

## IN REAL LIFE – READING GROUP GUIDE



### *About the Book:*

Anda loves Coarsegold Online. The massively-multiplayer role playing game is a place where she can be a leader, a fighter, and a hero. But things become a lot more complicated when Anda befriends a gold farmer—a poor Chinese kid whose job is to collect valuable objects and sell them to other players for real money. This behavior is strictly against the rules in Coarsegold, but Anda soon comes to realize that questions of right and wrong are a lot less straightforward when a real person's real livelihood is at stake.

### *For Discussion:*

*In Real Life* is a graphic novel, a story told in words and pictures. How do you think this story would be told differently if it was a novel, with only words? How would it be different if it was a movie, with just pictures?

Anda has just moved to a new school and has very few friends, and therefore finds comfort in an online community of gamers. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt lonely, how did you cope? As Anda learn to make friends outside of her virtual world, does she grow?

One of the benefits of creating an online avatar is that you can choose your own appearance. How does Anda's avatar, "Kali Destroyer," express Anda's body image issues and self-consciousness? Does she overcome this, and if so how and when?

The primary appeal of belonging to the online "guild" is that it is a group of only female gamers. Why is this such an important aspect of the graphic novel, and what does it suggest about the real world of online gaming? Is the virtual world equally respectful to both genders?

Anda's mom is concerned that Anda spends too much time online, and not enough time in the "real world". What are some of the benefits and disadvantages of Anda's virtual life? Does a balance need to exist, and for what reasons?

Bullying is a major theme throughout *In Real Life*. How does Anda deal with it in the physical world versus the virtual one? How does she deal with it on a global scale?

One of the advantages of connecting to a virtual community is the opportunity to meet people from different countries and cultures. What does Anda learn from her friend, Raymond, and what does she teach him in return?