

Fangirl

Rainbow Rowell

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Fangirl is one of those many contemporary YA novels out there that depict teen life in all of its glory and pain, yet it still manages to be original in a refreshing way. The main character, Cath, is starting her first day of school at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has a twin sister, Wren, but unfortunately their relationship has hit a rocky bump because Wren decided that she wanted some “distance” from Cath to meet new people and have new experiences. Unlike Wren, an extrovert who devotes herself to parties and clubs almost every night, Cath has trouble adjusting to college life because of her social anxiety. She spends most of her time in her dorm room writing fan fiction about Simon Snow, a boy magician from the fictional fantasy book series Simon Snow.

Eventually, she befriends her roommate, Reagan, and Reagan’s ex-boyfriend, Levi. Cath also finds a friend and writing partner in Nick, her classmate from her Creative Writing class. Things start looking up for her until she gets her first ‘F’ on one of her written assignments for her writing class. She had turned in one of her Simon Snow fan fiction stories, but her professor had deemed it “plagiarism”. In addition to her troubles with schoolwork, she and Wren were becoming more and more estranged, her mentally unstable father back home had a sudden breakdown, and Cath was forced to leave school early to take care of him. Her mother, whom had abruptly left their family when Cath and Wren were just eight years old, wants to become involved in her life again. Cath develops feelings for Levi, but sees him kissing another girl. She’s also betrayed by Nick, who “steals” the story they were working on together by turning it in as his own final project. All of these incidents build up to Cath’s overall depression and misery

at school, and she seriously considers dropping out for a while. But when spring semester rolls in, Cath decides to give college a second chance, and her life begins to change for the better thanks to the people around her that manage to bring her out of her shell.

This novel has some of the most memorable characters in the fictional world. Cath, Levi, Wren, and all of the other characters are very real and sympathetic. Every reader can relate to them and the experiences they face, but I do think that *Fangirl* would most appeal to teenage girls. The author, Rainbow Rowell, adds a clever touch to the novel by incorporating “excerpts” from the Simon Snow series (which draws similarities to the Harry Potter series). I liked everything in this book, from the characters, to the plot events, and even the “fangirl” elements, and I would highly recommend it.

Recommended Books:

Attachments by Rainbow Rowell

Eleanor and Park by Rainbow Rowell

Holding Up the Universe by Jennifer Niven

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Let It Snow: Three Holiday Romances by Maureen Johnson, John Green, and Lauren Myracle