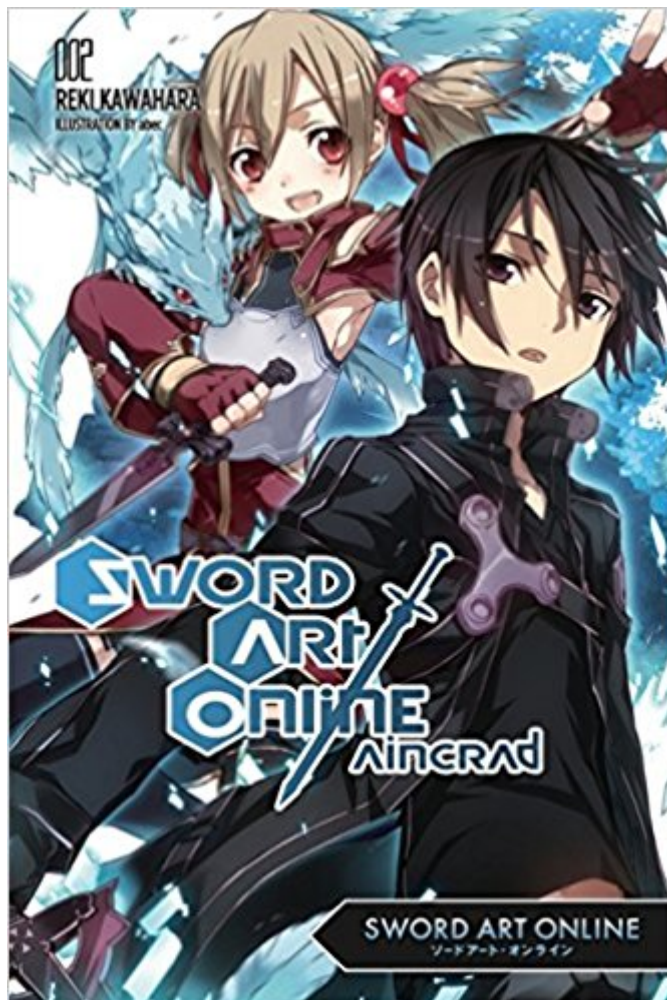


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Sword Art Online, Vol. 2: Aincrad



Synopsis

Linked up and logged into the deadly VMMORPG "Sword Art Online" in both the real and virtual worlds, Kirito is stuck in a hell of one man's making, and like everyone else, unable to escape until the game is beaten. But while some players are crippled by fear and others throw themselves into completing the game, still others relax into everyday life in the face of their cruel predicament and live to the best of their ability...laughing, crying, but always enjoying the game. Among them are four women who make a mark upon the solo adventurer that Kirito has become: Silica, the beast-tamer; Lisbeth, the blacksmith; Yui, the mysterious orphan; and the tragic Sachi, never to be forgotten by the black swordsman...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reki Kawahara is an award winning author best known for his light novel series, Sword Art Online and Accel World.

I got this in the mail today, and read it all during school today. There's a couple differences to the light novels and the anime. One major one is obviously the character designs. I don't know what "abec" was thinking, but I wasn't a fan at all. Characters like Klein, Agil, and Sachi look scary different. But there was some positives! Asuna got a lot more adorable, and I only liked Heathcliff's design because it wasn't that much different from the original. Now for the story. Yen Press threw the 2 volumes released into a big volume for the English release, and the price tells you that

basically. This manga covers the first arc, Aincrad, or volumes 1 and 2 of the light novel series. This adaptation has almost everything the light novels have, but a lot of the side story stuff was cut. When Kirito first joins a guild (Sachi and all of those other unimportant people) that little bit is cut down A LOT, there is no Silica and Lisbeth, and the whole little thing with murder in the safe zone and whatnot isn't there either. And where Kirito first gets the title of "Beater", that part is, for some reason, skipped. There's probably a lot more missing, but anyone that has watched the anime or read the novels will know what is missing. Besides that, there is little tweaks in the main story but it's still the same tearful ending that I enjoy immensely. This manga was well worth the price just because the Aincrad arc was amazing and I love SAO in general. If you want the original light novel, April 22nd is when the 1st volume releases. Hope this helped!

I watched Sword Art Online when it first aired on Toonami and I liked it so much I bought the light novel when it was translated into English. To all the SAO haters out there, you need to read the light novel because most if not all of your complaints are due to the way the anime was adapted from the light novels. I will include these differences in my traditional three sections. I will examine Plot, Characters and Polish and then assign a grade.

PLOT The general thrust of the book is that 10,000 players have been trapped in the VMMORPG, Sword Art Online and have to conquer the castle of Aincrad in order to escape. There are one hundred floors but the book only covers the point from the 74 and 75 floors. This is two years after the game began. You see, it's In Media Res. The first chapter is Kirito fighting an Elite Mook on the 74th floor. Then he flashes back to the first day up until Kayaba announces the start of the death game. Then he spends a chapter or so expositing on how the game works and general history: like how The Army got started and the four types of players in the game. After that, the plot goes directly to Kirito finding the Ragout Rabbit which would not happen in the anime until "The Sword Dance of White and Black". The content of episodes two through eight are all from other volumes. This is why there is no connection between them and the main story; they were created after the main story was published. They seem like filler because they were intended to be extra stories to flesh out the world and characters after the main story was completed. The main story as presented in the light novel is straightforward; possessing little fat or digressions. Even the "honeymoon" Asuna and Kirito take serves its purpose by demonstrating what life in Aincrad is like away from the front lines. Thus, providing both a traditional heroic reason to go back to the front lines as well as a temptation to stay away from them. It provides good emotional conflict without descending into meaningless angst or drama. For those that have a problem with the climatic battle, there's something here too. Kayaba talks about how one of the

great things about an RPG is having "one's expectations betrayed" and that includes his own expectations. Afterward, he talks about how he dreamed of a world that could surpass the rules of reality, including his own rules. While he is as surprised as anyone both in-universe and out-of-universe by the seemingly impossible feat that our leading lady accomplished, he is not angry. That's how his world is supposed to work. For those complaining about the status of the player's real bodies, and what would happen to them during a two year comma, there's an explanation for that too. The epilogue goes into detail about such things: food, body waste, bed sores, muscle atrophy etc. The ending is good. The book's main conflict closed but personal conflict remains. In fact, it's a perfect sequel hook for the next adventure "Fairy Dance".

CHARACTERS

I see a lot of bashing of Kirito in the anime. It's the typical mary sue variety; overpowered, bland, somehow attracts many admirers etc. That's not the case here in volume 1.---

>Sure he's a powerful solo player with the inside knowledge of a beta tester, but he's not the "only" solo player or the only beta tester. He points this out himself as part of his self-depreciation. This just happens to be his story so it focuses on him instead of them.---

>Sure he has the Unique Skill Dual Blades. In the anime it comes out of nowhere, but it's not as great as it seems. The light novel explains that he can't use it often or he'll be seen as even more of a "beater" than he is already thought to be, or be hounded by people demanding to know how he got the skill. Since he doesn't know, they might think he's lying and dislike him for it. Thus increasing his social isolation. There's sufficient foreshadowing in the light novel that he has before he uses it as well as an explanation of why he keeps it a secret: it's his ace in the hole.---

>Overpowered character? He has to be rescued twice in this volume, runs away in fear from a floor boss, and he only clears the game because the final boss allowed him to.---

>Bland badass? In the Light Novel, we see his thoughts because he's a first person narrator. There's rarely a time when he "isn't" scared, either for himself, Asuna, someone else, or all of the above. We also see his intense interest in and experience of VMMRPG, as well as a great deal of Heroic Self Depreciation. He's constantly praising others: Asuna, Klein, Heathcliff, but has a poor opinion of himself and his own skills.---

>Too many female admirers? Asuna is the only girl in his life and they known each for two years before their Relationship Upgrade. There's a different perspective on Asuna as well. The anime introduces her during the raid of the first floor boss. This establishes her first as an action girl and then later episodes show her cooking talent and her love for Kirito. In the Light Novel while she is still the Sub-Commander of the Knights of the Blood Oath from her introduction and she finds Kirito because it's part of her job to find solo players for boss runs. Her first scene with Kirito is this recruitment followed by the Ragout Rabbit stew, which is then followed by exploring a dungeon with Kirito. Instead of an Action Girl that becomes

girly, we have an Action Girl that is girly from the start; there is no separation. Unlike the anime where she floats in and out of the picture, she's a constant presence here and significant contributions to plot development. Because of the book's focus, Kuradeel is a bigger presence and a bigger threat. In the anime, the scope is smaller and he's just some one-off guy. Not so in the novel; in the novel is introduced shortly after the beginning exposition and reappears many chapters latter. POLISH This is a first person narration and the narrator happens to be a hard core VMMORPG addict. Thus, all the talk about the history of the game, the mechanics of the system, all of it is perfectly in character. There is a great sense of things because of this perspective. No spelling or grammar problems. Trickster Eric Novels gives Sword Art Online Volume 1 Aincrad an A+

I haven't got all the way through it but I read 45 pages real quick, I was surprised how the format was for the story but the anime follows it (or so I can tell) fairly close to the book save for a few word changes/cuts/adds. Even though I watched the anime first and know what happens I still got this book in a sort of frenzy for SAO products and got the lanyard with it (which is awesome). Just for extra information this book is NOT a manga but does have a few pictures to set the scene and IS written in English; also it has great extra info that you kind of wondered "how does that work" when you were watching the anime that it explains in the book. I would definitely suggest this to any of my friends that like anime/manga!

I don't know how much was colored by having watched the anime first, just before reading the book, but the characters were well done, with more in-depth look at who the people are, even if the backstory isn't really explored. It feels like there is more to learn about the characters, and since it is the first book in a series, it makes sense to know there is more to learn and the hook is good. It is a bit dark, but not as much as some. It is a novel, not a manga, which surprised me - didn't read the description as carefully as I should have.

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