

Heaven Sent Gaming Picks Up Global Fans | BY ALITA BYRD

A twenty-something Adventist gamer has set up an online company with her husband to bring online comics, games, and novels with an ethical focus to fans from New Mexico to Japan. Isabel Ruiz Lucero talks about her work as an artist and how she uses the Fruits of the Spirit as recurring themes.

You and your boyfriend, now husband, Mario Lucero started Heaven Sent Gaming together. You met at Sandia View Adventist Academy in Corrales, New Mexico, I believe. How old were you when you started the gaming company? What made you decide to put the company together?



Artwork from Heaven Sent Gaming's "Mouton"

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It was the summer of 2006, so I was seventeen years old, and Mario was eighteen. We had been dating for nearly two years by that time, and we always encouraged each other to pursue our passions. We both knew that we wanted to do God's work together, and we wanted careers in the video game industry and entertainment fields.

Heaven Sent Gaming publishes comics, web serial novels, web video series, and even a New Mexico cultural Encyclopedia/Lexicon. What is the most popular thing that you produce?

It's between our original productions and the New Mexico Cultural Encyclopedia and Lexicon. I think those are our most popular publications currently. Our original productions mainly center around our comics and novels.

The New Mexico Cultural Encyclopedia and Lexicon covers topics often undiscussed online and seeks to correct a lot of the information and misinformation about New Mexico, so it often appears in search results.

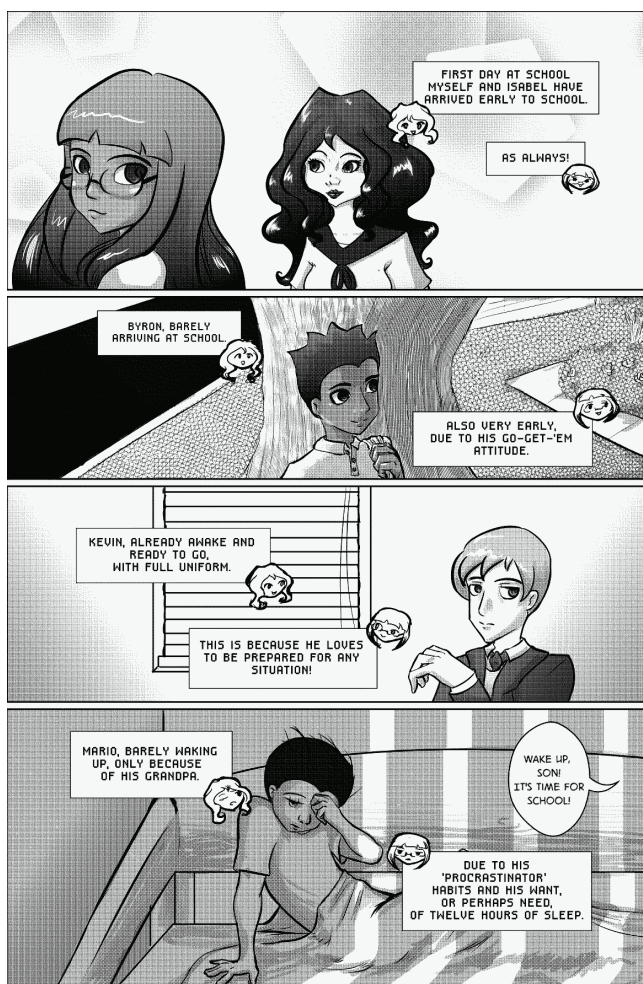
Do you share all of your content through your website? How many views does your website get? Where are your fans located?

Yes, we share most, if not all, of our content through our website. Our website's monthly unique viewers are anywhere between 15,000 (according to Cloudflare) or conservatively 750 (according to Quantcast).

Our viewers come from across the United States and internationally, particularly in the UK, Mexico, Canada, Germany, the UAE, Australia, and Japan.

How did you get into comics?

I have been into artwork and comics for most of my life, starting with Peanuts and Garfield. My father introduced me to Japanese anime and manga when I was around eight. It wasn't long after that that I began to draw a lot.



Eventually, I wanted to practice by drawing comics, so I began to draw silly comics in high school, and that's when my friends saw them and encouraged me to pursue art.

Why is your company called Heaven Sent Gaming? How does your Adventist faith influence your work?

There's a lot of reasons for the name, but first and foremost, we wanted to reflect that we are Christians and that we are gamers. This is also a nod to one of our inspirations, Nintendo, which can be translated simply to "leave luck to heaven." My Adventist faith is represented through a common theme of temperance in my work.

How is Heaven Sent Gaming different or similar to other gaming companies?

In terms of secular companies that do something similar to what we do, perhaps the most successful is Rooster Teeth; their work really exemplifies the talent and passion within the gaming community.

What separates us is, obviously, the recurring themes of Christianity, specifically focusing on the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. In each product we try to integrate Christian principles. Some are more subtle than others, because we aren't solely creating content for Christians, but for anyone to enjoy.

One thing we like to do is to show a classic hero archetype and what real villainy is like. The media seems obsessed with brainwashing people with grey-area heroes, which makes people think that their own morality is a grey area.

Does Heaven Sent Gaming make money? Can you earn a living doing it? Is this the kind of work you always dreamed of doing?

Currently, it does not make much money due to the fact that we are more focused on doing God's work than earning money. There have been a few chances to make a lot of money, but we wanted to keep our artistic integrity.



We are currently starting to focus a little more on how to make this into a fiscally stable venture so that we can dedicate more time to it. This is the work that I know I was called to do, and I love it. I get to work with my best friend (my hubby) and do what I love the most.

What are the next projects you are working on?

We're currently working on a video game which we will reveal soon. But some of our next projects are a toss-up; we're in the process of developing some potential new web video series, making a compendium book of all our current work, or maybe even ironing out a Bible translation we've been working on, called the *Heaven Sent Version*.

Where do you see yourself and Heaven Sent Gaming, in five years?

I see myself raising a family, and continuing my work on Heaven Sent Gaming. I want to eventually grow it

into something that can help others be able to achieve their passions.

What advice would you have for young Adventist gamers and artists?

I would like to tell Adventist gamers to continue to play and try to join local communities of gamers; there are plenty of gaming culture events around and plenty of video game tournaments to enjoy out there.

For artists, don't let your imagination or creativity die. God has given you this talent for a reason—don't let someone scare you into making you hide it away. We are called to grow our talents. ■



Alita Byrd is a member of the Spectrum web team, and is a freelance writer from Dublin, Ireland.