

On Writing and College Life in Rainbow Rowell's Fangirl

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Abstract

The novel *Fangirl* was written by American novelist Rainbow Rowell. The novel was published in 2013. The University of Nebraska serves as the setting for Rainbow Rowell's Bildungsroman *Fangirl*, which is one of the top ten contemporary college novels. This book may evoke memories of the 1960s. Despite being a young adult novel that also follows the protagonist Cath through her first year of college, *Fangirl* may bring back memories of similar experiences for any graduate of college, regardless of field of study. As the plot revolves around a creative writing course Cath enrolls in during her first semester, *Fangirl*, like many other great college novels, is preoccupied with the writing process. Cath is a fanfiction writer who creates fantasy stories based on the works of Harry Potter. She turns in an assignment. Even more, Cath's progression to writing a changed short story for the course colleagues her scholarship to deal with family difficulties as well as her anxiety in the college atmosphere that is new to her. In turn, not only does the novel not completely overstress college life, but it also highlights Cath's need to adapt her forces as a student and her responsibilities outdoor campus.

Keywords: College Life, Fanfiction, Intertextuality, Campus Novel, Family Dysfunction, Mental Health.

Rainbow Rowell was born on February 24, 1973, in the state of Nebraska, which is located in the United States of America. She is recognized for her Young Adult, Contemporary, and New Adult books. Before beginning her writing career, Rowell worked as a columnist and copywriter for the Omaha World-Herald from 1995 to 2012. When she was working for an advertising agency, she wrote *Attachments* as a hobby, which became her first published novel later. *Eleanor and Park* was Rowell's debut young adult novel, published in 2012. She authored *Fangirl*, her second young adult novel, in 2013. The New York Times chose *Eleanor and Park* and *Fangirl* as the best young adult novels of the year. In January 2014, Rowell agreed to a two-book agreement with First Second, an American graphic novel publisher. *Landline*, a contemporary adult novel about a troubled marriage, was published on July 8, 2014, and is Rowell's fourth. Following *Fangirl*, Rowell wrote a trilogy of books based on the fictional books. Its sequel, titled the eighth book in the series, was released in 2015. It draws heavily on JK Rowling's Harry Potter books. Her most recent novels, *Wayward Son*, released in 2019, and

Any Way the Wind Blows, published in 2021, are both Simon Snow tales. Some of the key themes Rowell engages in her works include family dynamics, facing life obstacles, coming of age, love, identity crisis, and teen angst. Rainbow Rowell's Fangirl is a young adult novel that was published in 2013. The novel follows Cath, a socially awkward college freshman. She is an ardent fan fiction writer and a die-hard lover of Gemma T Leslie's popular book series Simon Snow. Cath is having to adjust to college life and deal with her fears, particularly because her twin sister Wren wishes to pursue a new independent life without her. Cath receives support from her fan fiction writing and internet network.

However, as she grows more interested in her writing and her relationships with her roommate Reagan and her boyfriend Levi, she begins to face the obstacles of real-life situations. Cath ultimately finds her voice and tale as she socializes with others. Rowell's second novel Fangirl, particularly when read during the epidemic, which resulted in online education and limited social interaction, is a nostalgic portrayal of college life set at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. While the work is featured as one of ten recent campus novels, it might also be described as a Bildungsroman, as it follows the protagonist Cath Avery's first year of college. Fangirl is a coming-of-age story about family relationships, mental health, house parties, crushes, and a newly arrived college student's scholastic Problems. Because it concentrates on a first-year student who takes a wide range of classes, the novel does not concentrate on a specific department but rather gives a thorough image of campus life as an integral component of early twenty-first-century American society.

In the initial days of the semester, Cath finds college life surreal, viewing it through the lens of a well-informed yet limited narrator. As she walks to class, she senses a dreamlike quality, as if she's living out a scene from a Coming-of-age film rather than experiencing her own reality. With no prior college experience, Cath associates the campus more with popular culture than her everyday life. A dedicated reader and writer, she channels her passion into fanfiction based on the Harry Potter series, featuring characters like Simon Snow. The novel Fangirl delves into Cath's writing process, especially within the realm of fanfiction, integrating extracts of her work as Magi Cath to convey a sense of reality. Notably, Cath weaves a plot of romantic tension between Simon Snow and his roommate Baz in her fanfiction.

Cath's excitement for her first semester at college revolves around the creative writing course, a beacon of anticipation amid the challenges of leaving her hometown, Omaha. As she embarks on this new chapter, the Overview to Fiction Writing class becomes not just a class but a focal point of her college expectations. The prospect of adapting to a new environment is heightened by her twin sister Wren's decision not to be her dorm roommate. Cath is taken aback by the surprising revelation that Wren, her twin sister, opts not to share the dorm room, disrupting their presumed inseparability. The symbolic unity in their names, constituting Catherine, underscores their strong connection, a bond now tested. This unexpected turn prompts Cath to retreat socially in the subsequent weeks.

In contrast, Wren quickly becomes friends with her roommate, a freshman named Courtney, who enjoys going to parties and has an active social life in which Cath rarely participates. Unlike Wren, Cath avoids the dining hall save with her sister, as she explains to her roommate, Reagan, a sophomore. Cath dislikes new places and situations. Cath agrees to go only after Reagan forces her to join her for supper in the dining hall one night. Cath, on the other hand, does not see her lack of social life as a limitation. Cath feels like a part of her life is coming to an end early in the semester when her high school lover, Abel, who now attends Missouri Tech, breaks up with her over the phone because he has met an innovative girlfriend. Cath thus devotes herself to her fanfiction, which has a large internet following. Cath believes that online conversation with her fans is more appropriate than face-to-face talk because, on the internet, you become all of the profits of other people without the body aroma and eye contact.

Fangirl's image of inventive writing differs from that of earlier campus books. Cath is thrilled at the thought of being taught writing by an officially published novelist, Professor Piper, to the point that she has read all three of her novels, but she already has thousands of internet followers to cater to. Cath intends to compose and upload Carry On, her conclusion to Simon Snow's story, before the author. Cath is surprised to discover that many problems arise in her creative writing class. First, when Cath submits a fanfiction piece as a writing assignment, she is surprised to see that Professor Piper has accused her of plagiarism. In the post-lesson discussion, Professor Piper assigns Cath responsibilities. If you're requested to compose something original, you can't simply take someone else's story and rearrange the characters. Cath must disagree, claiming that she prefers to name her writing Borrowing, Repurposing, Remixing, and Sampling. Many contemporary literary theorists would agree with Cath's point of view. However, Professor Piper has an essential role in Cath's growth as a writer and as a person. He encourages her to explore writing ideas inspired by her personal experiences.

Despite accusing Cath of plagiarism, the professor admires her writing abilities and extends the time for delivering her final project. Professor Piper, an author of novels about social difficulties in rural America, believes that if Cath continues to write fanfiction, it will limit her artistic development. Despite Cath's remark that she will continue to write fanfiction because she enjoys it, the professor claims that writing fanfiction cannot be a career. She believes that creative writing can be a useful tool for self-reflection. The professor describes her writing technique by saying that he takes something that happened in 1983 and makes it happen to someone else in 1943. He picks apart our lives in this way to better understand them by writing through them. Cath realizes she has a lot to write about after reflecting on her own life experience during the talk. Despite their early dispute, Professor Piper becomes Cath's genuine mentor. In contrast, The book only briefly mentions the other lecturers that Cath has.

Cath's other concern in the creative writing class stems from her writing sessions with her classmate, Nick Manter. Early in the semester, the professor offers the students a combined writing project in which they must compose a short tale in pairs outside of class time. Nick immediately asks Cath to be his writing partner, and she agrees, partly because she imagines Nick to be handsome in an old-fashioned way, resembling someone with a bottom deck ticket on Titanic. In contrast, Nick admires Cath's writing abilities but does not appear concerned about them. After their short tale is nominated as one of the best in the class, Nick suggests they continue to collaborate as writing partners, and they eventually write an alternative piece together.

To Cath's surprise, Nick declared at the end of the semester that he would submit this short story as his final project in the creative writing class. While Professor Piper accepts Nick's paper, she tells Cath that she can see her participation in some of the better parts. To Cath's chagrin, Nick gets away with submitting a piece that she has greatly enhanced. Cath felt enraged. Robbed She'd written some great material with Nick, and she'd never get it back. If she tried to use any of those lines or jokes, people may accuse her of stealing them from him. Like she'd never steal anything from Nick except the paisley scarf he was wearing, which she'd always liked. Nick's lack of interest in Cath outside of obtaining a top mark in the creative writing class is verified when, after the conclusion of the semester, he never tries to contact her again.

He only appears briefly in one scene near the end of the novel, waiting in front of Cath's dorm room door to inform her that the story he submitted for the progression has been selected for publication in the university's literary journal however, Professor Piper will only allow it to be published if Cath's existence is acknowledged as a co-author. The scene emphasizes Nick's selfishness, as when urging Cath to consent to the tale being published under these terms, he says, You've got to say yes, Cath. Cath consequently finds it simple to reject Nick's imploration. Nick's

portrayal, rather than a realistically presented identity, could be interpreted as an exaggeration of a self-important student and would-be artist. This facet of the story makes *Fangirl* similar to previous campus novels, which indulge in satire of various parts of academia and its companions.

Towards the end of the novel, Cath's name emerges in the university's literary journal, unrelated to Nick's story. Instead, her submission for the creative writing class not only wins the Underclassmen prize but also gets published in the journal. The final page of *Fangirl* includes a one-page excerpt from this triumphant story. Guided by Professor Piper, Cath, fueled by the growth in her relationship with Wren, finally pens a narrative titled *Left*.

In the conclusion of *Fangirl*, the heroine is awarded academically for her autobiographical story, but this achievement results in Cath's separation from Simon Snow's universe and the realm of fanfiction. Simultaneously, *Carry On* transforms into an alternate universe as Gemma T. Leslie's final volume claims the final narrative voice. Cath's version of *Carry On* is intricately woven into Rowell's 2015 novel of the same title.

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