



The Queen's Gambit

Jessie Mihalik

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When the Quint Confederacy and the Kos Empire went to war—again—young Queen Samara wisely kept her Rogue Coalition out of the conflict. But staying neutral in a galactic war doesn't pay the bills, not when both sides refuse to trade with neutral sectors.

With her people on the brink of starvation, Samara hatches a daring plan to snatch the kidnapped Kos Emperor from the Quint mercenaries holding him. The Kos Empire will pay a fortune for their emperor's return, enough to feed the Coalition's citizens while they wait for the return to a begrudging peace.

But when her plan goes sideways, Samara finds herself evading Quint mercenaries with the very man she intends to capture. And the more time she spends with Valentin Kos, the more she realizes that he's not the coldly indifferent villain she imagined. Torn between duty and desire, Samara must decide if saving her people is worth giving up the one thing she's always wanted.

The Queen's Gambit is a science fiction novella set in its own universe. I'll be posting it in a serial format, with new installments each week.

<http://www.jessiemihalik.com/blog/sto...>

The Queen's Gambit Details

Date : Published November 20th 2017

ISBN :

Author : Jessie Mihalik

Format : ebook

Genre : Science Fiction, Romance, Novella

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From Reader Review The Queen's Gambit for online ebook

Joanne Watkins USA says

Good but ends quickly

This is an interesting new world. I like the main characters and the pace was good. But it feels like a part 1 not a complete novel. The ending too me by surprise. So I would recommend waiting for book 2 before buying this one.

Emily says

A bit of a disappointment. I never really warmed up to the heroine, and I thought that the relationship between the heroine and hero grew too quickly. No real romance in this one, but I just thought that for being enemies and the heroine being his captor, that they got too chummy too quickly. I also didn't like the resolution of why Valentine's father changed the kin of succession. Especially since Kos seems full of backstabbing, I didn't buy Valentine trusting Samara. It just didn't make sense that he always knew his older son wasn't his but waited so long to change it. I would have liked it if his parentage been a new revelation or if the reason why wasn't known and not revealed in this book.

I'm not sure if I'll be continuing on with this series or author because beyond on the story issues I had, I thought her prose and worldbuilding were fairly basic. I can overlook that if I love the story and characters but that wasn't so here, and I got a similar vibe in the preview for the next book.

Chenise says

Actual rating: 2.5

First line: "I lowered my spaceship's cargo ramp and slipped into the night with the ease of long practice."

So *The Queen's Gambit* isn't *bad* but it does feel incomplete and too reminiscent of Mihalik's other novel *Polaris Rising*, although the latter is much better in my opinion. I understand it was written first in serial format, and while I will continue on with the story, it just barely gave me enough to be interested in it. Everything was pretty basic and most of the story was taken up by a couple battles I didn't really have an interest in.

I'll read the next part of the story when it is released as a bundle, but for right now, I'm much more interested in *Polaris Rising* and its sequels. I might even reread it soon!

Janice (Janicu) says

Downloaded this after reading *The Kinsmen Universe* by Ilona Andrews and saw the authors had recommended *Polaris Rising* by Jessie Mihalik for fans of *Kinsmen*. Well *Polaris Rising* isn't out yet but this

novella is.

Glad I gave it a go, really liked the characters and fast pace in this, and the romance is rather sweet. The Insta-lust from the heroines pov made me worry I was going to read a story where things get physical really fast, but this didn't jump the gun like I feared. Will definitely be preordering Polaris Rising...I'm excited to find a new SFR author to follow!

Angela says

Read the serial format available online - will do a more full review when I read it again.

All in all, this was a fun sci-fi space romp. I love Samara. And I'm intrigued by Valentin. I can't wait to see where this goes from here! There's definitely some shady stuff going on, and I'm excited to see Samara get in the middle of it.

I especially loved how easy it was to visualize the advanced tech, world, and societies, how the problems and advantages of those advances were thought out, and how it wasn't simply used as a deus ex machina to fix all the problems.

XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says

Original rating (serial): 3.73896 stars.

New rating (book version): 2.96864 3 stars.

Okay. Until I read The Queen's Gambit, my experience of online serials had been limited to the somewhat slightly awesome Innkeeper Chronicles. So when I read The Queen's Gambit after its official release, I thought that one of these **most unfortunate accidents** must have happened:

- a) I was **drunk as a high-strung puffer fish** when I read the online version.
- b) I was **drunk as a high-strung puffer fish** when I read the final version.
- c) I was **drunk a high-strung puffer fish** when I read both the online and final versions.
- d) **All of the above.**

I mean, the **main plot** of the story was the same, but the serial read like **SF with some romance thrown in**, while the book read like **Allergy-inducing Romance with SF thrown in**.

My thoughts exactly.

My **Wannabe Nefarious Daughter** (WND™) Little One seems to be of the wrong opinion that this was indeed a case of flammable liquid-induced amnesia. Mostly because her beloved father didn't experience **Multitudinous Super Hot Body Descriptions-Related Anxiety Attacks** (MSHBDRAA™) while we were reading the serial, as she expected him/her/they/it/whatever to. Anyway, as every barnacle knows, **kids are always wrong** and you can't trust a single thing they say, so I promptly proceeded to disregard Little One's **erroneous hypothesis of the misguided judgement**.

Still, I thought this deserved **further investigation** and went off to, um, you know, investigate and stuff. Meaning I **compared** some of the passages in the book to those in the serial. And the results of this **far-reaching, in-depth analysis** are:

a) There is indeed **a lot more romantic erap stuff** in the final version than in the serial.

b) Yes, there were a few **seizure-inducing Hot Bods Descriptions** in the serial. But they were a complete joke compared to the **Multifariously Extreme Super Hot Bod Descriptions of Doom and Oblivion** (MESHBDaO™) featured in the book: we've got **golden** skin! And **hard** muscles! And **flat** chests! And **sculpted** chests! And shirts that stretch nicely across **muscled** (view spoiler) chests! And **defined** abs! And **sexy** v-shaped muscles! And **muscled-this!** And **muscled-that!** **YAY!** (view spoiler)

c) The serial had **more bite**. A bloody shrimping lot **more bite**. There was more **tension** between the two main protagonists. Their feelings and attitudes were a lot more **ambivalent**. Everything was more **kickass**. And more **exciting**. And less **conventional**. And the story didn't feel like a **HEA of Complete and Total Annihilation of All Life on the Planet** (HEAoCaTAoALotP™) waiting to happen *shudders dramatically*

d) I was **drunk a high-strung puffer fish** when I did the above-mentioned far-reaching, in-depth analysis.

► And the moral of this **This Book Ain't Bad It's Just Too Full of Lovey Dovey Crap for my Black Withered Heart Superiorly Crappy Crappy Non Review** (TBABIJTFoLDCfmBWHSCCNr™) is: if you're looking for a light, entertaining **insta-lurve/attraction/whatever story set in space**, then The Queen's Gambit is for you. **If you're not, then it's not.**

P.S. Huge kudos to Jessie Mihalik for creating a homosexual couple that **doesn't feel like a bloody fishing gimmick**. Move along no token gay characters to see and stuff. Most **welcome and refreshing and commendable and praiseworthy** indeed this is. And much grateful for it the murderous crustaceans are.

[Pre-review nonsense]

Ugh. Either I was ~~high on top quality stuff when first read this story~~ my ever-failing memory is failing me big time, or there is a lot more **romantic erap stuff** in the final version of this story than there was in the serial.

► Full **Valentin Kos You're Super Hot and Super Muscled and Super Sexy and Super Bloody Shrimping Everything Yes Yes Yes We Get It Thank You Very Much Crappy Non Review** (VKYSHaSMaSSaSBSEYYYWGITYVMCNR™) to come.

[February 21, 2018]

Actual rating: 3.73896 stars. *And a quarter. For now. I'll probably change it when I read the final version*

and stuff.

So this was pretty **cool and fun and entertaining and stuff**. Ergo, I **kinda sorta liked it**.

The temporary end. I shall return when the ebook is released and stuff.

► **Free online SF serial available** here (weekly instalments).

It's pretty entertaining and stuff. Also, it comes recommended by someone called **Ilona Andrews**. Not sure who that person is, but I hear she's written a good book or two and can be trusted. **Ha**.

? I'm going to bump the fish out of this review as new episodes are posted by the author. Don't say I didn't warn you ?

► **Feb. 19, 2018**: the final chapter is up!!!

► **Feb. 15, 2018**: Chapter 13, part 3 is up!

► **Feb. 12, 2018**: Chapter 13, part 2 is up!

► **Feb. 10, 2018**: Chapter 13, part 1 is up!

► **Feb. 9, 2018**: Chapter 12, part 2 is up!

► **Feb. 5, 2018**: Chapter 12, part 1 is up!

► **Feb. 1, 2018**: Chapter 11, part 2 is up!

► **Jan. 29, 2018**: Chapter 11, part 1 is up! **Ha!** I knew something like this was going to happen! **Woo hoo and stuff!**

► **Jan. 25, 2018**: Chapter 10, part 2 is up!

► **Jan. 22, 2018**: Chapter 10, part 1 is up!

► **Jan. 18, 2018**: Chapter 9, part 2 is up!

► **Jan. 15, 2018**: Chapter 9, part 1 is up! I smell **war, political scheming and delicious backstabbing**. YUM.

► **Previous chapters :**

- Chapter 8, part 3
 - Chapter 8, part 2
 - Chapter 8, part 1
 - Chapter 7, Part 2
 - Chapter 7, Part 1
 - Chapter 6
 - Chapter 5, Part 2
 - Chapter 5, Part 1
 - Chapter 4, Part 2
 - Chapter 4, Part 1
 - Chapter 3, Part 2
 - Chapter 3, Part 1
 - Chapter 2, Part 2
 - Chapter 2, Part 1
 - Chapter 1
-

Linzi says

OK I marked up a little but this novella was a FREE weekly serial on the author's blog and it was a lot of fun. It had solid world-building, is well written, with a lot more of a plot than most novellas and has a kick-ass heroine and some nice secondary characters just for icing on the cake. In my book that's a solid 4.5.

The novella is still free on the website at the time of this review and will shortly be available to buy on Amazon. Her first published work (Harper Voyager) comes out later this year

Jo (Mixed Book Bag) says

This meets all my requirements for a excellent science fiction romance story. You could take the romance out and still have a good story. The world building and backstory are layered throughout the story and do not block the flow of the plot. The plot includes wonderful characters whose development grow as the story unfolds. Both main and side characters have what it takes to keep the story moving. Hard to put down and even better this is book one in the series. Wish I did not have to wait for book two.

Sarah says

1st read - March 2018

2nd read - August 2018

I first read **The Queen's Gambit** when it was available on **Jessie Mihalik's** blog as a free online serial and I enjoyed it enough that I purchased the final, edited version when it went on sale. The story was officially edited and expanded upon before official publication and I enjoyed the story as much, if not more, the second time around.

Samara is a great character, she's the queen of a ragtag group of refugees and rebels who are living in the outer reaches of the solar system and just trying to get by without drawing attention of two warring factions. The war has made food and other supplies scarce and her people are struggling just to survive on very low rations. Samara has done everything she can think of to get food for her people but desperation has made her a little reckless and now she's decided to kidnap Valentin, the new Emperor of the Kos Federation hoping to use the ransom for food and supplies. After all Valentin's war is the reason her people are suffering in the first place so the least he can do is provide the means to save them.

I don't want to say much more about the story but things with Valentin aren't all what they first seemed and Samara may have bitten off more than she can chew by abducting him. Now she just has to decide if she can work with him for the good of her people or whether he will stab her in the back at the first chance he gets.

Jessie Mihalik has created a fun futuristic world with lots of interesting technology but even though this is only a novella I never found myself lost or struggling to keep up. There was a nice amount of action, a good selection of side characters and I also enjoyed the developing romance. I'm already looking forward to reading the sequel and luckily I don't have to wait long because the author has already started posting instalments of **The Queen's Advantage** on her blog!

UPDATE:

Now that this novella has been edited and published as an ebook it's no longer available as an online freebie (I believe you can read the first couple of chapters on the author's blog though if you just want to try a sample). I liked it enough to purchase a finished copy and I'm planning to reread it soon so I'll review it properly after that.

This is a free online SF novella that was being published in weekly instalments and comes recommended by both Ilona Andrews and Sarah of the Murderous Crustaceans. You can read the whole story on Jessie Mihalik's website (<http://www.jessiemihalik.com/blog/sto...>) for a limited time while it is being edited and then it will go on sale as an ebook so try it now while you still can and if you love it you can always buy it later :o)

I really enjoyed this one, fun setting, great characters and a lot of potential for future books in the series. I'll definitely be buying the finished version for a reread when it's gone through editing and I'll write a proper review then but in the meantime it's still available as a free online read so you've got nothing to lose by giving it a try!

Bry says

5 stars? Yeah, 5 stars. Dare I say even a new favorite.

Both the heroine and hero are smart, cunning, strong, kind, and responsible. The world is pretty fleshed out given the fact that this is a novella. The action scenes were on point. The political intrigue was totally believable.

All in all, I am pretty surprised and pretty happy! Granted I take any recommendation from Ilona Andrews pretty seriously, but I was still concerned given this and *Polaris Rising* are the author's first published works.

Gotta say though, Jessie Mihalik is now an auto-buy for me!

I can't wait to read more about the Rouge Queen Samara Rani!

Riley says

I am pleased to have discovered Jessie Mihalik's science fiction novel **The Queen's Gambit**. Samara is a queen on a mission to save her people from starvation. Kidnap the Kos Emperor for her own hostage to trade for the means to save the people of the Coalition.

Of course, it is not that simple (complications arise) and the Emperor, Valentin, is more than she imagined him to be (he actually seems to be good person). There is a bit of romantic tension between the two which was nicely downplayed in the aspect of the much bigger picture of galactic strife. The story concentrates on the kidnapping of Valentin and the subsequent escape and defense against the mercenaries. Lots of action! At only 159 pages, the events of **The Queen's Gambit** zooms by. This is a great read and I will certainly be following this series!

Katherine says

Space opera novella (can a novella be called a space opera?? is there an implication of length?) that's fast-paced and full of action. War, an evil confederacy, a potentially evil or maybe helpful empire, famine, kidnapping, ransom, and a coalition of thieves and pirates run by a non-hereditary queen. This is all excellent and my only complaint is I need MORE.

Samara is the queen of the Rogue Coalition (the aforementioned thieves and pirates). The war between the Quint Confederacy and the Kos Empire has cut off trade routes to the Rogue Coalition, whose people are now starving. So when the Quints kidnap the Kos emperor, Samara decides to break the emperor out and ransom him back to his own people. Naturally things do not go according to plan. Everyone is competent and a badass, which is my preferred trope in every genre.

ETD: YES I just checked Jessie Mihalik's website, and the sequel is being published as an online serial. (FYI since I'm behind the boat, Queen's Gambit was also published as a online serial, although it's now out in book form.) 100% will be reading the sequel and Mihalik's full length novel *Polaris Rising*!!

Laura the Highland Hussy says

Review posted on Got Fiction?

After I read the Sci Fi Romance *Polaris Rising*, I dove right back in and read it again. I wanted more! Not just of that world, but of that author's writing. Luckily Jessie Mihalik has another book out. It's a novella that she serialized on her website, but is now complete. I really like this author's voice and style. I expect great things from her.

It starts out with a wild rescue mission that quickly turns to an escape mission. However the man she rescues is the emperor of a very rich people. Her people are the refugees of the war going on, and they are starving.

Her idea is that she can ransom him back to his people and use that money to feed her people. But things don't go that easily. And the emperor is no easy target.

But the two of them build up a fragile trust, and during this, a mutual enemy attacks. They each get to see what the other is made of, and I feel it helps cement their relationship. She's a fighter, and she's protecting him for a good portion of it! But he's no slouch either, oh no. This guy can take care of business. And when they work together, you can see how good they'll be.

I loved that they got to know each other over a longer period of time than just the escape/rescue/ransom part. They may be attracted to each other from the first, but this is no insta-lust story. They spent weeks speaking daily and it's adorable. They become friends and I loved it.

I also loved that ending, but hate that I have to wait for more. That's the problem with a debut author, you know? No extensive backlist! Even if you don't typically read Sci Fi Romance, or Space Opera, I think you'll enjoy this author. If she's good enough that even I want more? Then you know she's good!

Melody says

This book was incredibly well written. It was fun and exciting with a bit of romantic tension. I felt the end was a bit rushed otherwise I would give it 5 stars.

I expect there will be sequels. I am looking forward to them.

I will definitely buy this book when it becomes available. It is well worth owning.

MrsJoseph says

4 Fun stars!

Cute little novella with a Queen who seems to like getting herself shot and a romance bubbling around the edges.

I'd recommend this for Ilona Andrews fans - with the understanding that this is a bit closer to the Innkeeper Chronicles than Kate Daniels. Which, when I think about it, makes sense. This, too, started (and will continue) as a free online serial that is pulled for later publish as a complete work.
