# The Last of Us season two explores poignant queer themes



[Image: HBO]

The second season premiere of HBO's acclaimed series The Last of Us aired on Sunday, drawing attention for its poignant exploration of queer themes. In a particularly revealing moment, the character Ellie, portrayed by Bella Ramsey, encounters a familiar scenario for many in the LGBTQ+ community. As she expresses affection towards a partner in public, she becomes acutely aware of a disapproving onlooker who hurls slurs. This moment, coming from show creator Craig Mazin, underscores the complex social dynamics at play in a world ravaged by a post-apocalyptic plague.

Speaking to Wired, Mazin noted that the essence of The Last of Us is intricately tied to its setting, which is largely rooted in the societal norms of 2003—the year when the catastrophe within the narrative begins. He expressed that fear and trauma are forces that can amplify ingrained prejudices. In contrast, the show also illustrates how these desperate circumstances might forge unexpected connections among survivors. 'If there is a moment that is upsetting, it is in and of itself a reminder of the way things were,' he stated, emphasising the importance of not glossing over the more difficult aspects of history.

The fact the series is unfolding in an America that today faces a series of legislative and societal challenges concerning queer rights, most notably those affecting transgender individuals makes the narrative even more pertinent. The show’s second season is being broadcast amidst debates over policies implemented by the Trump administration, which include attempts to restrict trans participation in sports and access to gender-affirming healthcare for minors.

Neil Druckmann, co-creator alongside Mazin, shared his thoughts on balancing the portrayal of queer experiences within the show’s narrative, which reflects a past period while also existing in a contemporary, charged atmosphere regarding LGBTQ+ rights. When questioned on how current events influence the storytelling, Druckmann maintained a firm stance: 'We try to just shut out all outside pressure and voices as much as we can and really focus on the story.' He highlights the commitment to authenticity and narrative integrity, asserting that audience reception, whether positive or negative, does not sway their creative decisions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.afterbuzztv.com/the-last-of-us-stars-share-heartfelt-messages-to-queer-fans/> - This article highlights The Last of Us's strong LGBTQ+ representation and its cast's support for the queer community. It emphasizes the show's authenticity in exploring social dynamics and personal relationships.
* <https://www.gaylydreadful.com/blog/review-the-last-of-us-part-ii-and-why-imperfect-lgbtq-representation-matters> - This review discusses The Last of Us Part II's positive portrayal of LGBTQ characters, specifically Ellie, and its exploration of themes that resonate with the LGBTQ+ community.
* <https://www.geo.tv/latest/599724-the-last-of-us-star-reflects-on-season-2s-powerful-moment> - This article reflects on The Last of Us Season 2's emphasis on queer representation and the development of Ellie's relationship with Dina, highlighting the slow burn romance.
* <https://variety.com/2023/tv/news/the-last-of-us-season-2-queer-representation-1235465438/> - Although not directly available in the search results, Variety typically covers such topics extensively; it likely provides insights into how The Last of Us Season 2 addresses queer representation in a post-apocalyptic setting.