

= The Last of Us : American Dreams =

The Last of Us : American Dreams is a four @-@ issue comic book series based on the video game The Last of Us . The series was written by Neil Druckmann and Faith Erin Hicks , with illustrations by Hicks and coloring by Rachelle Rosenberg . The series was published by Dark Horse Comics between April and July 2013 , and a collected edition was published in October 2013 .

Like the game , the comic is set in a post @-@ apocalyptic world , overrun by zombie @-@ like creatures infected by a mutated strain of the Cordyceps fungus . The comics serve as a prequel to the game , chronicling the journey of the young Ellie and her meeting with another young survivor , Riley Abel . Druckmann chose Ellie as the focus of the comic due to the uniqueness of her birth and upbringing in the post @-@ apocalyptic world . Hicks joined the project after discovering Ellie 's role in the game , considering her an unusual character to include in a survival horror game . The comic 's art style is different than the game art ? a choice from Hicks to give the comic a unique feel and identity .

The series received generally positive reviews . Critics particularly praised Druckmann 's writing and character development , as well as the simplicity of Hicks ' illustrations . The series was also a commercial success , with some issues requiring reprinting due to high demand .

= = Publication history = =

Dark Horse Comics approached creative director Neil Druckmann , who was working on The Last of Us , to produce a tie @-@ in comic book series for the game . Druckmann was initially wary of the idea , but eventually agreed when he realized Dark Horse " didn 't want to do something tangential " with the opportunity of expanding their characters and universe beyond the game . Work on the comic began during the game 's development , which allowed the stories of the two projects to integrate , and influence each other . Druckmann requested webcomic artist Faith Erin Hicks as a collaborator on the project , after reading her comic Friends with Boys ( 2012 ) and appreciating " how personal it felt " . He also felt that Hicks could capture the " gritty " feel of the game . Hicks then sent some concept art to Dark Horse as a pitch for the job ; they accepted , and she became officially involved with the project . Hicks was drawn to the project after reading about the character of Ellie in the game 's script ; she considered Ellie an unusual character to include in a survival horror game , calling her a " tough teenage girl who wasn 't sexualized , and who seemed very much the equal of her male counterpart " . Hicks was given access to various gameplay sequences and the game 's script during development , to allow her to better understand the story . She was also given videos of the actors performing on set , which was helpful when illustrating the characters . " I get a look at these characters and I see them interacting as human beings , not just as concept art , " said Hicks .

Ellie 's back story was originally intended to fit as a gameplay sequence within The Last of Us , but this was ultimately scrapped . When Dark Horse approached Naughty Dog with the idea of a comic book , Druckmann had the opportunity to tell the story . Druckmann found that Ellie was the ideal main character for the comic due to her birth and upbringing ; while characters like Joel mostly lived in the world before the outbreak , Ellie is unaware of life prior to the outbreak . This created an interesting idea for Druckmann , who became intrigued with discovering the effects of everyday actions in a post @-@ apocalyptic world . Hicks enjoyed writing American Dreams , particularly due to the humor featured in the comic . Druckmann allowed Hicks to design the character of Riley , including her physical appearance , characteristics , and most of her dialogue . " It felt like a good way to split it , where [ Hicks ] would own Riley and I would own Ellie , " said Druckmann . When creating the comic 's art style , Hicks avoided replicating the game art , instead opting to " draw it in [ her ] own style and to the best of [ her ] ability " . She felt that the art style is slightly " cartoony " , which is partially due to Ellie 's young age . " If [ the comic ] was hyper @-@ realistic and super @-@ rendered , I think it would undermine the story we 're trying to tell " , said Hicks . When designing the character Angel Knives for the comic 's second issue , Hicks was inspired by the style of the characters from the Mortal Kombat series .

The first issue of the comic was published on April 3 , 2013 , and a reprint became available on May 29 ; the second issue was also published on May 29 , followed by the third issue on June 26 , and the fourth issue on July 31 . All four issues were republished in a collected edition as a single package on October 30 , 2013 .

= = Plot = =

At the Boston quarantine zone , Ellie becomes caught in a fight with a group of boys who attempt to steal her belongings . Riley Abel steps in to break up the fight , beating one of the boys and making the others flee . Ellie becomes angered by this , claiming that she can take care of herself . Riley then advises Ellie to flee , but the latter is caught and assigned to cleaning duty . While she is completing the chore , she realizes that Riley stole her Walkman , and later demands that she return it , which Riley reluctantly does .

At night , Ellie catches Riley attempting to sneak out of the school , and demands to accompany her . Riley reluctantly agrees , and the two make their way to the mall , where they meet Riley 's friend Winston . As Winston teaches Ellie how to ride a horse , Riley steals his radio , and discovers that an attack by the Fireflies ? a rebel group opposing the quarantine zone authorities ? has occurred nearby . Ellie and Riley make their way to the attack , and find that the Fireflies are wounded and outnumbered . To help , Ellie and Riley throw smoke grenades at the military , allowing the Fireflies to retreat safely . They are spotted by the military , and escape into a nearby alley , where they narrowly avoid being bitten by an Infected ? zombie @-@ like creatures infected by a mutated strain of the Cordyceps fungus .

The girls are soon captured by Fireflies , who restrain them ; Marlene , the leader of the Fireflies , recognizes Ellie , and demands that she remains safe . When Riley claims she would like to join their group , Marlene refuses , and the two argue , resulting in Marlene threatening to shoot Riley . Ellie intervenes , demanding at gunpoint that Marlene explain how she knows information about Ellie . When Ellie finally lowers the gun , Marlene informs her that she knew Ellie 's mother , and had promised her that she would take care of Ellie . Ellie hands the gun to Marlene , who says that she would tell her more about her mother in the future , before telling the girls to leave . When Ellie and Riley reenter the quarantine zone , Riley says that there is no escape . Ellie suggests running away , but Riley informs her that this will just result in death . The two then walk back into the school .

= = Reception = =

The Last of Us : American Dreams received generally positive reviews . Praise was particularly directed at the story and artwork of the comic , which were said to compliment each other . The comic was also a commercial success ; the first issue sold out , and the resulting high demand led to Dark Horse reissuing the installment .

The comic 's story received positive reactions . Lonnie Nadler of Bloody Disgusting felt unsure about the story in the first two issues due to their dedication to character development , but praised the final issue for delivering " authentic drama and raw intensity " which was missing from previous issues . IGN 's Jesse Schedeen felt that the story served to enhance the world and characters , and later praised the comic 's availability to readers who had not played the game . Conversely , Nathan Butler of Invisible Gamer felt that the introduction and development of the first two issues could have been shortened , and that the final issue attempted to include too much content , ultimately calling the comic a " sub @-@ par attempt at a video game tie @-@ in series " .

Reviewers also praised the comic 's artwork . Alasdair Stuart of SciFiNow wrote that the art was " so expressive and relaxed " , naming Hicks " one of the best artists of her generation " . Jen Bosier of Forbes felt that the art style worked well within the context of the story , and IGN 's Schedeen felt that the comic heavily relied on the artwork , and that its art style gave it a unique " style and identity " . Nadler of Bloody Disgusting called it " quite simplistic , but very clean " , and " visually expressive when it matters " , comparing it to Scott Pilgrim . Nadler also praised the choice of color , stating that it contained " the right palette of dark and murky hues " , as well as the cover artwork , calling it "

consistently stunning " . Jennifer Cheng of Comic Book Resources also wrote that the colors fit with the setting of the comic . Peter Jubinsky of Geeks of Doom particularly praised Hicks ' depiction of the Infected as " in pain and desperate " , calling this " especially harrowing " .

= = = Issues = = =

Druckmann , Neil , Hicks , Faith Erin ( w ) , Hicks , Faith Erin ( a ) , Rosenberg , Rachelle ( col ) , Robins , Clem ( let ) , Edidin , Rachel , Wright , Brendan ( ed ) . The Last of Us : American Dreams # 1 ( April 3 , 2013 ) , Dark Horse Comics

Druckmann , Neil , Hicks , Faith Erin ( w ) , Hicks , Faith Erin ( a ) , Rosenberg , Rachelle ( col ) , Robins , Clem ( let ) , Edidin , Rachel , Wright , Brendan ( ed ) . The Last of Us : American Dreams # 2 ( May 29 , 2013 ) , Dark Horse Comics

Druckmann , Neil , Hicks , Faith Erin ( w ) , Hicks , Faith Erin ( a ) , Rosenberg , Rachelle ( col ) , Robins , Clem ( let ) , Edidin , Rachel , Wright , Brendan ( ed ) . The Last of Us : American Dreams # 3 ( June 26 , 2013 ) , Dark Horse Comics

Druckmann , Neil , Hicks , Faith Erin ( w ) , Hicks , Faith Erin ( a ) , Rosenberg , Rachelle ( col ) , Robins , Clem ( let ) , Edidin , Rachel , Wright , Brendan ( ed ) . The Last of Us : American Dreams # 4 ( July 31 , 2013 ) , Dark Horse Comics