

The history of the book is an area of study that includes revolutionary and important works; cuneiform tablets, papyrus scrolls, the Gutenberg Bible, Shakespeare's folios, Homer's epics, and many, many more. There is an understanding in the rare book and historical manuscript world of the so-called "greatest hits" or most important and relevant works. Looking into more modern times, a work I view as revolutionary to the course of literature is the work *After* by Anna Todd.

The importance and influence of fan fiction in the peak Tumblr fangirl era (for the purposes of this silly essay, we will define this from 2011-2015) cannot be overstated. Wattpad was an essential app on any iPod touch of a fangirl. These fan fiction stories had more than just the writing, they often had links to curated playlists, including a song for every chapter, a Pinterest board with outfits, hairstyles, places the characters would use and go to. It was a fully immersive world created by and for fangirls. Readers could comment within the platform, which were often hilarious and just as enjoyable as the actual fic. There was no fic more popular or influential to me and my peers as *After* by Anna Todd.

The "dark" Harry Styles alternate universe story demonstrates some of the most popular tropes and tools used in One Direction (and most other) fandom spaces. The "dark" character often has tattoos and piercings, maybe a motorcycle, wears dark clothes, and toes the line of genuine bad person and dry charm. The alternate universe where familiar people and characters are placed in a different environment to allow a peek behind the curtain.

This was a cult-followed fanfic. I have strong memories of reading updates on an iPod in junior high at lunch with my friends, discussing the chapters in depth. To this day, the three-part series ranks in the top ten most read fics of all time on Wattpad. It is one thing to be successful within a fandom, but it is an entirely other thing to hit more mainstream success, which this book absolutely did. There was such a storm around this book that people outside of fandom began reading it, downloading Wattpad specifically to see what all the fuss was about.

Because of the craze around *After*, there was a move to publish the book traditionally. This meant that the story and characters were edited, Harry became Hardin and Gallery Books tapped into the fangirl market by creating a "real" book of *After*. The second two books were published as well and they were all turned into movies. The wild success of this series demonstrated the popularity (and potential profit) of fan fiction. Wattpad began creating stronger relationships with publishing houses and created their own publishing division and began pumping out more books. There was a combination of original works, many young authors wrote on Wattpad creating entirely original stories, and fan fiction altered for traditional publishing. Popular books and authors that I remember from the time include Ali Novak (who's book *My Life with the Walter Boys* was turned into a Netflix series), Natasha Preston, both who wrote original works on Wattpad.

The interests of young women and girls have long been dismissed and never taken seriously, viewed as trivial and unimportant. The move from secret, online stories to physical, published books felt like a step in the right direction. After the giant success of *After* and extreme popularity of Wattpad, fan fiction continued to be a source for publishers. Recently, author Ali

Hazelwood published her debut book, *The Love Hypothesis*, which started as a fanfic on ArchiveOfOurOwn (AO3) about Rey and Kylo Ren from Star Wars. The published book features many nods to its origin, such as the Kylo character being named Adam Carlsen, referencing Adam Driver. An extremely popular Draco Malfoy x Hermione Granger fanfic called *Manacled* has been signed to a publisher and the author is editing the book.

The publishing industry (and my tween mind) were never the same following the breakout success of *After*. It is wild to think about how this will be viewed in 50 or 100 years and what will make the cut as the crucial turns in the history of the book.