

## LoveReading Reader reviews of Find Me by Laura Van Den Berg

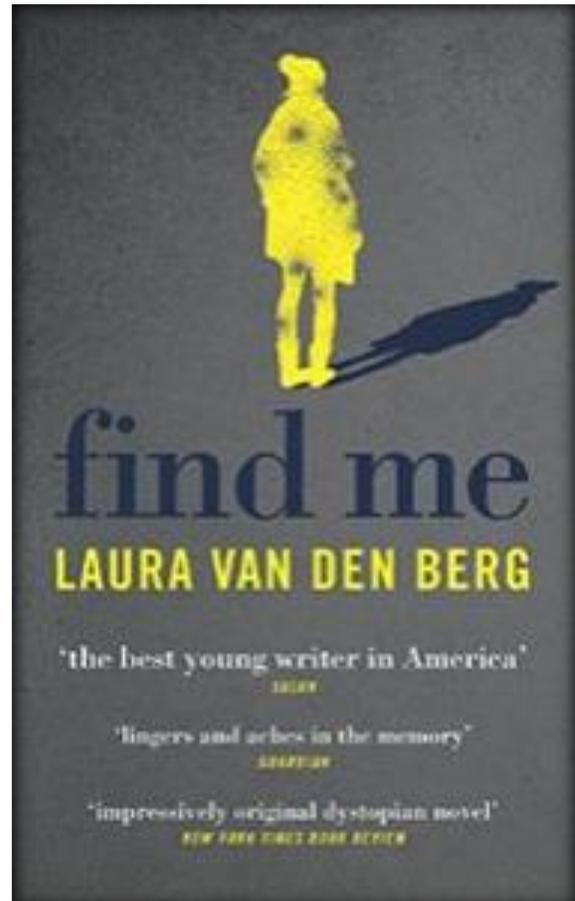
**Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.**

### **Sue Broom**

***The title says it all. This is a story of a lost and lonely girl seeking to discover her past and find a place for herself in the world.***

*This is a story of self-discovery for a girl, abandoned as a baby, who grows up in a series of orphanages and foster homes, survives a pandemic which causes others to lose their memories (living in quarantine hospital conditions), then sets out on a road trip to search for her family history and a place for herself in the world. The main theme is memory - how we remember certain events and why we might choose to forget them - well written and handled sensitively and movingly.*

*But it is a book of two very distinct halves - Joy's life in the hospital and her life outside it - and I enjoyed the first half far more than the second. The atmosphere of the hospital comes across well, at the same time secure and comforting, yet tense and sinister. Once she left the hospital and the memorable characters there, I didn't find her fleeting encounters with new characters appealing and my interest in the rest of her journey and its possible outcome waned. A debut novel so these are early days for this author and I look forward to following her development in future work.*



### **Danielle Holyland**

*Hey. So I was lucky enough to review my very first book for LoveReading this*

month & that book was *Find Me* by Laura van den Berg. When I received my parcel, I fell in love with the book straight away. I know you should NEVER judge a book by its cover, but hey, a pretty cover does draw you in. I read the book in 3 days & I'm going to admit, I have very mixed feelings for this book. I fell in love with the characters, straight away. **The writing style is quite different to anything I've ever read before and the first page hooked me in. I found the concept gripping & I couldn't put it down!** I'm a sucker for a good ol' dystopian. However, I noticed, the more I started to read the book, the more I began to wonder to myself, 'where is this going?!' The plot doesn't really thicken & it drifts away from the main storyline. Towards the end it became tedious & I was really disheartened, not to mention the ending was very abrupt. I felt like the story, should it have stayed more as a dystopian novel, would have been incredible. Sadly, that didn't happen & I finished the book, not quite fully satisfied. On the upside, I loved the writing style, I loved the characters & the concept. I just feel as though the last few chapters really let it down. However, I would definitely say, give this book a go. It's certainly worth a read. I'm glad this was my first book to review, as it's opened my eyes, to maybe trying something new when coming to reading a book. It made me think of perhaps reading some of the authors other books as well, so it wasn't all bad endings! I would rate this book 6 out of 10. Thank you for reading & I hope to speak to you in my next review. Danielle.

You can follow Danielle on Twitter: @\_xoDanielleee

## **Sarah Musk**

**An interesting debut novel with a terrifying sickness at its heart. Joy, the main character is sad and isolated but is given a chance to find her lost mother by the breakdown in society.**

*At first I found this book very compelling with an interesting, original story.*

*Seemingly immune survivors are incarcerated in a hospital by a supposed doctor who is studying them to try to find a cure for the sickness which is killing large swathes of the population. The illness is particularly sinister since the victim loses all their memories and eventually die.*

*The main character is a young woman called Joy, who has been abandoned as a baby and has led a sad, isolated life. The scenes in the hospital are vividly depicted - the claustrophobia, the fear of the outside world, the gradual breakdown of hope and trust between the doctors and the patients. Events happen but nothing really properly develops. Joy escapes to look for her*

*mother but the story seems to drift after that. Nothing seems to get resolved or explained and the ending is very vague and unsatisfactory.*

*I felt for the book to really come to life, more explanations were needed.*

*The book became increasingly empty for me and the early promise of an exciting story sort of petered out. I didn't dislike the book but I felt unsatisfied at the end and wish more had been made of the story.*

### **Janet Gilliard**

*This is not my usual choice of novel. It is about Joy a troubled woman addicted to cough syrup, working nights in a grocery store who discovers she is immune to a devastating epidemic.*

***This is a strange novel which I really had to struggle to finish. It is well written but not a story I enjoyed.***

### **Laura Gardner**

***Beautifully written, entrancing characters and a vivid world but with an ending that was a little lacking.***

*I devoured this book in just one morning, when recovering from tonsillitis, it proved to be a fantastic distraction and helped me while away an otherwise miserable day. I was instantly intrigued by the story, one in which the world has been overtaken by a sickness that begins with memory loss and disorientation but ends with death, a dystopian future but one that doesn't seem as far from reality as others within the genre.*

*The idea of this world was hard to get your head around but it was made much easier by the fact that a part of the book is based in a medical facility, where we meet Joy who is one of the immune. The characters in this facility are quirky and interesting and you quickly become invested in their futures. The world within the hospital is detailed and rich, there's so much, yet so little happening but you can see it in your mind's eye and that's something which will always captivate me.*

*This aspect of the book was my favourite, the slow pace but interesting details, it was beautifully written, but other parts of the book seemed to race ahead and not give the same level of intricacy. The other parts of the book were erratic and another step further in the stakes when it comes to quirky, it gets surreal and much harder to grasp. I did like how the story worked, but I feel like it could've*

*been a little more polished in the non-hospital parts.*

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### **Cherrill Deans**

***A peek into a world outside my own experience; a world of despair, of dashed hopes, and betrayal. Original, imaginative, deep and daunting.***

*I chose this because I liked Margaret Attwood's Handmaid's Tale. Find Me is an extremely well thought out and executed story, and leaves you wanting a sequel.*

*It depicts what might happen if a major epidemic hit the world with people dying in their hundreds of thousands, and how the remaining population survive it. Cleverly, the story begins in a hospital that houses people known to have survived the virus. They were selected as they may be able to help medical researchers find a cure. At least, that's what they are led to believe.*

*Joy Jones was abandoned as a baby: her rescuers gave her the name. Growing up she found herself in the care of various foster families and children's homes, with varying degrees of success or ghastly failures. Disillusioned and desperate, she takes to drinking cough syrup as her drug of choice to achieve oblivion.*

*Her young best friend Marcus, a fellow foster child, is disfigured and takes to wearing masks to hide his face. He disappears from her life early on, when she is moved from a foster home after an incident with the carer's adult son, but finds him again after she escapes the place where she has spent the best part of a year, as fellow inmates fall apart or eventually die of the virus. Her escape involves hitching rides across the states to try and find her birth mother.*

*It's a bleak world, all the sadder because much of what is wrong with the characters is due to their poor upbringing and lack of care in the formative years. One to mull over long after you've finished it.*

### **Teresa O'Halloran**

***This is a bleak book about a world where sickness has taken over and humanity faces an uncertain future.***

*I found this book to be both bleak and if not dark, certainly a muddy shade of grey. A book with a slow beginning, an interesting middle and an uncertain ending. There was nothing about this book that lifted the mood, and I was*

*disappointed with the ending. This book was well written and had a certain style about it, in a lot of ways it reminded me of Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro.*

*I'm sure a lot of readers will find this book fascinating, it just wasn't my kind of book.*

## **Riki Bill**

***An awesome début novel set in the modern world. The writer leaves me wanting a sequel to this book which is an adventure from beginning to end.***

*An awesome début novel set in the modern world.*

*This novel follows Joy in her adventure from addict of cough medicine to humanity's last hope as she is immune when a mystery plague sweeps across the World wiping out the population. She is taken to the mysterious Hospital where she is tended to by 'professionals' in suits and where she lives an uncomplicated life. But she dreams of leaving and when this plague mysteriously and suddenly disappears she decides to leave this safe environment and seek the mother she has never known.*

*The reader is along for the journey and what a myriad of characters Joy meets on her exploration to find her mother. It also seems that the dregs of humanity seem to be immune to this mysterious plague which seems to have wiped out the best of humanity.*

*The writer leaves me wanting a sequel to this book, which is an adventure from beginning to end.*

You can follow Riki on Twitter: @riki\_gabrielle

## **Jane Pepler**

***A post-apocalyptic tale of a pandemic spreading across the United States.***

*When a pandemic which wipes people's memories before they die sweeps the country certain people are found to be immune. Joy is one of them and is admitted to a hospital in Kansas. I felt sorry for Joy - she was abandoned as a baby and has been in social care for all of her life. Now 19 she has a job at The Stop and Shop and is addicted to cough syrup. The first part of the book is set in the hospital where the inmates are subjected to various tests by nurses in*

*hazards suits but otherwise they have nothing to do. We are introduced to different characters in the hospital; the sense of boredom and waiting is very apparent.*

*Part two of the book is where things start to unravel for this writer. I found it really hard going to continue reading the book as it was difficult at times to work out what was going on. Joy is on a mission to find her mother and undertakes various bus journeys to achieve this but it is all rather confusing. Perhaps this is what the writer is trying to convey - the disarray of the country, the lack of meaning in day to day life and the general feeling of the country after being hit by a killer virus. Nothing really happens in the second half of the book, there is no real plot and I struggled to finish it.*

### **Sophia Ufton**

***Wow this book was really good. I've never enjoyed a book so much. Awesome!!***

*Joy is on her own, she works the grave yard shift at a grocery store. Due to her troubled past (read the book to find out about it) she is addicted to cough syrup, which she tries to help suppress it all. One day a sickness starts, which begins with memory loss and ends with death, and sweeps the entire country. Joy for the first time (maybe due to the cough syrup) is immune. She goes to a hospital in rural Kansas and eventually breaks free. She travels to Florida to track her birth mother down. Will she 'find herself' in Florida or along the way? Will she find her mom? And sort her problems out? Read the book!!*

### **Ruth Carson-Byrne**

***A fantastic dystopian novel about an epidemic sweeping across America. I can't recommend this book highly enough. Read it now!***

### **Rachel Bridgeman**

***Beautiful, apocalyptic and spare. Not a word wasted.***

*A beautiful book, you can really see that Ms Van Den Berg has honed her skills as a short story writer in her debut novel. The writing is spare and sparse and you can intimate that words are chosen with precision and care. The main character, Joy (named by nurses after being abandoned by her mother) is one of the lucky few residents of The Hospital, a bastion against a disease which is*

*literally eating holes into memory until death occurs. No one is quite sure where it started, only that there is no cure and the safe ones are kept inside the Hospital, on different floors, and monitored daily. 'Find Me' works on many levels, Joy wants to find both herself and her mother, in order to understand why she kept her for some months before giving her away. The disease eats away memories so she repeats facts daily, things she knows for sure as the medical staff are convinced knowledge will literally keep you from dying. In a world where people are intent on being remembered/remembers every last detail of meals, outings, and dates on so many multi-media platforms, this is an examination of what we really leave behind when we go. A beautiful novel.*

You can follow Rachel on Twitter: [RACHELb75](#)