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# Fangirl: A Novel

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Rowell, Rainbow. *Fangirl: A Novel*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013. PZ7.R79613Fan 2013.

“Wren held her tight and shook her head. She really was crying, too. ‘Don’t be so melodramatic, Cath,’ Wren laughed hoarsely. ‘It’s never over...It’s *Simon*.’” – page 427

Cath Avery and her twin sister, Wren, have been part of the Simon Snow fandom since they were young, but fandom has a deeper meaning for Cath than most. Cath doesn't just hang out online in Simon Snow forums, she doesn't just attend the midnight release for each of Gemma T. Leslie's Simon Snow books, and she isn't just able to quote every one of the Simon Snow movies filmed to capitalize on the print saga. Cath writes Simon Snow fanfiction, and with tens of thousands of hits on each post to her website, Cath clearly writes it well.

Fanfiction has become an escape for Cath, who is by nature more introverted and generally prone to panic attacks than her outgoing twin, Wren. Cath enjoys reworking Gemma T. Leslie's magical stories: she understands Simon Snow, she understands the World of Mages, and she revels in changing the relationships between the characters and writing entirely new scenes for each of them. When writing fanfiction, Cath feels more like herself – it has become her coping mechanism and brings order to her otherwise often chaotic world.

But when Cath leaves for university, not even Simon Snow may be able to solve all of her problems. Cath's new roommate Reagan is brusque and intimidating and Cath is flustered by the guy Reagan regularly brings to their dorm. Cath can't uncover the intentions of a classmate who wants to meet weekly to write, and she learns the hard way that her fiction-writing professor views fanfiction as a waste of time. Moreover, Cath is worried about her lonely father as well as her suddenly uncommunicative twin, who seems determined to experience college on her own. Cath's life is steadily changing and she feels pressured to let fanfiction go, but Cath isn't sure she can handle a new life without Simon – one of the most important pieces in her life of old.

Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl* is a book of firsts: Cath's first time living away from home and her first true separation from her sister, Cath's first real friendship, and maybe her first true love. But *Fangirl* is also a celebration of the powerful relationship created between a book and its reader: Simon Snow is a deep-rooted part of Cath's life and that may not be such a bad thing. Rowell's work of realistic fiction is brimming with genuine teenage emotion, perfectly embodied by a heroine who is the opposite of the current young adult standard. Cath is awkward and angst-ridden, yet her worries and woes are never exaggerated; Cath is not only believable, but endearing, and her character will stay with readers long after *Fangirl* is finished.