

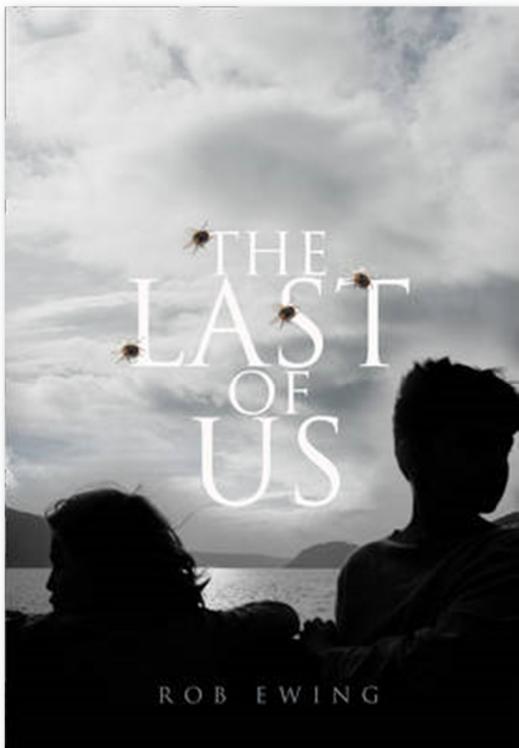


Helping you choose
your next book

Lovereading Reader reviews of **The Last of Us** By Rob Ewing



Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.



Vikki Patis

'Can we go to the rocks and chuck bottles?'

'We don't just chuck bottles: we send messages. There has to be a purpose to everything.'

'Why?'

'Because we lost our adults to the virus. Because we're alone.'

There's nothing that fills me with more dread than being left alone. I don't mean for a day of peace and quiet; I mean completely alone, wandering the streets and wondering if there's someone, something, close by, surviving, watching. This creeps me out more than I care to admit. 'The

Last of Us' is exactly this kind of story. And to make it creepier, it's the kids who survive. Told by Rona, we learn the story of how the children became ill, watched their parents and families die or disappear, and lived through the virus, only to have to struggle to carry on surviving.

Ewing does an excellent job of creating a desolate wasteland. With the narrator being a child, there's an innocence to the story, which only makes it all the more scary. The inclusion of Gaelic is a beautiful addition, and Ewing allows us a peek into life on a Scottish island - not just after the virus strikes, but before, where the smaller population meant familiarity, rather than loneliness.

This is a story of survival, of being left alone and struggling to cope, but it's also

*a story of hope and trust. It's a story of friendship, and strength. It's **horrible and terrifying, but wonderfully crafted.** The Last of Us isn't a horror story in the traditional sense, but it's bound to give you shivers. Thank you, Ewing, for creating something I will continue to see in my nightmares.*

Sarah Musk

A beautifully written story about six children left alive on an isolated Scottish island in the aftermath of a global virus. The brave, resourceful children are an inspiration.

This is a poignant, haunting book which is very well written. It is about six children on a remote Scottish island who are the only survivors of a global virus which has killed all the adults. The book is all about their attempts to survive but also about their dogged refusal to believe their parents are really dead.

The story is simply told using simple language and interspersed with flashbacks to the deaths of the adult islanders. The loneliness, bewilderment and isolation of the children is sensitively portrayed as well as the spitefulness and bullying that can occur when adults are not present to regulate such behaviour. There are elements of 'Lord of the Flies' in some of the situations that arise. Divisions appear with the strong coming to the fore and struggles to dominate the weaker children.

Rob Ewing does portray the children as resourceful and organised - they do not become savages and still show compassion and kindness to each other. Although the book is about a catastrophic situation it does give hope through the humanity and bravery of the children. I would love to know what happens next - I hope he writes another book.

Josie Barton

'The Last of Us' is a heart-breaking novel about courage, survival and the overwhelming power of hope over adversity.

When a vicious pandemic wipes out a community on a remote Scottish island only a handful of children survive. They learn to fend for themselves, always on the lookout for a means of survival. Elizabeth is the sensible one, she cares and cajoles, and keeps an eye on the youngest, Alex, whose dependence on insulin, is just another problem to be solved. With food running out and morale low, petty squabbles break out and when two of the boys attempt to usurp Elizabeth, the

tenuous link which holds the group together is broken.

This is a difficult book to enjoy, and yet, the author does a really good job of making sure that the children's story is always frighteningly truthful. I found the story immeasurably sad with a bleakness which is quite upsetting but such is the power of the story telling, that despite my misgivings, I found the story utterly convincing. I read the story very quickly, without respite, as to put the book down felt like an abandonment of this intrepid band of little warriors.

The overriding theme of endurance is captured with great insight, the evocative Scottish setting, the smattering of Gaelic spoken by the children, and the oppressive nature of what happens when your little corner of the world is completely damaged, certainly makes for compelling reading.

<http://jaffareadstoo.blogspot.co.uk/>

Sarah Harper

A fantastically powerful story that will stay with you for all the right reasons.

A remote Scottish island. A deadly virus. A handful of survivors. All of them children. Elizabeth, the eldest at 11, plays mother. Teaching the other four in the schoolroom, going 'shopping' for provisions in the abandoned houses, giving 4 year old Alex his injections of insulin. Insulin which is fast running out. Rona follows Elizabeth's lead but Calum Ian is surly and aggressive, challenging her authority and controlling his younger brother Duncan. All of them bear the scars of the virus, both physical and mental, and for all of them, time is running out. Forced to find more creative ways to feed and care for themselves they feel the immense pressure of isolation and the need to survive. It is imperative that they continue to work together as a team but the group starts to fragment. Silly, childish acts have devastating consequences. Each of them in turn needs to dig deep and find an almost impossible strength of character within themselves. This is their story.

I couldn't wait to start this book. The whole premise appealed so much and although it drew me in straight away and left me wanting to know more each time I put it down, I found the language hard to get to grips with. It just didn't flow for me and although I'm sure the author wrote in this way with good reason, maybe to make the children's voices more authentic, it made my reading somewhat stilted. That was my only criticism though. The story itself was absolutely fantastic. The power play between the characters was intriguing and

the effects of isolation and despair were palpable. I found myself mulling over this long after I'd finished reading. This is a story that will stay with you for all the right reasons

Angie Rhodes

'The Last of Us' is set on a remote Scottish Island and there has been an epidemic and the only ones left are the children!

A little like 'Lord of the Flies', but it has more of a punch and one that hits home.

Saying the story is gripping is an understatement, it keeps you reading. The children are of a mixture of age and sex, and they are living by looking out for each other, squabbles and petty fights breakout and it's one of these that tear the group apart. Alex one of the younger children, needs insulin and has only a little left, thanks to one of the boys. Now Alex is in danger of dying if they cannot find any before it's too late.

This is Rob Ewing's first book, and I am looking forward to his next.

Nicola Underwood

A well written, post epidemic story. A strong coming of age theme prevails.

This is a good read. There were aspects of the book that I enjoyed and I finished the book within a day of starting it. The book is centred around a girl living on a Scottish island, who is one of the few survivors of a health epidemic. You never really learn what the epidemic was, only that it killed all of the adults and most of the children and that it was very contagious. The story tells of how the children are living after the event and memories tell of what happened. As the narrator is a child, there is some confusion over the illness which is why it is not fully explained. Overall, it is well written and worth reading but it is quite sad at times, so be prepared for the need of tissues.

Mrs J Harper

This is a post pandemic novel set upon an island off the Scottish mainland.

It had me hooked from the word 'go'. We see the world through the eyes of Rona, who, in the absence of adults, depends upon Elizabeth, the sensible doctor's daughter for good advice.

Rona still remembers her mother's sayings inside her head, and from time to time likes the comfort of replaying these to herself.

As the story progresses we gather the seriousness of this recent disaster, we see the measures the grown-ups had put in place to contain the contamination and the way in which those attempts were futile.

We are caught up in the desperate need of young Alex for more insulin and how, eventually, Elizabeth is forced to leave the island to search for fresh supplies in a vessel that is not seaworthy, with young Duncan, the only boy with any previous experience of boats.

Elizabeth's emphasis on teamwork, on keeping together and working as a group has proved an excellent way to involve everyone and educate each child, no matter their background. This works well until the time the two Mc Neil boys join the group.

This is an excellent read, totally believable.

Wendy Stubbs

This novel tells the tale of a handful of children trying to eke out surviving on a remote Scottish island when left to their own devices after a pandemic eliminates all the adults.

At the beginning the children cope with their current situation but as human nature raises its head splits start to appear within the group, such as with some of them questioning Elizabeth's right to be leader, medication issues to name a few and a battle of wills ensues.

Hope is a trait that the children do not give up on despite having to scavenge for food and everyday living essentials from the empty houses and shops on the island and this trait continues throughout the story.

The Gaelic language is used throughout the book and not being a speaker posed a great problem for myself. Therefore, I feel that an English translation of the Gaelic used would be beneficial to non-Gaelic speakers such as myself, as a glossary in the book.

This is a book that I read with mixed feelings, it is familiar to 'The Lord of the Flies' and 'Animal Farm' 'only from a Scottish perspective - a nice read but found it to be rather disappointing regarding the storyline.

Olivia D'Silva

A story of responsibility and survival.

The story is set on a remote Scottish island in the aftermath of an epidemic, which has all but wiped out the population except for a group of children who remain to fight for survival. Told through the eyes of eight-year-old Rona, who leads us from her current situation of total isolation back through the time when the virus strikes and the destruction of the population. Now there are no adults left and the children have to make sense of this new world with dwindling supplies and no electricity or communication.

Rona's character switches between being mature beyond her years to an emotional and tantrum throwing child, often acting upon her impulses and regretting the inevitable consequences. The older members of the group, Elizabeth and Calum Ian have different responses to taking responsibility for the younger and more vulnerable members of the group. Elizabeth is a naturally responsible leader but her regime of rule setting and her status as an 'incomer' invites rebellion from other members of the group. Calum Ian initially rejects any responsibility but it is interesting to see the reactions when it comes to the crux of survival. Rona's switching temperament is a theme throughout the book, which ultimately leads to her outcome.

At the outset I was concerned that the theme was going to be too dark and traumatic but I didn't find it so. Despite the conflicts the group remained in hope of rescue and fighting for survival. I was left to wonder what happens next and wonder if there is scope for a sequel?

Carrie Johnson

Many contemporary references make this novel horrifically real. Sympathetically drawn characters, make it so credible, with brilliant asides that have the clarity of a youngster's observations.

Reminiscent of 'The Lord of the Flies'?...No selling point for me, as I whizzed back through the years to senior school, quite reluctant to commit myself to only having this book on hand during a long journey.

I needn't have worried, as I was immediately pulled into a different world, but with many contemporary references which made it horrifically real. Think swine flu a few years ago- several references in the novel rang scary bells for me.

The characters are sympathetically drawn and I felt concerned for the children and their desperate situation, but also admired their organisation and

resourcefulness. It was just all so credible, with brilliant asides that have the clarity of a youngster's observations.

I know some of the islands in the Hebrides and could imagine the setting and the previous life there. What irony that in such a beautiful place, lies so much horror.

The shifts of time perspective in telling the story flowed easily & I genuinely 'enjoyed' this book. For teenagers or adults who want an alternative to 'Lord of the Flies' or 'The Beach', although no less challenging in its subject matter, I would suggest this.

www.boozybookworm.com

Jenny Shirley

A haunting story of survival after a deadly virus leaves just a handful of children alone on an island. Brilliantly told by the innocence of a child in a situation that would scare us all.

This is the story set on one of the Outer Hebridean islands after the outbreak of some sort of deadly virus. A virus that has killed everyone who lives there and all that are left are wild dogs and cats, sheep, birds, and five children. It's narrated by Rhona and tells the story of their survival after all the adults have died leaving them completely alone and vulnerable. She tells us not just how things are now but glimpses of how life used to be before. Elizabeth the eldest tries to keep them together and in some kind of order but inevitably the next eldest boys begin to resent her leadership and try to take over. It's very haunting, a story of struggle and friendship and has been compared to 'Lord of the Flies'. I loved this book, a very real fear of isolation and loneliness and survival of a future all too possible, told from a child's point of view - gave me goosebumps!

Julie Reed

A wonderful novel depicting how children survive after a catastrophe. This story shows how love, trust, hope and friendship guide them through daily life with danger ever present. Will Elizabeth's leadership and courage be thwarted by the others and what will the final outcome be? Life or Death for them all?

Emma Smith

Not just children stranded on an island, but an exploration of group dynamics, grief, and the struggle to survive.

All adults are wiped out after a terrible virus, leaving only six of children stranded on a Scottish island to fend for themselves. 'The Last of Us' is compared to 'The Lord of The Flies' and there are clear common themes between them. It's quite a strong comparison to make, and I wondered if it could live up to such a classic but the book doesn't disappoint. It's not just children stranded on an island, but an exploration of group dynamics, grief, and the struggle to survive.

The narrator of the book, Rona, adds a wisdom to the story. She is looking back at what happened and telling her mum all about it. Knowing she is on the other side of it all makes you wonder where she really is. Did she survive? Did all of them? What are the terrible things she says she has done? It adds atmosphere as she talks of mistakes made, regrets she has, and lessons learned the hard way. She tells the story of how it happened; when the adults were struggling to save as many people from the virus as possible. This is in stark contrast to the bleak world of surviving day by day, hoping to be rescued, whilst they struggling with the grief of losing their families.

I found the book quite slow to get going, but soon understood some of the detail that seemed too much at the beginning was what really made the story later on. Rob Ewing has really thought through this deeply depressing world of being stranded on an island as a child and what it would take to get by. The details of the outbreak itself haunted me for a few days as I considered how I would cope, what it must feel like to see death all around you, and to keep that determination whilst trying to escape what seems inevitable.

<https://mrsredsreviews.wordpress.com>

Janette Skinner

This story takes place in the aftermath of disaster, which has killed most of the people on a remote island. It is an intriguing story told by one of the survivors, a child's view.

This story takes place in the aftermath of a disaster which has wiped out most of the inhabitants of a small remote island. It is told by one of the child survivors. The plot gives insight into the minds of children left to their own devices, and struggling to survive, feed themselves and obtain medicine for one of their

group. The story is slow paced and thoughtful, but to my mind not enough happens to move the story on. There are interesting power struggles between the older children and quite heroic attempts to keep the spirits up regarding a future rescue.

It becomes apparent that the problem of people dying is far more widespread than the island, and the chances of outside contact are slim.

In my opinion the book is too long for the depth of the plot and it could have come to a conclusion two thirds through the book, which is a shame as the ideas are very original and readable.

www.janettebookreviews.com

JB Johnston

Children plunged into a terrifying situation, simply trying to survive.

'The Last of Us' was a strangely disturbing book that although I struggled with at times, I was a little bit hooked on. Imagine the scene..... your child or children left alone on a remote Scottish island after a pandemic wiped out the adults and most of the children. What a horrifying thought! I think what struck me most about the story is the overwhelming desire to find out what happens to the main characters, despite their many flaws. They are only children after all. Rob Ewing doesn't sugar coat their experiences and the desolation of the island is almost as desolate as the future looks for the surviving children. Forced to scavenge for whatever food they find, whilst stepping over the bodies of the decaying dead paints a horrifying picture of survival at all costs, sometimes having to do things completely out of character. Leadership battles ensue and there is always a terrible sense of foreboding throughout the story. Elizabeth the leader of the group is forced to take on a parental role and make some difficult decisions. Her crushing feelings of being overwhelmed are horrifically palpable. However, despite now having to become very grown up in order to survive, they are all still children with the childish imaginations, hopes, dreams and fears of children and this brings the reader down to earth with a bump. If you enjoyed 'The Lord of the Flies', then you will enjoy this book.

www.brookcottagebooks.blogspot.co.uk

