



The Gamer (Sophie Washington)

Tonya Duncan Ellis

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"A satisfying read, full of real-life lessons and good-hearted characters." - Kirkus Reviews

Sixth-grader Sophie Washington and her friends are back with an interesting book about having fun with video games while keeping balance. It's almost Easter, and Sophie and her family get ready to start fasts for Lent with their church, where they give up doing something for 40 days that may not be good for them. Her parents urge Sophie to stop tattling so much, and encourage her second-grade brother Cole to give up something he loves most, playing video games. The kids agree to the challenge, but how long can they keep it up? Soon after Lent begins, Cole starts sneaking to play his video games. Things start to get out of control when he loses a school electronic tablet he checked out without his parents' permission, and comes to his sister for help. Should Sophie break her promise and tattle on him?

The Gamer (Sophie Washington) Details

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Author : Tonya Duncan Ellis

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From Reader Review The Gamer (Sophie Washington) for online ebook

Joel says

I received my copy of The Gamer via a Goodreads giveaway, which has no effect on my review.

I read this book to fulfill the prompt of “A book by a local author” for the 2018 POPSUGAR Reading Challenge.

I originally entered the drawing for this book, thinking it would be nice to win for my nieces and nephew. The book says it is geared toward ages 8-12, but I think it might be a more narrow focus toward the lower end of that range. Right now, I am positive my 12-year-old nephew will turn up his nose at it, and I think his 11-year-old sister will as well. There are illustrations within that are fairly plain, and something I would consider normal for books geared toward early readers.

This book deals with how a family chooses to celebrate Lent by giving up something that’s important (or a perceived negative) to them. Second-grader Cole Washington is encouraged to go without video games for 40 days, while his sister, Sophie, has it suggested that she stop complaining and being a tattletale.

I had a little issue with this, because Cole definitely needed an intervention to get his obsession under control, but his change revolved around an external change, whereas Sophie’s was more of a “Hey, change your personality because we don’t like who you are,” from her parents.

I’m sure that’s not the lesson the author intended to give, but I found it troubling.

Another issue I had was having to pause and research whether or not Baptists actually celebrate Lent (most do not—in fact, I know dozens of them, and nary a one celebrates Lent). Having it acknowledged in the book that this was something not all Baptists do would have been a nice touch.

By the end, I was a little confused by the moral message. Apparently it is okay for Sophie to tattle when it might keep her brother out of trouble, but he can be a conniving little so-and-so without a whole lot of repercussions.

Ultimately, all I got from this was that boys will be boys, and girls need to not complain unless it’s to keep a boy out of trouble.

2 out of 5 stars.

Barbara Senteney says

Adorable series , Sophie and her friends have lots of fun, very age appropriate. I also like that it;s about a little girl of color since some of my grandkids are mixed. It is hard to find stories for black and mixed children. I hope Sophie has many more adventures

Tony Parsons says

Xavier Academy. There is no bus so Mrs. Washington (wife/mother, book club member) drives Sophie Washington (6th.-grader, daughter/sister, dyslexia), & Cole (8, son/brother) to school.

Mariama Asante (Nigeria, classmate) is going to have a birthday party.

A Mardi Gras party is in the works.

Mrs. Washington decided Cole could keep the stray/homeless Bertram (Portuguese Water Dog).

The school's Spring Spectacular special fundraiser festival is finally here.

Cole won a PlayStation video game system.

Houston, TX. Lent service & then Easter Sunday. New Faith Baptist Church. The Washington family just left the church & was headed out to eat.

It seems Cole has a secret.

I did not receive any type of compensation for reading & reviewing this book. While I receive free books from publishers & authors, I am under no obligation to write a positive review, only an honest one. All thoughts & opinions are entirely my own.

A very awesome book cover, fabulous hand drawn black/white pictures, & great font/writing style. A very well written elementary age book. It was very easy for me to read/follow from start/finish & never a dull moment. There were no grammar/typo errors, nor any repetitive or out of line sequence sentences. Lots of exciting scenarios, with several twists/turns & a great set of unique characters to keep track of. This could also make another great elementary age movie, an animated cartoon, or better yet a mini TV series. A very easy rating of 5 stars.

Thank you for the free Dog Ear Publishing; Author; PDF book
Tony Parsons (Washburn)

Keshia Driscoll-Cook says

I really enjoy the Sophie Washington book series. This edition covers Sophie and her brother Cole handling giving up specific things for Lent. While this book was focused a bit too much on religious beliefs for my taste, since I am not of the Christian faith, the morals and meaning behind the story were still understood. I personally think it's great for children to read books from every religious base. I would highly recommend this book to any child who might be feeling or acting a bit greedy or unappreciative.

jackmagnus says

Reviewed by Jack Magnus for Readers' Favorite

The Gamer: Sophie Washington is a novel for children, grades 4-6, written by Tonya Duncan Ellis. Sophie's in sixth grade now, and she's beginning to understand more of what the pastor is preaching in church on Sundays. Today's sermon was on resisting the temptation to indulge in things that might not be so good for us. That message was particularly on point as the Lenten season was swiftly approaching. As she, her parents and her little brother, Cole, were driving home from service, her dad asked Sophie and Cole if they had

considered what they would be giving up for Lent. Cole, who normally got his way with everything as far as Sophie was concerned, was told that he should give up his video games. Sophie was given an even more difficult challenge. Would they be able to keep those commitments until Easter Sunday?

Tonya Duncan Ellis's novel for children, grades 4-6, *The Gamer: Sophie Washington*, finds Sophie, who is a sixth grader now, having to reconcile her feelings of envy and jealousy regarding the relationships of her friends in school and trying not to constantly complain about and tattle on her little brother. There are a number of high points in this engaging book including the arrival of a new member of Sophie's household, Bertram, the Portuguese Water Dog, and the further development of Cole's artistic talents. While, as a gamer, I was sympathetic to Cole's plight in being denied all access during the Lenten season, the story had me wondering just how much I might be missing during those hours I play. While this is not the first book in Ellis's *Sophie Washington* series, it can be read on its own; however I would strongly advise that each volume of this compelling and intelligent series be read in order. *The Gamer: Sophie Washington* is most highly recommended.

Katie B says

Sixth grader Sophie Washington and her family each pledge something to give up for Lent. Sophie will try not to tattle so much and her 8 year old brother Cole will stop playing video games. But when Cole sneaks in some video game playing and does something that could get him in a lot of trouble, Sophie has to make the hard decision on whether to tattle to her parents or keep his secret.

This is the second book I have read in the *Sophie Washington* series and unfortunately I didn't like it as much as, *Hurricane*. The book covered plot lines such as feeling left out among friends, sibling rivalry, and cutting back on electronic gaming which are all good topics but because so much was going on it almost felt like it lost its focus. By no means is this a bad book but when compared to the other one I read in the series, I just don't think this one was as strong.

I won a free copy of this book in a giveaway but was under no obligation to post a review. All views expressed are my honest opinion.

Robin Morgan says

Even though it states this book is a verified purchased, it's actually the KINDLE I'd won recently through a giveaway the author had on GoodReads and the following is my honest opinion.

It's interesting that I won and reading this book as we enter the Lenten season, a time where we must keep our promise as to what we're willing to sacrifice not doing for a period of 40 days in remembrance of the ultimate sacrifice he made for us on the cross.

Since Sophie and her younger brother Cole are too really young to decide for themselves as to what an appropriate sacrifice would be for them, their parents select one for each of them. For Cole it would be his love for playing video games for hours on end, and for Sophie it would be to stop her perpetual passion of tattling on people [especially, her brother].

As adults we know there's always a consequence when we do something we shouldn't be doing. But as a

child it's a lesson which must be learned. This proves to be the situation rather quickly when Cole's weakness for playing his video games causes him to lose the electronic tablet containing games he'd taken from his school sans his parent's knowledge or permission.

Cole's action causes Sophie to wind up with a quandary. She knows she has to help her brothers with the fix he's gotten himself in with the loss of the purloined tablet he took from school. She also knows she should tell their parents about it; but if she does, she'll wind up breaking the Lenten promise she made of not tattling on someone else. What does Sophie do to wind up in the good graces of everyone concerned.

For giving her young readers [and some of their parents] a written, inspirational story for this time of year, I'm happy to give the author, Ms. Ellis, 5 STARS.

Maria Beltran says

The Gamer by Tonya Duncan Ellis is the fourth book in a series that tells about the adventures of sixth grader Sophie, her friends and family. Sophie has a younger brother, Cole, who is in second grade. It is Lent season and they have been encouraged by their parents to give up something that they really like for forty days, that is, until Easter Day. For Sophie, it is snitching on her brother while for Cole, it is giving up his video games. Meantime, something happens in school that makes Sophie feel bad while Cole does something behind his parents' backs. Can they really give up something that seems to feel like second nature to both of them already?

Tonya Duncan Ellis' The Gamer is designed for grade school children, but surprisingly, adults can learn a thing or two from this book too. The author writes at a fluid pace that will surely keep her readers interested. And as we follow Sophie and Cole in their daily lives, it is not difficult to relate to them. Indeed, for most of us who grow up with a sister or brother, the story is quite familiar. But what makes it special is that it teaches us about the importance of finding balance in our lives, without sounding preachy. As such, we can look forward to the next events in Sophie's life, and expect to pick up life's lessons along the way. Tonya Duncan Ellis is obviously a keen observer and reading her book is both an informative and a delightful experience.

E. says

4.75 stars

"Sophie Washington: The Gamer" by Tonya Duncan Ellis continues the saga of sixth grader Sophie as she deals with things like sacrifices for Lent, sibling rivalry, trips to the dentist, and the ups and downs of friendship. I love the realism of this series, that shows a normal family against the backdrop of the horrific force of nature that affected Houston and the hard work that is required to maintain a professional service (dad is a dentist) and raise a decent family.

The kids struggle with the concept of sacrifice for Lent, especially when it involves giving something up that is precious. I was entertained by what her parents chose for Sophie to give up and the moral dilemma that it presented gave richness to the story. The jealousy of her friend Mariama's celebration wasn't quite addressed as well as I would have liked, but I love that Sophie had a chance to shine as a generous friend. The irony of a dentist's children having issues with their teeth is entertaining and I enjoyed watching the family grow,

both literally and figuratively.

I think this is a great series, both for the way it addresses common issues that children face and for the elements of diversity that accompany a glimpse into the lives of an engaging nuclear family. Each of the stories can stand alone, yet builds on events from the previous tale so that one will appreciate the lessons learned in each episode. I am delighted that there are multiple books in this series and look forward to watching Sophie and her brother continue to grow.

A copy of this title was provided to me for review.

Amy says

The Gamer is yet another fun installment from Tonya Duncan Ellis's Sophie Washington series. I think this one is my favorite I have read from the series. It has the normal laugh out loud humor and perfect lesson for anyone – young and old – to learn. I liked there was an element of faith in it, as well. So many good words to read in this one.

I give The Gamer 5 plus stars and highly recommend it, as well as, the rest of the books in the series. I received this book from the author. This review is 100% my own honest opinion.

Kimberly Vanderbloom says

Fun and cute

I won this book in a Goodreads First Reads giveaway!

This is the second Sophie Washington book I have read and I loved every minute of it. The last one I read with my little one and this one I read myself. I was entertained and thought it was well written. The author was able to expertly capture experiences and emotions of a young girl. It brought back memories and emotions from when I was that age. I will recommending these books to all my mom friends and talking to my local book vendor.

Ally Swanson says

This book was such a fun, exciting, entertaining, enjoyable read!

This book mostly revolves around the main character, Sophie Washington, and her family. Sophie is a bright, fun-loving, sixth grader who can't seem to stop tattling. Her brother Cole, a second grader, seems to be addicted to playing video games. However, all of that is about to change. Sophie and her family are at church and with the Lent Season about to start the sermon is directed towards resisting temptations and indulgences. On the way home Sophie and Cole's parents talk to them about Lent and pick out the item that each of them should abstain from for the forty days. Their parents choose no tattling for Sophie and no video games for Cole. However, as soon as Lent starts Cole secretly checks out a tablet from his school and accidentally loses it. He goes to his sister for help. Now Sophie must decide whether she should break her Lent promise and tell

her parents what Cole did? Or secretly help Cole find the tablet and get it back to the school before their parents find out?

I absolutely remember having to give something up every year for Lent! Usually it was candy, junk food, or eating out, or keeping no secrets from mom, or no white lies. However, I do remember a couple times it was no oversharing, which was like tattling. I remember getting in trouble for telling people things that were supposed to stay private (sorry mom lol)!! And of course, my mom's best friend's daughter and I hated each other so whenever we got the chance to get each other in trouble we totally did lol. There were many Lent years of abstaining from "Trying to Get Deena Into Trouble," the best friend's daughter lol and vice versa. So, I when I heard about this book I was thrilled to read it since it sounded like a great read and I thought I could relate to it!

I loved the main character, Sophie Washington. She sets a wonderful, positive role model for girls. At a time when young girls are carefully watching and following the lead of their role models it is important that we are providing them with ones that are not only realistic, but also ones that demonstrate confidence and leadership skills.

I also really enjoyed getting to know Cole more this time! In the previous books in this series, he's been more the annoying, pesky brother. And in this book, I felt like he really came out of his character shell. He was more developed and really owned up to the bigger role he received in this book. Plus, it was great to see this other side to him and see how he loves Sophie and really looks up to her. I look forward to seeing more of him in the future! Also, my newest favorite family member was Bertram! He is so cute! He is a stray Portuguese Water Dog that the family takes in.

This book series are just filled with so many life lessons and morals and this particular book did not miss the mark!

I really liked that this book had so many underlying messages. For example, this book focused on hard work, faith, hope, respect, determination, positive attitudes, self-improvement, self-evaluation, abstinence, moderation, growth, appreciation, overcoming obstacles, team work, and so much more.

I liked this book focused on a Lent aspect. I think there are quite a few children that participate in Lent and will be able to easily relate to this book. They may also find some better understanding of what Lent is and why people celebrate it.

I loved that the author used so many Houston and Texas references throughout the book since the book does take place in the Houston Suburbs. I have been to Houston many times, and I have lived in several parts of Texas before. So, I really enjoy when I read a book from there that the real Texas is found in the pages – and it sure was! The author did a great job listing things like restaurants, local spots, and culture references.

I think the best part of this book being for middle graders, is that it's a fun, cool, intriguing, suspenseful book for them! It's not a dumbed down kid's book and it's not a book that a parent can be worried that their kid is reading. It's a book that a kid will want to read, won't be embarrassed to read in front of their friends or their parents. It's the right kind of a book a kid should be reading and the right kind of book their parent will be glad they are reading!

This book is book four of the Sophie Washington Book Series. Although I have read other books in this series, this book can absolutely be read on its own as a standalone without any fear of getting lost or confused. However, I am really enjoying this book series, and would totally recommend the whole series!!

This book is "G" rated as there is no swearing, no violence, no adult situations, and no sexual content. However, I would like to point out that this particular book in the series does have a strong faith element as

this plot line wraps around the Lent Season which is strongly celebrated in the Christian Community.

I would absolutely recommend this recommend for middle graders as I think they would love this book and the Sophie Washington Book Series!

This book is marketed towards middle grades and I totally agree! However, I might even go as far as to suggest this book for readers in third grade to seventh grade as they too would also easily enjoy this book and book series as well!

****Disclaimer:** I received a complimentary copy of this book and have voluntarily provided an honest, and unbiased review in accordance with FTC regulations.**

Ann Neville says

Reviewed by Ann Neville for Readers' Favorite

The Gamer by Tonya Duncan Ellis is written from the point of view of sixth grader Sophie Washington. It's almost Easter, and Sophie and her family get ready for Lent by giving up something that may not be good for them for 40 days. Her parents urge Sophie to stop tattling so much, and encourage her second grade brother, Cole, to give up the thing he loves most - playing video games. Soon after Lent begins, Cole starts sneaking quick sessions on his video games. Things start to get out of control when he loses a school electronic tablet he checked out without his parents' permission, and comes to his sister for help. What a dilemma! Should Sophie break her Lent promise and tattle on him?

The Gamer gives an interesting peek into the lives of Sophie, her family and friends. Her voice is authentic and, through her, Tonya Duncan Ellis touches on some of the usual modern-day conflicts between siblings and peer groups, particularly girls' interactions regarding boys and clothes. Sophie's choice (as to whether or not to tattle on Cole) is a quandary most of us have probably faced at some time or another - how can we decide what the physical and mental consequences of breaking, or not breaking, a promise are and how our decision will impact on others around us? The text is enhanced by well executed line drawings that add some extra context and sometimes humour to the book. I particularly liked the one of Sophie's brother Cole in church! The Gamer by Tonya Duncan Ellis provides a quick and easy read for sixth graders, imparting a moral message without appearing too didactic.

Peggy says

What a perfect way to teach about the meaning of lent and the the ability to give up things that you don't always realize will be hard. This book is easy to follow for all ages and will pull close to your own personal life. Well written story for all ages (even though it's a middle schooler book) we can all enjoy!

Lyn says

I read Things You Didn't Know About Sophie, The Gamer, The Snitch, and Hurricane all immediately after one another within the course of a day, so I will review all four together.
I thoroughly enjoyed reading Things You Didn't Know About Sophie, and The Gamer; they were really well

written, in a believable tone for a young girl, and in a friendly way for any young kids. They taught great, valuable lessons, in a way where it's really clear what point the author was trying to get across, but also in a way where kids are more likely to listen and understand it, because it's not just being shoved in their faces in big, bold letters, or even instructions.

The Snitch and Hurricane were also good; they had the same qualities of being well-written, and of teaching good lessons. I just felt that the characters were a bit whiny / annoying in these two, compared to the other two. Perhaps this was just me, and not the books themselves, or perhaps it was just because I read them all so close together, but either way, I didn't enjoy The Snitch or Hurricane quite as much.

The author did do an excellent job of introducing characters and past events in each book, though. You really don't need to read them in any particular order to get all of the information. I do wish I had looked up the order, though; I read two that happened to be in order, then one that came before those two, and then one that came after all three. It was a little weird doing that.

Note: I received these books for free through Goodreads Giveaways.
