

Women in Game Development

FAIZA ADIL

Video games have been around for as long as we remember and so have gasps at women mentioning their interests in them. But with the intense scrutiny of an underrepresentation of women in video games in recent times, a lot has changed and an unsurprisingly vast number of women partake in their own share of gaming. But what may come as a surprise is, there's even more that have a hand in making them. Here's a few worth mentioning.

KIM SWIFT

With massive successes under her belt, Kim Swift made a name for herself as a designer and environment artist at Valve Corporation in designing favourites like *Left 4 Dead* and *Left 4 Dead 2*. Currently working as a Design Director at Electronic Arts, Swift has designed and led the design team for *Star Wars: Battlefront II* and is currently working on an unannounced project. With all that she's done, one can only hope whatever's coming is just as good.

JADE RAYMOND

Considered as one of the most influential women in gaming by Fortune, Jade Raymond started off as a programmer for Sony but soon joined Electronic Arts and produced *The Sims Online*. Her career, however, peaked in 2004, when she joined Ubisoft and served as producer of the first *Assassin's Creed* and Executive Producer of *Assassin's Creed II* and *Watch Dogs*. Three games that are loved by millions even today and from Altair to Ezio, she's had quite an impact.

BONNIE ROSS

With *Halo Infinite* scheduled to release in 2020, an ode to Bonnie Ross seems fitting. As the Head of 343 Industries, she has a direct hand in the making of the next Halo. Named after 343 Guilty Spark, the studio was founded by Ross and have worked on all Halo games since Bungie's departure. But that's not all she's done, she's worked on numerous successful games like *Mass Effect*, *Gears of War*



and *Counter-Strike*.

KAZUKO SHIBUYA

Since middle school, Kazuko Shibuya nurtured a growing interest in animation, but it was not quite what she expected to be doing. At the brink of giving up in her animation work, Shibuya was recruited by Square Enix and has since continued to work in design graphics with her massive successes in the initial games of the *Final Fantasy Series*.

RHIANNA PRATCHETT

Amongst all the designers and programmers, writers too have a lot to do with game development. Where would

storylines be if they weren't skillfully written? From writing in newspapers to shifting her focus on video games, Rhianna Pratchett has since won and been nominated for multiple awards for her work. From *Mirror's Edge*, *BioShock Infinite*, and the 2008 *Prince of Persia*, she's done it all. Pratchett's most acclaimed work however, lies in her massive contributions to *Tomb Raider* and *Rise of the Tomb Raider* projects where she served as the lead writer.

Faiza spends most of her time staring at computer screens and playing a string of video games, give her new games to play at faiza2421@gmail.com

SECONDARY FEMALE CHARACTERS IN LITERATURE AND CINEMA

SHOUNAK REZA

I was rewatching *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy a couple of weeks ago. It had been a while since I last watched the three films and while I remembered the basic storyline and the main characters, I had forgotten the many extraordinary "secondary" characters that are crucial to the story. As I devoured the trilogy, every single scene brought waves of nostalgia to my heart and I was awestruck by one particular character: Éowyn.

Éowyn, a noblewoman who fell in love with Aragorn, the heir to the throne of Gondor, appeared to be a relatively insignificant character throughout the second film and the first half of the third film. Although brave and likeable, she mostly stayed in the background until she disguised herself as a man and secretly accompanied her countrymen into battle. When she confronted the evil, undefeatable Witch-king, the latter told her, "You fool! No man can kill me!" – and then she took off the helmet that had been hiding her face and said – "I am no man." – and killed him.



This scene gave me goosebumps. I had rarely been moved so much by a particular scene before and I watched it over and over again on YouTube. It made me ponder over the roles of some of the seemingly timid secondary female characters in literature and

cinema who ended up saving the day.

In the *Harry Potter* series, for example, we had Molly Weasley. Even though we loved her, we never thought this affectionate person was capable of fighting. She even tried stopping Harry from going on a risky quest.

But then she proved us wrong. She didn't hesitate confronting the dangerous Bellatrix Lestrange when the latter threatened to kill her daughter, proving that love is a stronger power than fear and hatred.

Such characters are found in abundance in literature. For instance, while Catherine Earnshaw was one of the two central characters of *Wuthering Heights*, it was her daughter, Catherine Linton, who left a mark on my heart. After choosing to marry Edgar Linton, the older Catherine spent the rest of her life crying for Heathcliff before succumbing to an early death. Even though the younger Catherine was initially a character I just doted on, my heart was filled with respect for her the moment she stood up to the revengeful Heathcliff, the man responsible for ruining her family. She couldn't do much in the face of Heathcliff's wealth and power but defied him anyway, something her parents and relatives had tried to do but failed.

Examples of such strong secondary characters also include Melanie from *Gone with the Wind*, Celia from *As You Like It*, Éponine from *Les Misérables* and so on.