

Helping you choose the best books for children

LoveReading4kids Reader reviews of **The Reluctant Journal of Henry K Larsen** by Susin Nielsen

Below are the complete reviews, written by the LoveReading4kids members.

Amelia Corrick-Gough, age 14

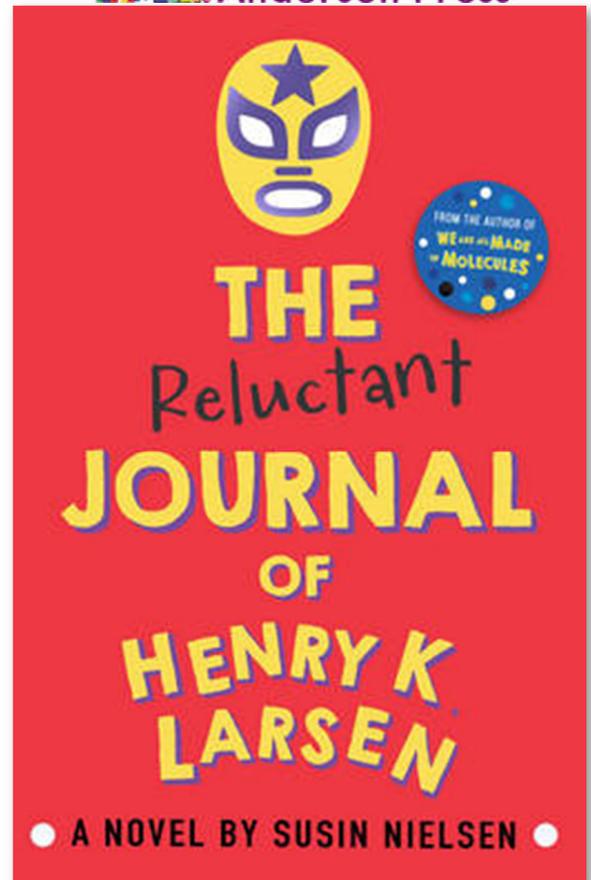
This book reeled me in from the first page, and kept me spellbound until the very last word. I connected with the characters really well, especially Farley, and I loved the ideas behind this book!

The way that the past of Henry was slowly revealed made the book very interesting, and I read on, wanting to know why he was so badly affected. I will be reading 'We Are All Made Of Molecules' next!

Leanne Turner, age 12

Thomas Cowley School

This is a fantastic book. Susin Nielson has done a very good job writing it. I recommend this book to people who like interesting and adventurous books. When I was reading this book, I couldn't put it down. It was like I was there the whole time when I was reading. This amazing book takes you on an adventure through the life of Henry K Larsen. The main character is Henry K Larsen. Since his brother died and IT happened, life has been hell for Henry and his family. His family decided to move house for a fresh start, but his Mum didn't



go. Henry started a new school and made new friends, but things were bad at home. I would rate this book 5 stars out of 5 because I just loved reading it.

Henry Plummer, age 9

*A diary of a 12 year old affected by bullying & its disastrous consequences. A mixture of humour & family tragedy. This is a moving diary based book about a boy called Henry K. Larsen (a wrestling fan). He had a normal life until ... IT happened.... Henry then has to make a fresh start somewhere new and the book gives the reader a view of what it is like to deal with terrible family tragedy (IT) from a 12 year old brother's perspective. Henry befriends a group of "nerds" at his new school and in time, they help him to open up about IT. **This book touches on bullying and its disastrous consequences, upsetting at times but also humorous in places. Henry tries to make a fresh start only to find you can't run away from bullies...***

An interesting read about a sensitive issue, for school children today.

Edel Waugh

*This is a story about a young boy called Henry who has moved to a different place with his father. We don't know straight away why he moved or where his mother is or why Henry is in therapy, but we do know this boy is hurting. Moving into a new area Henry and his father are quickly introduced to their new neighbours, and at school Henry reluctantly makes new friends with some very cool nerdy kids, all these new people will prove beneficial to his new life no matter how much he fights it. **The story is heart-breaking and at many times bittersweet, seeing the results of bullying from a different angle is enlightening and thought provoking.** Henry uses his own mechanisms to cope with stressful situations and we see how others cope with mental illness too making it easier to understand this illness that often has a stigma attached to it. I would recommend this to anyone, especially anyone who needs to read about an inspiring character who is stronger than he realises.*

<http://edelwaugh.blogspot.ie/2015/12/the-reluctant-journal-of-henry-k-larsen.html?m=1>

Megan Chambers, age 14

This book was fantastic. I read it all in one go, not stopping for

anything. It is absolutely incredible and everyone should read it.

I really loved this book; it showed how death and tragedy can have different effects on everyone, and how it can change a family. It also shows how society changes around you, even though you are still the same person. I think this book could help change some of those false assumptions in society today, if everyone read it.

I really liked how it was written in journal form. It was done very well, and stood out from the average book/journal that many authors are starting to write.

Finally I also loved how you had to keep guessing what was happening and what had happened. It really kept me intrigued, and it also showed me that sometimes you can automatically jump to the wrong conclusion about someone and their life.

Emily Setchell, age 16

This was a charming book that intrigued me until the end. It was done sensitively, whilst remaining entertaining and gritty at the same time.

This is a delightfully charming book that reflects well some of the challenges faced when transitioning from childhood into adulthood. Henry, a young boy obsessed with wrestling and haunted by a tragic past, begins to write a journal (reluctantly) when it's given to him by his therapist. This was a charming book that kept me interested and intrigued right until the last page. As it was written in journal form, it allowed you to really connect with the protagonist, and understand his emotions surrounding the elusive past we are yet to uncover. I really liked how his past wasn't given away in one go, but tiny details appeared throughout as it showed how he had struggled to cope with what had happened. It was a great portrayal of someone struggling with the loss of someone close, and the guilt he felt towards the events that had taken place, but ended with the implication that he would be able to carry on with his life having opened up about the past and accept that it was a tragedy, but not his fault. The elements of humour speckled throughout the story added a childish tone which really suited the format and the protagonist, and showed how he could still have a happy future despite what had happened in the past.

Overall, it was a wonderfully interesting book about a child coming to terms with his harsh reality, and was done sensitively, but was still entertaining and

gritty at the same time.

Adam Goodman, age 13

I LOVED this book! The more I read it, the more the story unravelled, and the more I wanted to read on!!

At first I thought it was a bit muddled up, I struggled to understand it and found it hard to get into, however as the book progressed, the story unravelled. Then I understood it more and it got more exciting. It is cleverly written in journal-form and first-person, describing an obese teenager who moves house and school to hide his secret which he refers to as 'IT'. 'IT' is not explained until later in the book so you are compelled to read on to find out about the full incident, and the impact on his life. This is a very complex book but I immensely enjoyed reading it and would recommend it. At times it is hard to follow so it is probably not appropriate for younger readers.

Destiny Maraj, age 14

*This novel had a great plot with some excellent characters. I really liked how it was written in a journal format and how the author did it so fantastically. **The novel really made me think, it was a very heavy topic but had a good sense of humour showing both the lightness and the darkness. I loved reading this novel!***