Lovereading Reader reviews of 
Russian Roulette by Anthony Horowitz

Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.

Beth Honeyman, age 11

‘Russian Roulette’ by Anthony Horowitz is outstanding, fast paced and gripping from the first page. I loved it and was hooked instantly.

I have not read any of the ‘Stormbreaker’ / ‘Alex Rider’ series and this was to my advantage as I was able to immerse myself in this novel without any attachment to the forerunners. The book will however appeal to all ‘Alex Rider’ fans as it gives an insight into the evolution of the young agent’s arch nemesis.

Yassen Grgorovich is a character beautifully crafted by Horowitz. Painstakingly created layer upon layer by events and actions beyond his control. It is a fascinating tale of a boy who goes from street urchin to an unstoppable assassin. The characters in this exciting thriller leap off the pages to draw you in. I stayed up late as I simply could not put this book down with all its twists and turns I was determined to discover the fate of Yassen.

I really enjoyed the story of Yassen Grgorovich especially when he begins his training as an assassin. The book transports you across the globe and I loved the descriptions of the different locations the character travelled.

This is a must read book for those who thrive on lightning paced thrillers and for those who love a good story with believable characters and events. I would highly recommend this to Horowitz fans and to newbies like myself. I can’t wait to start the ‘Alex Rider’ series!
Lauren Coffman, age 14

*I am a massive fan of the ‘Alex Rider’ series so when I got this book I was very excited, and it didn't let me down. Every moment was thrilling and it was a real page turner. I definitely recommend it.*

This book was amazing. It took you through the life of Yassen Gregorovich from a young age until the moment where he meets Alex Rider and is meant to assassinate him, a scene already featured in one book in the ‘Alex Rider’ series. It was the prequel and it really gave us an insight and took us into more detail about certain moments in the series. It was extremely thrilling, with so many unexpected twists and turns, but also sad, and frightening as well. I really empathized with Yassen, even though he was an assassinator, due to his hard past. Overall I absolutely LOVED this book and couldn't put it down. A new favorite!

Natalie Hunter, age 12

*This book was brilliant. It was full of action and I found myself unable to put the book down. It is a great way to start the series or finish it. If you like spy books then this book is great for you.*

This book was brilliant. I was a bit disappointed when the book came whilst I was in the middle of ‘Harry Potter’ but soon I was sucked into ‘Russian Roulette’. It is full of action and I now want to read the rest of the books so it is good to start the series or to finish it. I think it is a really good idea to see why the enemy is as he is as you can then understand things from the other books. It's a good book to read if you like spy books and it keeps you on the edge of your seat.

Sam Saddler, age 12

*This book introduces Yassen Gragorovich, explaining his life and how he became a cold-blooded assassin. The setting is modern and reflects current affairs. Exciting, unexpected, read it in a day!*

Yassen lived a basic but enjoyable life in a poor unheard of town in Russia. On what began as a normal day, there was a fatal accident in a near by factory and from there Yassen’s life turned upside down.

The setting of the book is modern and reflects current affairs. Every chapter was exciting and the story was unexpected, making me want to keep reading.
Everything in this prequel links up perfectly with the equally thrilling ‘Alex Rider’ series and I would encourage anybody to read on through the existing series. I think this would appeal to both boys and girls of ages 10 and above. It’s every thing you would expect from Anthony Horowitz and more!

Katie Johnson, age 10

I absolutely loved this story! I am a big fan of the ‘Alex Rider’ series, so this was a perfect book for me.

I would advise reading the other ten ‘Alex Rider’ books (in order) before reading this, otherwise you may not entirely understand it.

As always, Anthony Horowitz fills his story with suspense, and the gripping tension that makes you unable to put the book down. 10/10.

Lola, age 10

A prequel to the ‘Alex Rider’ books with plenty of twists and excitement.

This amazing book is a diary story of Yassen Gregorovich, a contract killer, and is a prequel to the ‘Alex Rider’ series. It is an adventure book for people aged 9 and up because there is lots of violence and killing involved. People who like the ‘Hunger Games’ will love this as you get the same sense of fear that someone might die soon and you can’t stop reading until the end.

There are lots of twists in it. He starts in a lone village that the authorities ignore then is forced to be a servant and ends up as a contract killer! How does Horowitz come up with these things?

I would definitely recommend this book to my friends.

Sidney Greenslade, age 10

‘Russian Roulette’ is an action packed and violent tale of survival against the odds and how one devastating event changes a boy’s future forever.

‘Russian Roulette’ is a book about how a boy named Yasha Gregorovich became an international assassin, in a prequel to the ‘Alex Rider’ series.

In ‘Russian Roulette’ Yasha’s childhood is destroyed in one sudden, violent event
that changes his life forever. In seconds the young boy loses everything he loves and his dream of growing up to become a helicopter pilot is extinguished. Now he must survive on his own.

Not knowing who to trust Yasha changes his name and must escape from many dangerous situations in this story full of sinister characters and assassination plots.

‘Russian Roulette’ is a fast paced tale full of intrigue and violence but also sad and moving at times.

I would recommend the book to ‘Alex Rider’ fans and to anyone who likes dark and dangerous stories. I think the author did very well in breathing life into the characters and making the detailed action and settings seem real and intimidating. Not for the faint-hearted!

James Harrison, age 10

‘Russian Roulette’ is a really, really brilliant book. Every bit is amazing. It is beautifully written and so enjoyable you couldn't stop reading. At the end you wanted more, like all of the previous books. The only bit that wasn’t as good was the bit at the Silver Forest. You felt he spent too long there and Ivan should have played a bigger part or not play a part at all! So, all-in-all I hope Anthony Horowitz writes a lot more ‘Alex Rider’ books.

Robert White, age 10

This book is impossible to put down. ‘Russian Roulette’ consists of intense action and lots of cliffhangers at the end of the chapter making it impossible to put down.

The well experienced assassin, Yassen Gregorovich, has been assigned to kill Alex Rider. In this book, Yassen recalls how he became a wanted assassin in S.C.O.R.P.I.A. This book is one of the best books I have ever read. Ten out of ten! This book is full of all the content that you would expect from the best rated books ever, there is so much action and description that the pages cling onto you, not letting you go until you have finished the book.

Samuel Breaks, age 13

An action-packed novel that you can't stop reading, you just want more. Follow the life of Yasha Gregorovich and find out how he came
to be an assassin. I love it.

‘Russian Roulette’ is a must read, as soon as you start reading it, you can’t stop. I really enjoyed this book and would definitely recommend it to other readers above 10 years old. I would easily give this book 11\10, it is just that good!

Sam Harper, age 10

Yasha is in danger but is the life of an assassin the answer and does he have a choice when it comes to killing Alex Rider? An exciting story which is a must-read for any ‘Alex Rider’ fan.

When Yasha's village is contaminated with anthrax and destroyed he sets out to find a friend of his parents in Moscow. But this so called friend betrays Yasha and, unable to return to his family or his village, he is forced to create a new life for himself in the city. He is soon hungry, dirty and penniless and is forced to fit in with a gang of thieves in order to survive. When a robbery goes wrong he is kidnapped to work as a slave for the evil Sharkovsky. His life changes dramatically as he is drawn into a web of spies, murder and double crosses. He has nobody to trust and is in constant danger when Scorpia comes to his rescue but is the life of an assassin the answer and does Yasha have a choice when it comes to killing Alex Rider?

‘Russian Roulette’ is the fast paced, thrilling prequel to the ‘Alex Rider’ series. It sets the scene for Alex's life and that of his enemy, Scorpia, and I particularly liked the way that it was written as a diary, from Yasha's point of view. It could be read either before the first ‘Alex Rider’ book, ‘Stormbreaker’, or at any point in the series. It's a very exciting story with lots of twists, turns and double crosses. A highly recommended must-read for any Alex Rider fan.

Alice Horncastle, age 14

‘Russian Roulette’ took me on a roller coaster ride that was action packed and full of adventure—as I have read the other books in the series it answered a lot of questions I wanted to ask the author!

‘Russian Roulette’ started off on an unusual note - you think it is in the future but is actually set around the time of the ‘Stormbreaker’ novel, which surprised me. However most of the book was focused on the character Yassen Gregorovitch, who you first think of as bad, but he actually has a warmth to him that I found different. The book also explores the mental side of being an assassin—how do you actually find courage to kill someone? That was interesting
Alice East, age 9

If you like ‘Alex Rider’ stories you must read this as it is the prequel to all the other stories. It tells you about the life of Yassen Gregorovich and how he became a deadly assassin!

It is like the other ‘Alex Rider’ books as it is full on non stop adventure and excitement. It is so good you want to keep on reading - even when you have been told it’s bedtime and lights out!

The book is written as Yassen's diary from when he was 10 and his parents had accidentally discovered a deadly virus. His parents were then forced to continue making this virus as a weapon for the Russians.

The book keeps you thinking about what is going to happen next and you can’t wait to find out.

I would recommend this to anyone who loves ‘Alex Rider’ stories. If you haven’t read any Alex Rider stories yet start with ‘Stormbreaker’ as reading ‘Russian Roulette’ first could spoil the ending of ‘Stormbreaker’ a little bit.

Callum Broomfield, age 10

This is a thrilling book with gripping vocabulary and mystery at every turn. It tells the story of the childhood of Yassen Greorovich, the man who killed Alex Rider’s uncle in ‘Stormbreaker’. What is it that makes someone evil? Read this book to find out the answers to your questions about Yassen Greorovich. Difficult to put down once you get started; this is a great read, even if you haven’t read all the ‘Alex Rider’ books.

Delilah Acworth

Russian Roulette made me speechless. Having been an avid ‘Alex Rider’ reader from a very young age I was immediately gripped with the stunningly written tale. It was just so AMAZING. I can barely contain my excitement about it as a write this. Everyone who has ever heard of Alex Rider MUST read this mixture of emotional brilliance and confused integrity.
Daisy Ingram, age 12

This is a fast, action packed prequel to the ‘Alex Rider’ series. I read the ‘Alex Rider’ series a few years ago, and loved them, as I have done with all of Horowitz’s books. (My favourite being the ‘Diamond Brothers’ series). When I first read the books, I thought of Yassen Gregorovich as a cold blooded killer, but this book has changed my mind about that as it tells Yasha’s story.

I would rate this book 4.5/5. I really enjoyed it and couldn't put it down. I would recommend this to anyone who has read ‘Stormbreaker’, (the first book in the ‘Alex Rider’ series) or who likes spy/mystery books like the ‘Cherub’ series, which I also love.

Hannah Baer, age 10

The book is about a Russian boy called Yassen Gregorovich who will be Alex Rider's future enemy. I liked the book because it had a lot of adventure and action in it. It describes the settings and characters in detail which made me more involved with the story. It was interesting that the story travelled to lots of different place like Russia, Venice and New York. The highlight for me was when Yassen escaped from Sharkovsky's mansion. As the book has some fighting and violence, I think the age category of 9+ is appropriate.

It is a superb read for children who like adventure and action packed novels.

Adam Pendell, age 11

This book is a fantastic read. It fills in the gaps about Yassen Gregorovich and Alex's Dad, John Rider. Alex Rider books are the best! You must read this if you are a you love spy or action books.

The ‘Alex Rider’ series is an exciting and addictive set of books. Any fan is genuinely sad to finish the series and leave Alex behind. Anthony Horowitz has thankfully written a prequel to the series, which answers many of the questions about Alex’s arch nemesis Yassen Gregorovich, his employers, Scorpia, along with Alex's Dad, John Rider. The book starts in 1980’s Russia but takes you across the world to Venice and Peru. Like the other books in the series, this is an exciting and action-packed thriller. Once you start, it is impossible to put it down. This book does not disappoint! It explains how a young Russian boy from a country village turns into a cold-hearted and deadly international assassin.
Jacob Coleman, age 10

This latest Alex Rider book had me gripped. Every twist and turn made me want to read more!

Anthony Horowitz has written another epic story about his hero Alex Rider. The book starts with the assassin well on his way to his target. I was gripped with fear for Alex and as the plot thickened I wanted to jump into the pages to warn him!

This is an action packed tense book that has many nail-biting moments. Read it if you dare!

Daniel Mann, age 10

This book didn't disappoint. It got straight into the action and despite Yassen Gregorovich being the bad guy you can't help but come to like him and feel for him.

I am a big lover of the ‘Alex Rider’ series and have read them all and this one didn’t disappoint. It went straight into the action. There was one part at the beginning that I began to think, “This is going nowhere” and then suddenly it picked up again and was none stop action and suspense to the end. It fits in wonderfully with the series, you get to see elements of them as you read. It tells Yassen Gregorovich’s story in such a way that despite being the bad guy you can’t help to come to like him and feel for him. I was a little sad when it came to the end.

Traviss Chaytors, age 11

“one big switch from ordinary to unknown and from slavery to KILLING!!!”

This book is a very good at making you want to read on and I have got a whole bunch of people waiting to read it including my Teacher!

This book is about a young boy named Yassen Gregorovich who turns from a school boy to one of the world’s best assassins!

My favourite part is when Yassen has a spider on his shoulder and hunter has to decide whether to kill the spider or shoot his assassination target and I bet you can’t guess what happens next…..
Alexander Boxall, age 11

This tenth and final book in the ‘Alex Rider’ series brings together Yassen Gregorovitch, the Russian assassin and Alex Rider, the reluctant British teenage spy in an unpredictable and gripping finale.

For those who have yet to discover the ‘Alex Rider’ series this book can be read as a ‘stand alone’ or, for those who know the characters well, will find the revelations of how a previous "debt" is ultimately repaid. ‘Russian Roulette’ will keep all new readers and returning fans of Anthony Horowitz, totally hooked from start to finish.

A fantastic read but I am really sad to have to accept that this truly is the last book in the series.

Conor Kelly, age 12 – Year 8 St. Colm’s High School

Having read the previous ‘Alex Rider’ series books, I was glad to hear that I was going to be reading the prequel, the background story of Yessen, the lethal assassin.

The book certainly did not disappoint. The writer, Anthony Horowitz, used a lot of novel ways to emphasise his point. The story was fast paced and very exciting. The story was very easy to visualise and also would be a good movie. I would like to see if all the assumptions I made were right or wrong. You always make mistakes while guessing and Anthony Horowitz leaves it up to your imagination to decide.

I would give this book a 10/10 and would recommend it to anyone who loves intriguing novels from the age 11 up to any age.

Dylan Sweet, age 10

'That night as I stood at the table watching him tear apart the salmon that I had just tasted in front of all the other guests, I swore that I would kill him. It was surely the reason why fate had brought me here and it no longer mattered if I lived or died. I would kill him. I swore it to myself. I would kill him.

Its one of the best adventure books I have ever read. I couldn’t put the book down. It felt like it was bringing me into the story. Finally, I can get the villain’s point of view. As I found out from the book sometimes, villains don’t want to be the bad guys, they don’t have a choice.

I found this incredibly emotional and is mildly violent. It is more
psychologically scary than physical. It is very long but I finished in a matter of weeks. Following on from the brilliant ‘Alex Rider’ series, I think this is going to be another great book in the series.

My favourite character is Hunter because he is has advance skills in being a spy and keeping under cover. My favourite scene is when Yassen and Hunter are about to kill the commander. However, a huge black widow appears on Yassen’s shoulder. Hunter then had a very clever idea (you’ll have to read the book to find out what it is). I wouldn’t have thought of it - I think its extremely clever.

I would recommend this book for boys and tom girls 11 plus. This is one of the only books I would rate as a five star. I have to say it, this is five star! I loved it and I hope you enjoy it too.