

The Healing Power of Magic and Love: Analyzing *Fourth Wing* by Rebecca Yarros within the Romantasy Genre

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Abstract:

A recent genre that combines romance and fantasy, the Romantasy genre typically features perfect love within an enchanted world. Rebecca Yarros's *Fourth Wing* (2023) unsettles these conventions by positioning trauma, recovery, and systemic critique at its center. This paper examines the ways in which the novel builds on the genre, emphasizing emotional growth, detailed world-building, and a romance that eschews stereotypical tropes. It explores how the text deviates from these established norms, looking specifically at its examination of power dynamics tied to emotional endurance, the choice of a military academy as backdrop for a more personal and institutional conflict, and its rebuttal of deterministic romantic narratives. Through textual analysis and a scholarly lens, the current paper analyzes three main aspects: protagonist Violet's magical evolution and its relationship with her psychological healing, the role of the academy as a microcosm of systemic and individual struggles, and the romance between Violet and Xaden, discussed in psychological terms as a relationship based on equity rather than fate. The book reconstructs Romantasy by knitting personal recovery into societal change, value through earned grit instead of natural talent, and depicting love as a collaborative project. Its critique of corrupt institutions and emphasis on relational honesty push the genre forward, offering a blueprint for stories that blend epic fantasy stakes with introspective depth. This analysis illuminates *Fourth Wing*'s contribution to expanding the thematic parameters of the genre, establishing Romantasy as a framework for the discussion of contemporary issues like structural inequality and ethical choice that enhance its relevance and narrative potential.

Keywords: emotional healing, *Fourth Wing*, Rebecca Yarros, Romantasy, worldbuilding,

Introduction

One of the most popular sub-genres of contemporary fiction is the Romantasy, which combines romance with fantasy elements, delivering high-stakes love stories in other-worldly settings. Characterized by its ability to entwine romantic relationships with aspects of magic, fantasy creatures, and detailed world-building, Romantasy has become a dominant entity within contemporary literary fiction. Series like Sarah J. Maas's *A Court of Thorns and Roses* (2015) and Jennifer L. Armentrout's *From Blood and Ash* (2020) represent the genre's greatest draw, as they provide escapism through idealized love stories and epic fantasy conflicts (Shekhawat & Kaur, 2024; Stephan, 2016; Verhavert, 2023). But these works often follow tried-and-true narrative formulas, with romance as the narrative engine and fantasy details as decorative accoutrements.

The Romantasy genre is ever-evolving and new authors have tried to break its conventionality, they left the surface level and started to venture deeper into the emotional and the psychological. Rebecca Yarros's *Fourth Wing* (2023) is a representative of this shift, blending a narrative that is as much concerned with character development and internal change as it is with the story's fantastical details. While earlier Romantasy novels approach love as an all-consuming and idealized force (Boucher, 2021; Gottschall & Nordlund, 2006), *Fourth Wing* shows romance as a channel for healing and self-discovery.

Violet Sorrengail (20), a candidate at Basgiath War College, was originally slated for the Scribe Quadrant, leading to a life as a scholar engaging with texts constructed around historical truths. Yet, everything changed when the commanding general—her mother—forced her into the dangerous and cutthroat Riders Quadrant. In this hierarchical structure, cadets compete for the chance to bond with dragons, which are granted only to the strongest among them. That leaves Violet with a physical vulnerability that is a significant disadvantage; in the cutthroat ecosystem of the Riders Quadrant, death is always a threat. Dragons form attachments to only a handful of exceptionally strong-willed humans, and the rest are blasted out of existence the moment of the first hint of weakness. Moreover, Violet's lineage heightens her vulnerability, because many cadets see her as a stand-in for their resentments toward her mother. Among those most determined to break her is the dark and ruthless wingleader Xaden Riorson, whose grudge against her is rooted in his hatred of her family. For all practical purposes, Violet will have to outsmart and outmaneuver in order to survive — the Quadrant exists in a cruel paradigm where only graduation or death is an exit. But external

threats also grow apace, as Navarre's protective wards crack, and casualties mount. As Violet explores the house and grounds, she gradually discovers disturbing evidence that points to institutional deception that puts her already precarious position in even greater jeopardy. Violet and Xaden's relationship starts off as one of mutual distrust and antagonism, but the latter is a deliberately paced development. Forced proximity, as well as shared adversities, bred an uneasy alliance that eventually morphed into a complex romantic entanglement. Between them looms a complicated dynamic that can be characterized as tense, strategically interdependent, and tinged with something like unresolved conflict, and these themes also compose the narrative's larger themes of loyalty and betrayal (Yarros, 2023).

But the protagonist, Violet, isn't only overcoming outside challenges — she's also processing emotional burden that informs her empowering arc. Its most distinctive characteristic as a novel is its use of an academy setting through which to develop both fantasy and romance plots (Berkeley Fiction Review, 2024). Whereas most Romantasy stories take place in far-off kingdoms and warrior-besieged lands, *Fourth Wing's* plot is structured around an academy where character growth comes from the needlework of mastering one's magical skills in the midst of an outrageously cruel social and political hierarchy. The academy setting, where Violet is subjected to trials and tribulations, becomes the breeding ground for character growth, mirroring her journey as she learns about her own abilities and those of others around her in ways that shape her perception of strength through fragility. The narrative constructs a world that illustrates the intrinsic connection between magical abilities and emotional strength, where true power arises not only from the body but also from the mind (Andersen & Pedersen, 2024).

Fourth Wing also includes an introspective depiction of love as a force that constantly evolves and can thus enhance or challenge a character's conception of themselves. Violet and Xaden's romance is not just a side plot or secondary motivation; it serves as a necessary part of Violet's path to accepting herself and feeling powerful. One of the more refreshing aspects of their relationship is how it completely flips the traditional "fated love" trope that is so popular in Romantasy; Rhian and Aelwen's relationship is forged in mutual development, shared trauma, and emotional support. In doing so, Yarros reinterprets a genre rooted in romantic idealization to portray a love more approachable than idealized, one captivated by the transformative nature of love itself (The Empyrean Series Wiki, n.d.).

This article contends that *Fourth Wing* reshapes Romantasy spaces by demonstrating how trauma, healing, personal growth, and resurrection are central to narrative form. With its subversion of the academy setting, multi-faceted worldbuilding, and a deft handling of the nuances of romance, the novel interrogates the conventions of its genre, providing for a more human portrayal of love and power. Through the exploration of magic and emotional healing, this study shows not only how *Fourth Wing* expands the parameters of Romantasy, but also how it has something more philosophical, and more emotionally compelling, to present.

Research Questions

- 1- What role does *Fourth Wing* play in the evolution of Romantasy, in ways that challenge the standard constructs of how magical power and emotional growth are intertwined?
- 2- How does Yarros's approach to worldbuilding and character development provide a more layered and cohesive examination of the overlap between romance and fantasy?

Research Statement

In this paper, I will conduct an analysis of *Fourth Wing* by Rebecca Yarros as a gamechanging text in the Romantasy genre. Through an analysis of the novel's revolutionary stance on matters of power exchange and their relation to magical sophistication and emotional growth, this study will prove *Fourth Wing* to be a novel that tests the boundaries of its genre. Yarros's mixing of genres is thus not simply two genres fused, this study posits, but a kind of "holistic exploration" that highlights how love, magic, and personal growth intermingle in ways that challenge traditional conventions.

Research Methodology

Important areas of analysis include:

- **Power Dynamics:** Looking at how magical power interplays with emotional and psychological development, and how this is explored through Violet.
- **Worldbuilding and Setting:** Examining the way the academy setting serves more than a backdrop, shaping both the emotional and magical development of all characters.
- **Romance and Healing:** Exploring how the romance in *Fourth Wing* transcends ideal before love, centering around emotional scars, healing and empowerment
- **The methodology** is based on both primary and secondary sources, from the text of *Fourth Wing* itself to critical reviews, academic essays about Romantasy and fantasy literature, and studies of romance/fantasy at play in contemporary literature.

Literature review

Romantasy has emerged in recent years as a cross-genre phenomenon combining romance with fantasy, a trend that has been especially popularised through BookTok and similar platforms (Flood, 2021). It blends the emotional depth of romance with the imaginative elements of fantasy to deliver rich and immersive narratives. In this exploration, we will delve deeper into the defining elements of romantasy, with references to a number of studies and analyses on its narrative structures and emerging themes.

Romantasy typically combines romantic elements with a fantasy aspect. Sarah J. Maas writes of Females whose romantic and sexual desires drive much of the action in *A Court of Mist and Fury*, thus challenging much of the traditional conception of female sexuality (Dudek et al., 2024). The book reinforces a heteronormative script in which the female protagonist's male partner is expected to intuit the female protagonist's feelings, limiting the potential for female agency around sexual communication (Dudek et al., 2024). It is in the theme of love that cultural and social norms are also explored. In the case of Chinese romantic fiction, for instance, the genre serves not only as an echo of societal values but a resolve of love fantasy for female readers (Li, 2023). For example, love is often interwoven in North Caucasian romance myths with philosophical and psychological processes, hinting that certain cultural influences and mythological elements will continue to shape the told story (Paranuk et al., 2015).

The idea of power is a repeated motif within romantasy, frequently played out through the societies that male and female characters construct around themselves. The knight archetype often appears in historical romances, e.g. those set during the medieval period, to engage with ideas of chivalry and prowess (Neconesnic & Morăraşu, 2023). These tales often challenge the cultural narrative that casts the medieval past as one of unrelenting misogyny, with potent female figures responding to their places in patriarchal societies. However, female agency is a super important aspect of many romantasy stories. While some novels like *A Court of Mist and Fury* depict female protagonists voicing their desires and experiences without shame, they often fail to model explicit communication about sexual preferences (Dudek et al., 2024). This illustrates the conflict between autonomy and restrictions due to societal norms.

Identity and transformation are key fantastical elements of romantasy. In stories such as *Harry Potter* and *A Court of Thorns and Roses*, the main characters experience key changes to themselves, typically following their romantic partners (Shekhawat & Kaur, 2024).

Not just the horrible physical transformations but the emotional and psychological transformations as well, which is very much the magic of the fantasy genre, how you can capture big feelings through the strange magic of the genre. In cross-cultural romances, the intersection of disparate cultures adds another layer to identity issues. Arab Anglophone literature, for instance, employs romantic relationships as a lens to examine Arab-Western relations, facilitating a cross-cultural dialogue in opposition to monolithic nationalist currents (Abu-Shomar & Salam, 2024).

Romantasy is also home to increasing ecofeminist themes, especially in books that pair fantasy with environmental justice. In *Aditi and the Thames Dragon*, the journey of the female protagonist is entangled with environmental conflict, resisting both patriarchal and ecological forms of domination (Jain, 2024). This reflects the genre's ability to talk about larger socioenvironmental issues through fantastical external narratives.

In addition, romantasy often borrows from fairy tale structures (*Trapped in the Academy of Dragons*, *The Chosen One of the Storm*) (Fedorchuk & Pronina, 2023). These stories develop according to a pattern akin to Propp's morphology of fairy tales, with absentation, interdiction, and marriage functions (Propp, 2014). It sets up romantic, fantastical, and other elements to play off within this framework of familiarity. The Cinderella formula, moreover, is a stock narrative structure in romance, including romantasy. This formula includes a heroine who overcomes adversity to make her happy ending with her romantic partner (Wijanarka, 2022). Although this trajectory is often condemned as indicative of patriarchal values, it has tended to be favored as a narrative device through which themes of love and transformation may be explored.

Another hallmark of romantasy —love triangles — is common in both romantasy and digital fiction. *La'nat al-'Ishq* and *Abighea* are examples of works with idealized characters and love triangles that reflect the desires and expectations of young readers worldwide (Nugraha et al., 2023). These narrative devices are very common and it adds emotional drama and intrigue which keeps the story moving. The happy ending is a staple of the romance genre and romantasy is no different. As conflicts and challenges appear therein, the resolution of the romantic relationship is often linked with the protagonist's personal growth and fulfillment (Wijanarka, 2022). This creates that sense of hope and satisfaction in the reader, the perfect appeal of the genre.

Like all historical romances, this one uses the perverse possibilities of romantic fantasy to engage with tenuous cultural-political discourses. In sixteenth-century Chinese historical romances, for example, the exogamous desire trope is deployed in discussions of proto-nationalism and imperialism (Wang, 2013). These works are indicative of the cultural curiosity and anxieties of the moment, giving us a clue into the history landscape they were written inside. Though, in the age of romance-fantasy literature, contemporary romantasy does mirror the world, often with narratives that examine intercultural relationships. For instance, cross-cultural romantic entanglements in Arab Anglophone literature are used to catalyze dialogue and contest monolithic nationalist impulses (Abu-Shomar & Salam, 2024). It's a testament to the genre's potential for commenting on real-world, contemporary social and political issues in fantastic disguises.

Analysis and Discussion

In *Fourth Wing*, emotional growth is inextricably linked to power dynamics. Violet's evolution from victim to warrior is a hero's journey both literally and metaphorically. Violet isn't inherently strong or given strength by destiny, like many Romantasy protagonists; she earns it, through trials and making herself vulnerable in order to emerge stronger. Early in the novel, she indicates, "I will not die today. The words become my mantra, repeating in my head" (Yarros, 2023, p. 21), —showing her dedication to change even when she feels limited. Her changing relationship with Xaden reflects this shift — their relationship shifts from mistrust to dependence on one another.

A central focus of power in *Fourth Wing* is how it is divided and used. Instead of leaning into the power imbalance where one character holds all the power over the other, Yarros creates an equitable relationship in which both Violet and Xaden have equal investment in each other's character development. But with Violet's growing magical abilities comes her growing authority. Even Xaden himself recognizes this when he tells her, "You're not just a rider. You're a storm" (Yarros, 2023, p. 223), affirming her presence as an equal, not an underling. That traditionally upends the power dynamics of Romantasy, in which dominance is the main currency of relationships.

Moreover, power in *Fourth Wing* is not just about magical ability. A character's strength is also determined by emotional resilience, strategic thinking and interpersonal dynamics. Violet's own survival depends not only on these burgeoning abilities, but on outsmarting her enemies. With Xaden she retorts, "I do not need a bodyguard,' I snap at Xaden. Am I out of line speaking to a wingleader that way?

Absolutely. Do I care? Not one bit.," (Yarros, 2023, p. 240) reinforcing the novel's condemnation of brute strength as the only form of power.

Worldbuilding and Its Role in Character Development

The academy setting in *Fourth Wing* is more than a backdrop for romance it's a crucible that propels Violet to her limits and beyond. The strict caste system of Basgiath War College is built upon a doctrine: "In the Riders Quadrant, you either graduate or die" (Yarros, 2023, p. 37). This high-stakes atmosphere parallels Violet's internal turmoil, ensuring her growth feels hard-earned, not preordained. When she observes, "I am the sky and the power of every storm that has ever been. I am infinite," (Yarros, 2023, p. 362) and emphasizing how the setting helps form this message of resilience. The academy is also a microcosm of larger political tensions, with outside disagreements spilling into interpersonal dynamics. Violet's navigation of factional rivalries highlights the novel's interweaving of setting and character development. When she understands that the true war is not simply outside these walls — it's in every alliance, every betrayal, the worldbuilding underscores the high stakes of her decisions.

Rebecca Yarros's *Fourth Wing* redefines the Romantasy genre by masterfully weaving together worldbuilding with character development. This helps to examine its underlying theme: the transformative nature of magic and love as tools of healing. In traditional Romantasy, the fantasy elements are just background for romance. That is not true for *Fourth Wing*, which uses every action-packed detail of the Basgiath War College in this alternate world and its draconic lore as a living, breathing force that influences protagonist Violet Sorrengail's emotional and magical trajectory. Through its corrupt bureaucratic system, sentient dragons and the kind of deeply complex political intrigue which would do credit to any epic space opera, the novel shapes a story of healing that takes place on a personal and systemic level, overturning many genre conventions. Basgiath War College is completely integrated into this novel's central conflicts, and works on a Darwinian principle where one must fight for survival relentlessly. This lawless ground reflects not only the landscape outside the western coastal fortress (where Violet Sorrengail risks her life as a spy for the New Commonwealth government), but also characters within Violet herself: Aleea Linwood has cancer and is physically weak; she has always had a poor relationship with her military mother; society expects that she conform to certain standards of behavior without hardship. The

academy's murderous pedagogy thrusts Violet into a powerful collision between vulnerability and aspiration, pushing her to reckon with her limitations head-on; Violet's eventual victories are won, not destined.

The Riders Quadrant's "graduate or die" (Yarros, 2023, p. 37) motto externalizes Violet's deep-seated fear that she is inadequate, and the physical space of the academy becomes a psychological landscape populated by this need for self-actualization. Every obstacle she must overcome — whether it's the treacherous gauntlet or the merciless social pecking order — serves as a metaphor for her path to self-acceptance. At its heart this story subverts the tropes of fantasy as it shows that our hero's strength is realising that weakness is normal, well at least amongst all the regular folk, and it is not the absence of this weakness that makes us strong but rather the will to persevere in spite of it. This fits with the novel's forward-looking treatment of both magic and love as resources for survival, not just as elements of escapist fantasy. Yarros raises the dragon-rider cliché above titillation by imbuing the dragons with deep psychological import. These creatures act as embodiments of their riders' souls, and since the undesirable applicants get killed on the spot, Violet must confront her deepest vulnerabilities during their selective bonding procedure. The development of a special bond with two dragons could heal her wounded life both metaphorically and literally. This connection demonstrates her second nature where she gradually comes to accept herself. This type of whimsically sanitized storytelling merges the compositional process of magic and emotional maturity, in a tone that subverts established conventions in anime literature as far as magic goes. All this goes on to grow even stronger within the novels' telepathic links with the characters' dragons which can only be achieved through mutual understanding, rather than control. Such a theme covertly throws light on these books' astute picture of power - dynamics in magic as well as relationships both above and at work. Beyond the tutor's high walls, Yarros has built a world of political turmoil. Those ancient protective lines of Navarre, weakening: vindicate how flimsy institutional power is. As Violet begins to uncover state falsehoods, her life's story has a new meaning which evolves from a personal quest for satisfaction to an aggregate struggle for truth and justice. Told like this, the pageantry of the narrative effectively lifts the book above the confines of the fantasy-romance genre, illustrating how personal healing always involves track change.

Political turmoil here isn't just a narrative function, it fundamentally changes the status of people. Violet and Xaden's love

doesn't deepen despite being on such a largely shattered stage; but precisely because they have far only ever known such a spread of their world. Their love is an act of defiance against the systems that tried to destroy them, and magic and love become complementary in their healing journey. This subverts the Romantasy trope of love as a sanctuary from trauma, reframing it instead as a deliberate decision to weather a storm together:

I'm not going to lose the only woman I've ever fallen for without a fight.

... I'll spend every single day of my life earning back your trust.

... I would rather lose this entire war than live without you, and if that means I have to prove myself over and over, then I'll do it. You gave me your heart, and I'm keeping it. (Yarros, 2023, pp. 497–498)

Romantic and Emotional Healing

There isn't a perfect love story that unfolds between Violet and Xaden; rather one built on slow trust. Unlike the usual Romantasy tropes, their love isn't a healing balm for trauma, but an ongoing project of mutual care. Xaden admits,

You want to know why you're still alive? Because you're the scale I currently judge myself against every night. Every day I let you live, I get to convince myself that there's still a part of me that's a decent person. So if you want to quit, then please, spare me the temptation and fucking *quit*. But if you want to do something, then do it. (Yarros, 2023, p. 131)

This is an especially potent reflection of Xaden and Violet's complicated dynamic — one of accountability, moral grayness and begrudging crutching rather than moon-eyed romance.

Xaden's admission is visceral and unflinchingly truthful; it tears away at notions of chivalry or destiny. He doesn't pretend that he protects Violet out of love or even loyalty; rather she acts as his moral compass, a living reminder of the humanity he worries he's lost. His words indicate a self-hating pragmatism: the fact that he keeps her alive is his way of showing himself that he isn't completely given over to darkness.

For Violet, this moment is devastating and clarifying. Xaden isn't telling her hollow platitudes or grand proclamations — he's telling her the unvarnished truth. Their attachment is not one of healing each other's trauma by falling in love (an archetypal Romantasy trope), but of witnessing one another's suffering without flinching. His challenge—"if you want to do something, then do it" (Yarros, 2023, p. 131) —compels her to take agency instead of relying on him to save her. This dynamic distinguishes their relationship from traditional

fantasy romances. Trust is not automatic; it comes from the choice you make, not the hand that you have been dealt. Xaden's love (if we can even call it that at this point) is wrapped in guilt and necessity; Violet's strength is that she will not be just the reflection of his conscience. Their relationship is messy, uncomfortable and all the more interesting for that.

Yarros also twists the notion of love as fate. When Xaden says, "I don't deserve you ... But I'm going to keep you all the same," his arm curls around Violet's hips and he pulls her closer. "Good" she answers and gets closer and brushes her lips against his, "because I think I'm in love with you." His eyes go wild and his arms cinch tight around her, "You think? Or you know? Be brave." She explicitly calling into question traditional Romantasy narratives (Yarros, 2023, p. 416). They have what should be respectively called honesty in a relationship, such as when Violet tells,

Even if he doesn't feel the same, at least I will have spoken my truth. "I know. I'm so wildly in love with you that I can't imagine what my life would even look like without you in it. And I probably shouldn't have said that, but if we're doing this, then we're starting from a place of complete honesty. (Yarros, 2023, p. 416)

This moment with Violet and Xaden is a bold departure from classic Romantasy tropes, where love is typically framed as inevitable, an elemental force that washes away doubt, pain and everything else. Instead, Yarros treats their relationship as a conscious decision, one that takes courage, vulnerability and — above all — radical honesty. Xaden's declaration is anything but a swoon-worthy vow of eternal devotion. It is possessive, morally ambiguous and painfully human. He sees his wrongness, yet won't give up, ever, subverting the idealized "fated mates" narrative where love cancels all sins (Yarros, 2023, p. 416). Violet's "Good," meanwhile, is also defiant, refusing the passive archetype of the heroine who is redeemed by love.

When she confesses, "I think I'm in love with you," Xaden's retort—"Be brave" (Yarros, 2023, p. 416) — compels her to wrestle with uncertainty upfront. This isn't a big confession written in the stars; it's an exercise in emotional bravery. This flourishment doesn't stem from certitude but from the courage with which to keep selecting each other in the face of fear. Violet's subsequent admission — "I know. I'm so wildly in love with you..." (Yarros, 2023, p. 416) — that is stated as a risk, not a guarantee. She knows Xaden may feel nothing back, but says her truth regardless. This moment demolishes the Romantasy baseline that love has to be safe or mutually assured to be real. Xaden's demand for "complete honesty" robs performative

romance from the table. There's no sweeping gesture, no fated connection, just two traumatized people trying to make sense of messy feelings. Their relationship mirrors what is real in the world; trust is earned through accountability, not destiny.

In some fantasy romances, love "heals" damaged characters, but the bond between Violet and Xaden doesn't wipe away their trauma. It accounts a space for mutual recognition, an opportunity to confront their demons without gilding the process. Xaden doesn't love Violet necessarily because she heals him; he loves her while struggling with his own darkness. By prioritizing honesty over destiny, Yarros creates a relationship that feels perilously real. Their love is not a balm — it's a battlefield, and every inch gained is hard-won.

Findings

Fourth Wing reinvents the Romantasy genre with multilayered storytelling and thematic innovation:

Emotional Resilience as Magical Catalyst: Violet's lightning powers do not come from some innate talent, but from moments of profound vulnerability, linking her supernatural abilities with emotional growth. Notice how dragons work as symbolic mirrors of mankind psychology that make characters struggle with self-doubt. This interaction between magic and internal growth is in contrast to models where power is separate from psychological growth.

Worldbuilding as Psychological Landscape: The ruthless class system of Basgiath War College, in which students have to earn their place or attempt to upturn the whole institution if they're not suited to the merchant's daughter template, acts as a narrative device that manifests Violet's anxieties about her flaws and her family. The academy's sagging political structures reflect her own struggles, showing how systemic rot intertwined with individual recovery.

Romance, Reimagined: Violet and Xaden's bond, for instance, is built around war and lies, trauma and agency, as they reject the notion of their relationship as a "soulmate" cliché. Their relationship reframes love as an evolving partnership, not a predetermined, cure-all force.

Reimagining Power: The story dismisses brute force as a measure of strength, glorifying strategic guile, emotional fortitude and relational subtlety. If Violet sheds fear as a sign of acceptance, her ascent in power and influence is mirrored by something akin to confidence, both in the self and against patriarchal precedent that is reflected in the story and commentary naturally atypical of narrative.

Sociopolitical Allegory: Navarre's crumbling magical defenses and institutional lies echo real-world themes of authoritarian decay

and disinformation. By entwining Violet's personal awakening with the unraveling of society, the novel raises Romantasy into a filter for examining systemic inequities.

Conclusion

Rebecca Yarros's *Fourth Wing* is an epochal resurrection of the Romantasy genre in that she purports to have outgrown the tropes of escapism, pioneering a new brutality of psychological depth, systemic critique, and narrative innovation. Unlike earlier works that idealize love or use fantasy as mere decoration, Yarros intertwines magic, romance, and power dynamics with emotional and societal healing. It is an academy, so life there as a deadly pedagogy is full of political intrigue, a scale-factored microcosm of broader struggles, and life lived there is a reminder that at some point in time you will have to conclude that it is impossible to have a self without a self outside and that you cannot grow without struggling against something larger than yourself. Violet's arc — from fragile outsider to resilient leader — embodies the novel's defiance of deterministic tropes. Her strength is not inherited or granted by fate, but caulked from determination, tactical skill and the bravery to expose institutional falsehoods.

Her relationship with Xaden is no less of a reimagining of Romantasy romance, supplanting passive "fated love" with active choice, mutual accountability and unflinching honesty. Their relationship exemplifies the novel's wider argument: healing doesn't happen in a straight line; it's an ongoing negotiation of trust and intimacy. Their bond flourishes in the tension between personal wounds and common mission, making clear that love only has meaning in relation to accountability.

Additionally, *Fourth Wing* broadens the thematic range of the genre (socially and politically) by weaving social and political commentary in its underlying fantasy structure. The breakdown of Navarre's wards and the sentient bonds of the dragons represent the fragility of institutional power and the need for truth-telling. In this way Romantasy becomes a genre that can speak to modern day plagues like systemic oppression, environmental collapse, and The Rise of Theocracy. The novel's critique of authoritarian structures, reflected in the academy's brutal hierarchy and the government's distortion of history, is applicable to contemporary discussions about power, transparency and resistance.

By prioritizing emotional resilience and systemic critique, Yarros pushes Romantasy to grow beyond its genre limits. This is an incredibly challenging type of novel to write in the fantasy genre, and its success comes down to the balance between stakes and intimate

character studies throughout the book, with Marked ones (refer to those carrying rebellion relics on their arms) and the angels providing an exploration into the morally ambiguous ideas, losing fate and hope versus finding a way to stand in the face of history, a more clear evil for the reader to combat—and a device the reader is able to relate to, as Marked ones struggle between deciding between the different worlds she has to become a part of in this novel (and potentially beyond). Violet’s victories are less about defeating enemies than about finding agency in an environment of oppression that would leave little room for marginalized voices. At the end of the day, *Fourth Wing* recontextualizes the genre as a realm in which a fantasy exists not to let the mind wander in the clouds, but to be a reflection of the nuanced, harsh world—a narrative playground in which love, magic and justice are achieved through trial and tribulation, not handed out by celestial decree.

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قوة السحر والحب العلاجية: تحليل رواية "الجناح الرابع" لريبكا ياروس في إطار الخيال الرومانسي

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الملخص:

يعد نوع الخيال الرومانسي (Romantasy) من الأنواع الأدبية الحديثة التي تمزج بين الرومانسية والخيال، حيث يتمحور غالبًا حول الحب المثالي في عالم سحر. إلا أن رواية الجناح الرابع (2023) لريبكا ياروس تزعزع هذه التقاليد عبر وضع الصدمة النفسية، والتعافي، والنقد المنهجي في صميم أحداثها. يبحث هذا البحث في كيفية تطوير الرواية لهذا النوع الأدبي، من خلال التركيز على النمو العاطفي والتأسيس الدقيق للعالم الخيالي وعلاقة رومانسية تتجنب القوالب النمطية التقليدية. تتناول المقال كيفية انحراف النص عن المعايير السائدة، عبر تحليل ديناميكيات القوة المرتبطة بالقدرة على التحمل العاطفي، واختيار الأكاديمية العسكرية كخلفية لصراع شخصي ومؤسسي، ورفضه للسرديات الرومانسية الحتمية. من خلال التحليل النصي والعدسة النقدية، يناقش البحث ثلاثة محاور رئيسية: تطور البطل "فيوليت" في سحرها وعلاقته بتعافيهما النفسي، دور الأكاديمية كمجتمع مصغر يعكس الصراعات الفردية والمنهجية، والعلاقة بين فيوليت و"زايدن" من منظور نفسي، حيث يتم بناؤها على أساس المساواة بدلاً من القدر المحتوم. تعيد الرواية تشكيل نوع "الخيال لرومانسي" عبر دمج التعافي الشخصي بالتغيير المجتمعي وإعلاء قيمة الاجتهاد المكتسب بدلاً من الموهبة الفطرية وتصوير الحب كمشروع تعاوني. كما أن نقدها للمؤسسات الفاسدة وتركيزها على الصدق في العلاقات يدفعان هذا النوع الأدبي إلى الأمام، مما يوفر نموذجًا لحكايات تربط بين رهانات الفانتازيا الملحمية والعمق التأملي. يسلط هذا التحليل الضوء على مساهمة رواية الجناح الرابع في توسيع الأطر الموضوعية لهذا النوع الأدبي، وترسيخه كإطار لمناقشة قضايا معاصرة مثل عدم المساواة الهيكلية والخيارات الأخلاقية، مما يعزز من أهميته وإمكاناته السردية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخيال الرومانسي، الجناح الرابع، ريبكا ياروس، بناء العالم، ديناميكيات القوة، الشفاء العاطفي.