

## *True Growth:* Ellie's Journey in The Last of Us II



Source: [Mashable](#)

*It was worth the eight-year wait.*

As a teen, I was nothing short of obsessed with *The Last of Us* from its release date on the 14th of June 2013. With my bulky Playstation 3 and a wild imagination, I was set for my GCSEs and late-night weekdays. Since then, I've 100% completed it **nine times**.

Now, in 2021, I was beyond thrilled (*basically shaking with excitement*) to rip open the highly anticipated parcel that arrived at my door. *The Last of Us Part II is here. It's time.*

Immediately, I grew emotional. Seeing how much the graphics had developed, specifically amongst the signature TLOU-Esque apocalyptic cities, made me re-live my teenage years at the ripe age of twenty-four. Each opening scene was delivered with a perfect nostalgic taste, practically forcing me to explore every inch of the open-world dynamics that Naughty Dog had presented to me.

I smashed out the first 40% within a few hours and quickly started finding the well-placed and intricate secrets surrounding Seattle with Dina in tow and a brand new horse.

Of course, I was still recovering from the heartbreak that is Joel's death, and I'm still not sure I've quite come to terms with that yet. *Wiping out clickers certainly helped with the rage.*



Source: [USA Today](#)

By far, the highlight of the game for me was ***Ellie's journey into growth.***

Besides being *extremely attractive* throughout the game (my gay heart can't cope with it), she transforms into a grown human being dealing with grief, violence, and rage amongst a never-ending zombie apocalypse. *That's pretty hard to top, huh?*

Moving through the game rapidly, I continued to be baffled and amazed by the unparalleled gaming dynamics, improved controls, and unmatched character development. I was moving through it so fast, even, that I purposefully stopped at moments, allowing myself to take in everything I was experiencing.

From the introduction of Jesse, old-man Tommy, the interactable dogs, and of course Joel's flashbacks, playing through The Last of Us Part II for the first time was one of the best experiences of my adult life.

Since its release, I've now played it another six times, with that same overwhelming emotional feeling occurring every. single. time.

Due to the anticipation surrounding rumours of Joel's death in the game, many avid players of The Last of Us had strong opinions before even playing the game. While this is understandable, the game proved to be much more about Ellie's reputation she had created in the shadow of Joel and how she will go on to deal with this and develop her own goals in life. Ellie's growth is predominantly demonstrated through her blossoming love for Dina.



Source: [YouTube](#)

In many ways, Dina is Ellie's grounding source throughout The Last of Us Part II. Not only does she act as her partner and lover, but as a driving conscience for much of Ellie's uncontrollable grief and rage on behalf of Joel's death.

*When Ellie is angry and sad, Dina always has her back.*

This relationship between Dina and Ellie made me realise that you are no longer playing as a fourteen-year-old kid but a **grown and nearly realised human**.

I'm not ashamed to admit that when Ellie and Dina got high and slept together during the first half of the game, I sat and shook with envy. That kind of relationship is something one can only dream about.

Even thinking about it now, I could easily play the game repeatedly for years to come. *I probably will.*

So there are just a few questions left. Do you want to feel so unbelievably connected to a game that you can barely breathe? Are you a TLOU fan and haven't played the second game yet? Are you someone who thinks Joel's death ruins the game? **Well, think again.**

I'm telling you here and now that it will change your life to see Ellie grow into a human being the way she does. *I promise.*

