



Chess Bitch: Women In The Ultimate Intellectual Sport

Jennifer Shahade

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In the game of chess, the strongest piece—the Queen—is often referred to as "bitch," and being female has been long considered a major disadvantage.

Chess Bitch, written by the 2004 U.S. Woman's Chess Champion, is an eye-opening account of how today's young female chess players are successfully knocking down the doors to this traditionally male game, infiltrating the male-owned sporting subculture of international chess, and giving the phrase "play like a girl" a whole new meaning.

Through interviews with and observation of the young globetrotting women chess players who challenge male domination, Chess Bitch shines a harsh light on the game's gender bias. Shahade begins by profiling the lives of great women players from history, starting with Vera Menchik, who defeated male professionals with incredible frequency and became the first woman's World Champion in 1927. She then investigates the women's chess dynasties in Georgia and China. She interviews the famous Polgar sisters, who refused to play in separate women's tournaments. She details her own chess adventures—traveling to tournaments from Reykjavik to Istanbul. And Shahade introduces us to such lesser-known chess personalities as the flamboyant Zambian player Linda Nangwale and the transgendered Texan Angela Alston and the European female chess players who hop from one country to another, playing chess by day and partying long into the night. For those who think of chess as two people sitting quietly across a table, Shahade paints a colorful world that most chess fans never knew existed.

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