone seems to know one another, you're gonna want in on that excellent fandom party. But how do? (Especially if you, like me, are a little socially awkward and, frankly, kind of weird.)

Allow me to share a little fandom secret with you: we are *all* a little socially awkward and weird, but we also all love the same stuff. This combination is perfect. No one is going to judge you for the way you are or for what you're into. Plus, joining fandoms online gives you the opportunity to e-meet geek girls all over the world you'd never have the chance to get to know otherwise. Taking the plunge is scary—but I got you.

## Make Like Link and Stay Silent...

When you first venture online, it's okay to be a bit of a lurker. Read up on the blogs, Tumblrs, and message boards you might want to become active in and learn the ropes. Figure out who the mods are, what rules to follow, and how people interact. Watch for particular conventions, terms, or bad touches associated with your fandom, and be sure to stick to those policies when you do get involved.

## ...at Least at First

Once you've learned up, the next step is as simple as just starting a conversation. You know what you're talking about—you have

seen every episode of *Card Captor Sakura*, after all—so don't hold back. If you're on Tumblr, start messaging your favorite bloggers; on Twitter, @-reply people involved in the fandom to get conversations started. Message boards usually have threads just for newbies, so head in to introduce yourself and then find other threads you'd like to contribute to. If you're worried about being new, say so! Everyone was new once and received help, kindness, or advice; they'll usually want to return the favor.

## Be Yourself...

Once you've started talking to people, don't be afraid to put yourself out there. Start stanning for the people and things you love. Engage in friendly debates, make dumb jokes, share particularly swoon-worthy GIFsets, and let your coordinated fangirl squees echo across the internets.

## ...or Don't

If you're starting a new role-play on a forum, setting up your first fanfic account, or queuing up a new fan-Tumblr with tons of Khal Drogo GIFsets, there's no need to spill all your personal deets. Create an identity based on your fandom—your followers, RP partners, and fellow ficcers won't care if you go by "Sam" or "mother-of-dragons-696969" (not that I would ever do that??????).

## You Are So Worthy

The beauty of the Internet is that it connects fangirls to fangirls, but also to—gasp—the actual creators of the stuff that we love.

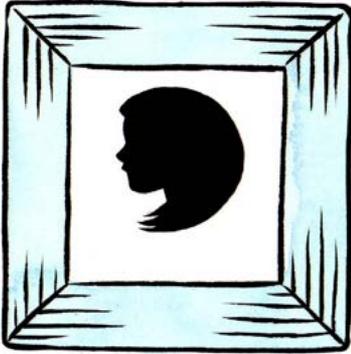
It's true! Your favorite author, actor, or comics artist is out there with an @ handle of her very own, and chances are she'd be happy to hear from you. If she tweets something about her new project, go ahead and hit "reply" and tell her how pumped you are to see it. If you finish the last book in a trilogy and write a long squee-laden blog post about how great it was, tag her when you post it and wait—she may say thanks, RT it to her followers, or link to it on her website. Even if your particular fave isn't a social media-ite (or doesn't use her account that much), a friendly "You're so cool and I love the stuff you make" e-mail never, ever hurts. And no reply does not mean that she hates you forever. She's just busy! Trust me, when you finally see that (1) notification from her account, you're going to feel more amazing than a million muppetarms.gif.



I WANT TO BE YOU

*Interviews with*

**Laura Vandervoort,  
Kate Beaton,  
Stephanie Leonidas,  
and Lorraine Cink**



## Laura Vandervoort

kick-ass actress and sci-fi gal extraordinaire; star of *V*, *Smallville*, and Syfy's *Bitten*  
@vandiekins22

### What does the word "fangirl" mean to you?

It means a girl who is strong, imaginative, and fun. A girl who knows exactly what she likes and wants and can use her imagination to disappear into a world of endless possibilities.

### How has being a geek positively influenced your life?

Outside of the industry and the incredibly wonderful fan base, being a geek has opened a new world to me. A world of incredible characters and powerful women. It has encouraged me to pursue the genre in film and TV, always playing females that challenge me physically, intellectually, and emotionally.

### If you could give geek girls advice for their career or personal lives, what would it be?

Simple. Never apologize for who you are. Pursue your interests . . . let them flourish. Be as crazy, unique, and confident as you are.



## Kate Beaton

creator of the "Hark! A Vagrant" webcomic, and the *New York Times* best-selling comic collection of the same name  
@beatonna

### What does the word "fangirl" mean to you?

A few years ago people started coming up to me at comic shows, and "I'm such a fangirl" was thrown into the mix of things they might say. I really think it's sweet. There's a sense of ownership and pride over claiming that something has meaning to you when you hear people declare it in that way. And when you're a creator and people say it to you, it's a high compliment; you make things so that they can belong to people, and here is someone saying, "I found it."

### How has being a geek positively influenced your life?

I don't know! I think it's cool that people are identifying with being geeks and nerds in a way they haven't before, because those are awesome things to be. For me, I never really put a name on it, it was just, "these are the things I like," and that was that. When I started publishing comics, people started putting that label on me, like you just did! I remember at one point thinking about it and concluding, "Well, they're not wrong." I like all the stuff that goes in those categories. That was after Nerddiness and Geekiness became A Thing that people invested in, a positive thing that I'm glad to see. But, you know, identify with it or don't, it's all good! Like what you like. But to answer your question, I wouldn't be here today doing what I do if I hadn't always zeroed in so hard on the art and reading that interested me, which I think is what a geek is, someone who cares with all their heart about a few things that they've always loved. To practice the thing you love is even better, and here we are.

# The Geek Girl's Litany for Feminism

---

I am a geek girl and I am a feminist.  
I embrace the word "fangirl" with open arms.  
(But, like, human arms, not tiny T-Rex arms.  
It would totally suck to have T-Rex arms.)

I don't have to prove my nerd cred to anyone, ever.  
Whether I'm a comics noob,  
Or a fic writer typing up her next chapter,  
Or a hardcore gamer who sometimes forgets to sleep,  
(Not that I ever do that,)  
No one else gets to decide whether I do or do not belong.

From SuperWhoLock to Shakarian  
I accept all fandoms and ships  
As equally meaningful and important  
In our geek girl lives.  
Even if your OTP is my NOTP,  
I will still like you  
(Even if I have to unfollow your blog).

I can wear makeup and R2D2 mini dresses,  
Or a baggy Chewie shirt and ripped jeans,  
And the world has to deal with it;  
Because a geek feminist looks however she wants,  
And doesn't apologize.

I will support empowering, lady-created media,  
And amazing female characters  
That make me feel like I could be Batgirl,  
If I just had some yellow Doc Martens  
And a vigilante complex.

I'm the Doctor, not a companion,  
Buffy, not Bella,  
Nobody's sidekick, love interest, or token female.  
I'm driving this ship.  
I'm a fangirl, a feminist, and a force to be reckoned with.





SELECT CHARACTER