Nervegear has developed Sword Art Online, an all-inclusive gaming experience where the gamers can see, feel, taste, smell, and hear everything in game, all while keeping their bodies stationary. Kirito is one of the lucky individuals selected as a beta tester and joins ten thousand players on the day the game launches. However, none of the players have a logout button and the players are trapped. The creator confirms this, teleporting them all and making an announcement that their lives are irrevocably tied to the game now, and if they die here, they die in the real world. The only way any of them will rejoin the real world is when someone makes it to Level 100 and defeats the final boss. Using previously gained knowledge and skill of the game, Kirito beats the game, makes and loses friends, and finds peace after over two years in-game.

Sword Art Online is one well-illustrated, well-thought-out story. In the American paperback version, it is in black and white, though the cover is in color as well as one or two pages. The paper itself is rather thin and feels like it would be really easy to tear, but the images make up for the paper quality. The characters themselves are developed and explored well, and the reader is able to see that there is always more than one skill or one side to every character. Not only are relationship and romantic interests developed, but there is also topics addressed that are deeper in technological ideas. What is real? What is the perception of reality? Are we what we create our characters to be or do the characters and avatars we create in-game start defining our lives and personality outside of games? Reki Kawahara does an excellent job in bringing his imagined online world to life.

*Contains mild violence.