

Review – I'll give you the sun

"I'll Give You the Sun" by Jandy Nelson is about twins Noah and Jude who used to be super close, but a tragic event tears them apart. The story is told from both of their perspectives: Noah's when they're 13 and Jude's when they're 16.

At 13, Noah is a shy, artistic kid who falls for the boy next door, while Jude is fearless and popular. But after their mom dies, everything changes. By 16, Jude is haunted by guilt and has become superstitious, while Noah has stopped drawing and is really withdrawn.

As they each try to figure out what went wrong, they uncover hidden secrets and misunderstandings that caused their rift. Through their journey, they learn about forgiveness, love, and the healing power of art, slowly finding their way back to each other.

"I'll Give You the Sun" by Jandy Nelson has several strengths. The main characters are complex and relatable, with their growth being compelling. The book tackles heavy themes like grief and identity powerfully, and its focus on art adds extra meaning. Additionally, Noah's journey with his sexuality is portrayed honestly and supportively, providing important LGBTQ+ representation.

However, the book also has weaknesses. The alternating timelines and perspectives can be confusing. Some parts of the story might feel overly dramatic and unrealistic. The pacing can be uneven, with some sections dragging and others feeling rushed. Jude's superstitions and supernatural elements may seem out of place, and some supporting characters lack depth.

Overall, "I'll Give You the Sun" is a powerful novel with strong characters and emotional depth, though its structure and pacing might be challenging for some readers.

I would definitely recommend the book because it represents the life of teenagers very well. Throughout the book you really notice how on one part the twins seem completely different but on the other they are also the same. I think it is a captivating story and the best book we have read so far.

Lorelei Pernhaupt, 5A

Review of "I'll Give You the Sun" by Jandy Nelson

"I'll Give You the Sun" by Jandy Nelson is an emotional and beautifully written novel about the twins, Jude and Noah Sweetwine. It was published on the 16th of September, 2014. The story alternates between their perspectives and different points in time: Noah's voice speaks from when they are thirteen, full of artistic dreams and secret love, while Jude's voice comes from three years later, when she's a rebellious sixteen-year-old dealing with guilt and grief. As they navigate their turbulent teenage years, a tragic family event drives a wedge between them, leading to misunderstandings and secrets. The novel's plot unravels how these siblings, once inseparable, struggle and strive to find their way back to each other.

"I'll Give You the Sun" is an incredible novel that beautifully captures the complexities of growing up. It's a story about family, love, and the difficult journey of understanding and accepting oneself. The themes of forgiveness, reconciliation, and the transformative power of art resonate throughout the book. Jandy Nelson has created a powerful and moving narrative that not only tells a compelling story but also delves deep into the characters' hearts and minds. This book is a must-read for anyone who appreciates rich storytelling and poignant, heartfelt moments. It leaves a lasting impression, reminding us of the importance of love, connection, and being true to oneself.

I personally really enjoyed reading the book. It has a really amazing storyline and I would definitely recommend the book.

Julia Schuster, 5a

I'll Give You the Sun by Jandy Nelson is an emotionally charged novel that dives deep into the complexities of teenage life through the eyes of twins Noah and Jude. The book uses a narrative structure, with alternating perspectives from the two siblings set three years apart. This allows readers to see how specific events shape their lives

The story follows Noah and Jude, who are incredibly close until a series of events drive a wedge between them. Noah's chapters, called "The Invisible Museum," are set when he is 13, and Jude's chapters, "The History of Luck," take place when they are 16. This format helps us understand their personalities and struggles over time, such as their artistic dreams, family dynamics, and personal losses.

Noah, the more artistically gifted twin, struggles with his sexuality and his mother's favoritism. His journey is about finding himself beyond his mother's expectations and coming to terms with his identity. On the other hand, Jude deals with guilt and the lingering effects of their mother's death. She seeks solace and guidance from her late grandmother's superstitions. The alternating viewpoints enrich the story, offering insight into how each twin experiences and copes with their issues and family situation.

When Noah doesn't get into art school but Jude does, it sets off their individual paths of self-discovery. While Noah turns away from art, Jude struggles with her artistic voice, due to her insecurities.

The reliance on first-person narratives sometimes results in convenient eavesdropping or hidden observations to push the plot along. Despite these small flaws, the emotional depth and vivid storytelling make up for it.

I'll Give You the Sun is a beautifully written novel. The book stands out among many novels for its authentic portrayal and I really enjoyed reading it (more than the fourth wing). What I loved most is how real the characters feel. The author doesn't shy away from showing their complicated lives, but she also balances it with humor and hope. The focus on art and how it helps the twins heal and connect is really interesting.

In the end, this book is all about love, forgiveness, and the unbreakable bond between siblings. It's one of those stories that makes you think about your own relationships and experiences. "*I'll Give You the Sun*" is definitely a must-read.

REVIEW – I'LL GIVE YOU THE SUN

Sometimes you read a book, sometimes you read a story. *I'll give you the sun* is more than a story. It is laughter, sorrow, incredulity and passion, all compressed into ink on dead trees. Although at first puzzling, and to some maybe irritating, both Jude's and Noah's narrative is utterly life-encompassing as Jandy Nelson manages to not only have the reader see their perspective, but live it in its entirety.

Jude and Noah, twins, both artistically talented though not in the same way, have always had a close relationship; that changes after their lives are thrown in disarray and for years they have to manage basically without each other. However, fate cannot seem to let the past rest and so they have to jump over their shadows and face their troubles.

There are many aspects that make this book great: the writing and plot for example, but nothing stands out as much as the simple realism of the story. All characters are thoroughly human, they hate and compete and are jealous and spiteful and ashamed of their actions just feverishly as the love and hope and help each other and want to make everything right. Their feelings and thoughts are depicted in a way that makes the reader feel empathy for objectively horrendous acts.

I'll give you the sun will crush anyone to the core and build one back up again who can lose oneself in pages upon pages of emotional writing and might permanently alter the way one looks at the world.

You have been warned.

Lucia Polacsek, 7A

The way of all flesh – Ambrose Parry – review

The story takes place in Edinburgh in the nineteenth hundreds. Young women are discovered dead all over town and they seem to have suffered the same way. The medical apprentice, Will Raven, comes to town and starts his career with the experienced Dr Simpson.

Raven is also allowed to stay in the house of Dr Simpson and he comes across the housemaid Sarah Fisher, who senses bad in him and she isn't exactly wrong because he owes a lot of money to some people. She is a very intelligent woman, whose dream it is to study medicine but due to her gender and class it is impossible. Even though they don't like each other, they end up working together to find out what happened to those poor women.

The book informs the readers about midwifery and the development of chloroform. Overall, I neither liked or disliked it. I liked the historical part because I was able to learn a lot from it. However, there was a lack of plot until the last pages. Adding to that, I wasn't convinced by the crime story because it doesn't really get into the focus of the narrative until the very end. Also, I think there should have been more backstory regarding the characters because I couldn't really get to know them. What I did like was the character development of Sarah and Raven. Altogether I would give the book three out of five stars.

The way of all flesh – Review

The way of all flesh is a book written by Ambrose Parry. It was published in 2018. The genre in which the book is written is historical fiction and crime fiction. Ambrose Parry is not one, but two people. It is the pseudonym for Chris Brookmyre and his wife Marisa Heatzman. The book “the way of all flesh” is their first collaboration together.

The book is about Raven, who is a medical student. He is working for Dr Simpson. Dr Simpson has a housemaid, her name is Sarah Fisher. A lot of women are found dead, and nobody knows why. Raven and Sarah both want to solve the crime, so they both get themselves in the dark shadows of Edinburgh’s underworld. They must face a lot of obstacles in order to solve the crime.

I personally liked the book. It was hard to read sometimes because it has a few difficult words in it but otherwise it was pretty good. I really liked the topic that covered the book because I think it is very important and not talked about enough. I would recommend the book to people who like reading about historical events and complex topics such as this. It also contains medical things so if you are interested in those kinds of books then you will like this book.

Julia Schuster, 5A

THE WAY OF ALL FLESH- by Ambrose Perry

REVIEW

In "The Way of All Flesh," a historical crime novel written by Chris Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman under the pseudonym Ambrose Parry, readers are transported to 19th-century Edinburgh. Set against the backdrop of medical advancements and societal disruption, the novel follows Will Raven, an apprentice to pioneering anaesthetist James Simpson, and Sarah Fisher, a spirited housemaid with aspirations beyond her station.

The storyline unfolds with Raven harboring a dark secret, entangled with the death of his lover, while Fisher navigates the intricacies of class divide and gender expectations.

Together, they investigate a series of gruesome murders plaguing the city, blending elements of historical intrigue with those of a classic crime novel.

The story in "The Way of All Flesh" seems interesting at first, but it ends up falling into some typical traps of old-fashioned crime tales. The plot is rather predictable, with clues that are too obvious and an ending that isn't surprising. Moreover, the inclusion of historical figures feels contrived and doesn't really contribute anything meaningful to the story. After a while the book felt very boring and repetitive, the middle part of the book being dragged out for way too long.

Despite its shortcomings, "The Way of All Flesh" offers a compelling glimpse into the tensions of a rapidly evolving society, where progress clashes with tradition and the pursuit of justice is difficult. While the novel may not break new ground in the genre, it certainly is an interesting read, especially if one is interested in historical crime novels. Therefore, I would recommend the book, however, I would not read it again.

Review *The Way of All Flesh*

The book *The Way of All Flesh* was written by the married couple Christopher Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman under the pseudonym Ambrose Parry and published in 2018. It is not your usual murder mystery, but thought-out historical fiction set in 1847 and focused on the obstetrics of the time.

Will Raven, the protagonist, is about to start his apprenticeship with the renowned Doctor Simpson when he finds his friend, a prostitute, dead and contorted. In order not to be associated with a prostitute Raven flees the scene and starts his apprenticeship as if nothing was wrong. There he meets Sarah Fisher, a housemaid with exceptional medical knowledge but held back by the simple fact that she is a woman. As more and more corpses appear Raven and Fisher must work together to find out who is behind it.

The Way of All Flesh is written from both Raven's and Fisher's point of view, offering fascinating insights into their personalities. Both characters have unique backgrounds and ambitions and are interesting to read about. The most extraordinary aspect of the whole book has to be the language though as it perfectly captures the time period.

In my opinion, this is one of the objectively best books ever published. The story, the characters, the language, it's all spot-on. Furthermore, the medical aspect of the story is well researched and informative.

I would recommend the book to anyone who values correct historical fiction with fascinating characters and immersive language.

Lucia Polascek, 7A

Ambrose Parry
THE WAY OF ALL FLESH
review by Lydia Blank

A city of secrets and opportunities; a young man near the end of his medical studies hoping to leave behind his previous life in the dark, crime-infested streets of the Old Town; a housemaid fighting to improve her status with the dream of starting a medical career herself; and a series of frightening murders all around town ... *The Way of All Flesh* is an enthralling mystery adventure that takes its readers all the way to the shadowy streets of Edinburgh, exploring the conniving world of 19th century medicine. In this review I wish to discuss what exactly made this novel such an extraordinary read.

It is the year 1847. Will Raven, resident of Edinburgh's infamous Old Town, is facing the extraordinary prospect of becoming assistant to the renowned Doctor James Young Simpson, a skilled and wildly successful obstetrician known for his benevolence and compassion for the poor. Bewildered at his luck and eager to prove himself, it seems that Raven still cannot quite escape the implications of his upbringing; worse still, as his friend and secret love, Evie, is found dead and horribly contorted in the bordel she had worked at, Raven appears to be the only one wishing to investigate the cause of her terrible death.

At the same time, Sarah Fisher, sharp and audacious, but utterly displeased with her position of housemaid in the Simpson household despite her medical knowledge and abilities, finds herself in a similar situation when the maid of an acquainted household is found in a condition quite like Evie's, but is largely ignored by the authorities. Having begrudgingly decided to work together, the two begin to uncover the tracks of a ruthless murderer ...

The novel was written by married couple Chris Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman under the pseudonym of 'Ambrose Parry' and published in 2019. Haetzman, having worked as a consultant anaesthetist for over twenty years, was inspired to the novel by research done for her Master's Degree in the History of Medicine, thus collaborating with her husband, award-winning author of crime fiction, to create the first book of this thrilling historical murder mystery.

The Way of All Flesh is one of those books in which setting and location are at the very heart of it. Before reading the novel, I would never have thought the town of Edinburgh in Victorian Scotland would fascinate me as much as it did; however, the love and care for his city Brookmyre put into his writing was palpable on every page. Not only does Brookmyre allow the reader to feel as though they are walking the streets of the Old Town themselves, the insight into the milieu of medicine at the time is expertly done as well, and one is able to quickly get a feel for the different types of persons in the medical field of Victorian times.

Aside from its thrilling plotline, *The Way of all Flesh* also aptly tackles its multitude of complex themes, many of which are focused on prominent issues during the time the novel is set. This includes the social standing of women during said time, abortion, classism, prostitution as well as the ethics of medicine and wealth. Additionally, the main character's difficult relationship with his father, culminating in a tragic event during his

late childhood years, plays a significant role in his characterisation, as seen in the title of the novel, a reference to Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* in which he portrays a similar father-son dynamic.

The language of the novel is another aspect undoubtedly deserving of praise. Elegant and melodious as well as sharp and witty, Brookmyre expertly captures the personality of Victorian folk in their manner of speech alone, and does so without leaning into the air of pretentiousness many books in Victorian settings take on. Although a little overwhelming to me at first, this writing style quickly managed to draw me into the story even more.

Arguably the strongest point of the novel, however, are its characters; with the approach of tying history into fiction – or perhaps fiction into history? – Brookmyre introduces historical figures from Scotland such as James Young Simpson, Henry Littlejohn and James Syme to the reader, giving them personality and truly bringing them to life in a way that is both entertaining and educational. Historical facts and anecdotes are incorporated into the story in a skilful way, and the reader will find themselves right in the midst of controversies, mysteries and accomplishments among 1840s medical practitioners. Balancing the thrill of murder mystery with an intricate depiction of the everyday life inside Number 52 Queen Street, Brookmyre manages to paint a vivid picture of the internal lives of his fascinating leads, Sarah Fisher and Will Raven. In fact – rarely have I read a novel in which the main character's perspective enhanced the story in such a way as Raven's did. With his ties to both the foul, shady dwellers of the Old Town as well as to the sophisticated but equally shady medical practitioners on the other side of North Bridge, with his fascinating duality of professionalism and empathy against his impulsive nature, and last, but not least, his brilliant humour, Raven succeeds in truly bringing the story to life by viewing it through his eyes. Sarah, as the second point-of-view character, though not quite as interesting, possesses the same quality of augmenting the events of the story by being the one to narrate them; partially due to her standing in Victorian society, partially due to her way of handling it and her efforts to break free of its constraints. Though not entirely realistic, the portrayal of a feminist maid trying to prove her exceptional medical skill in a vastly male-dominated field is not only done well, but an important story to be told.

All in all, Ambrose Parry's *The Way of All Flesh* is a fantastic, highly immersive dive into 19th century medicine and obstetrics, exploring a territory quite unique for a murder mystery. Its blend of historical factuality, alongside a variety of compelling characters, tied together into a complex, thought-provoking story kept me coming back to reread it. For anyone who enjoys historical fiction, murder mysteries or is generally interested in the history of medical practices, this book is highly recommended!

The way of all flesh – Review

The way of all flesh is a book written by authors Christopher Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman who write under the pseudonym Ambrose Parry. It was published in 2018 and includes genres such as historical fiction, Thriller and street literature.

Edinburgh 1847, a time when ruthless medical experiments were being carried out, quite often by the unscrupulous, those whose patients were of no consequence, who's lives mattered little when set against the desire for fame and fortune. Against this backdrop, Will Raven secures himself an apprenticeship with the much-respected obstetrician Doctor Simpson. The story begins with the suspicious death of Will's prostitute friend Evie, but her death (as we are about to find out) is only just the beginning! Will is determined to discover who killed Evie and along with his sidekick, housemaid Sarah, he is dragged into Edinburgh's very dark and seamy underground

I soon found myself drawn into the story, eager to be drawn back to the dark and foggy streets of Edinburgh in 1847. I loved the atmosphere of the book. It was easy to imagine the comfortable drawing rooms of the wealthy and the stark contrast of the freezing attic rooms of the poor visited by Raven and Simpson.

One of the the biggest pros is the variety of characters who all add to the story. Will Raven is driven, eager to make more of himself, to bring himself up from his beginnings. He has a darker side, one he is all too aware of, and an event in his past still haunts him. This is even more apparent when Mrs Simpson and Mina, Dr Simpson's sister-in-law are on the page.

I think it's a great Book that shows the differences between the different classes in the 18th century. It also shows new aspects of the Medicine and how it was used back then. I would surely recommend the Book because of its mysterious and dark ways of showing the Life more than 150 years ago.

Review: Fourth Wing – Rebecca Yarros

The book "Fourth Wing" by Rebecca Yarros is a fantasy/romance novel about a girl named Violetta that is forced by her mother to enter the dragon academy at Basgiath War College. There she encounters a lot of obstacles that she has to cope with.

Violetta is more of a book person but her mother requests for her to still go to the Riders Quadrant where she has to fight and bond with dragons. There she meets one of her old friends from when she was young whom with she starts a friendship but she also has a lot of enemies that want to kill her, like Xaden.

Personally, I thought that the book was really long and that it was very predictable. In my perspective the book put way too much focus on Violet and neglected the other characters. It is somehow logical why that is the case because she is the main character but I would have found it more enjoyable if there had also been a bit more about the other characters in the plot. I don't like to read fantasy books myself that is why I would not intentionally recommend the book to people who don't like those kinds of books either. Although if you like fantasy books then this book could be a really good choice for you.

Julia Schuster, 5A

Review- Fourth Wing

The Book called, written by Rebecca Yarros is a fantasy romance novel which was published on April 5th, 2023. The book combines aspects of romance, adventure and self-discovery and is very popular amongst fantasy readers.

It is about a girl named Violet Sorrengail, the daughter of the infamous General Sorrengail. She was prepared for the Scribes Quadrant all her life, but her mother had other plans and forced her to go to the Riders Quadrant. Therefore, Violet had to face a series of increasingly perilous tests, including being the only one bonding with two dragons, one of which is one of the largest dragons in the entire country. In her first year she made many friends. However, a few turned out to be enemies.

In my opinion, the book is written a bit poorly, especially because of how the main character Violet is repeatedly portrayed as weak and helpless and needs to be saved by her Boyfriend Xaden every time something bad occurs. Not to forget that Violet has one of the biggest Dragons in the country and can definitely defend herself. I really wanted to like the book, but I was turned off by the obvious foreshadowing and the lazy, formulaic writing. On top of that, the relationships and characters have no depth. We were made to believe Xaden wants to kill Violet, but I personally never once felt that threat was real. I also think that the characters, especially Xaden, were so one dimensional and boring.

I would not recommend the book because, even though it has such a big Fanbase, I think it is deficiently written and ultimately makes little to no sense. I just don't understand how such a popular and well rated book can have so many flaws and disappointments.

The forth wing- review

"The Fourth Wing", written by Rebecca Yarros, presents itself as an easy read, with a storyline set at Basgiath War College in the fictional country of Navarre. The book follows Violet Sorrengail whose mother forced her to enter the riders quadrant. Upon entering, the cadets must complete a series of challenges in order to bond a dragon in order to graduate and leave the quadrant alive.

Despite not particularly liking the writing style, I found myself captivated by the intriguing storyline, as Violet navigates the challenges of the Rider Quadrant. While it could be criticised that Violet's love interest is very predictable, I still enjoyed seeing it develop over the course of the book. Incorporating a chronic illness into the book is excellent representation and helps connect the fantasy world to the real one.

As someone not typically drawn to fantasy, the book offered a unique and unusual experience for me. Against my expectations, I was really entertained by the book and even started the sequel.

Rebecca Butollo, 7B

Review of Fourth Wing

Fourth Wing is a book of the fantasy genre. It starts with the protagonist, Violet, who is getting ready for Conscription Day. On that day they audition to become a rider for Navarre's army. The assignments are very dangerous and challenging. She could have also become a scribe like her father and that was originally the plan. However, Violet wanted to take the challenge, even though her family members have passed the challenge and grown to be accepted riders. When she arrives, she is immediately attracted to a guy who is three levels above her. Her sister had already warned her about guys older than her but she doesn't listen to her and tries to get a chance with the boy who is called Xaden and he is the leader of the squad called Fourth Wing. Later in the book Violet joins this squad and their difficult relationship starts.

I personally don't like the book. In my opinion it is way too unrealistic and it is not feminist at all. Violet is presented as the weak, cute girl and Xaden is the only one that is able to complete her and without a man Violet is „nothing“. Other than that I don't like the writing style of the author because it is written very simple.

Carina Horner, 5B

Fourth Wing; Graduate... or die.

Gryphons, dragons, handsome men and a devilishly lethal school – ever since its release, Rebecca Yarros' romantasy novel *Fourth Wing* has been shared all over TikTok, with people claiming it is everything they look for in fantasy and more. Over the past four months, I have fought through its 498 pages and have come to decide whether it has the right heat... or whether it is hot garbage.

"Graduate or die." – thus the motto of Basgiath War College, a military school in which young volunteers are made into riders of powerful dragons. 20-year-old Violet Sorrengail, daughter of highly esteemed General Sorrengail, has always dreamt of becoming a Scribe, keeper of books and historical records; but when her mother commands she be enrolled in the Riders Quadrant, she is forced to grit her teeth and face its deadly challenges. As if this wasn't enough, Violet comes face to face with Xaden Riorson, who is not only her new superior and the son of a revolutionary recently executed by her own mother – but also strikingly handsome... To top it all off, as Violet navigates through her turbulent and perilous first year and through highly scandalous love affairs, she begins to sense a much bigger and more disturbing threat on the horizon ...

Having read the novel, there are quite a few points I'd like to make regarding its quality – most likely enough to fill a book of their own, in fact – but I would like to start by saying this: I very, very strongly advise against trusting recommendations of people on TikTok when looking for quality entertainment.

With this out of the way, let us look at some of the book's positive aspects. Yarros presents her readers with a fantasy world of dragons, gryphons and war, which possesses a truly interesting history, tying the different nations and provinces on its map together. Though there is nothing particularly unusual or new in its portrayal of dragons and riders, it also doesn't fall short of one's expectations if one cares for dragon stories in fantasy. In short: the story offers decent ideas and a well-constructed worldbuilding, lending the book a good deal of potential in my eyes.

Unfortunately... that is really all. In every other regard, the story has little to offer. Yarros' promising fantasy world takes up only a third of the Holy Trinity: characters – worldbuilding – plot, and these other two aspects simply fall flat; flat enough even to wonder whether she outright forgot about them.

In general, *Fourth Wing's* characters can be sorted into four groups: the supporting characters we are meant to like (easily identifiable by being nice, funny and/or queer), the characters that are meant to bully and try to kill Violet, the ones that are supposed to die and the love interests. So far, so good; the interesting part, however, is that none of these types of characters come with more personality than the ones in the other groups.

Almost all of them are shallow husks of people only serving their one, abovementioned purpose.

The only exceptions to this are the (two) love interests – they display a fascinating variety of toxic personality traits and an even wider range of ‘romantic’ actions that not only speak volumes about the author’s views on relationship dynamics¹, but are also incredibly harmful to the young, impressionable audience the book is undoubtedly catered to. This includes, for example, a scene of the male lead, Xaden, trapping the distressed and resentful main character against a wall with his hands – but the book tells us it’s all a-okay, because his (yes, his) internal monologue quickly explains that she ‘knows she could leave’. To further demonstrate what is most important about these male characters, Yarros feels the need to include entire pages of detailed descriptions of their bodies, while completely skipping other important descriptions. Because who wants to know what the school looks like² if we could learn the exact positions of Xaden’s tattoos instead?

As for the book’s plotline, the most that can be said is that for the most part, it doesn’t exist. After the essential elements have been covered - the ceremony of meeting the dragons, the first big physical challenge (“The Gauntlet”) and the day the dragons choose a rider, all of which happen in quick succession – the story begins to focus on the love story... and it never really stops. The plot effectively stagnates, and the reader is forced to endure Violet’s increasingly ridiculous expressions of lust for Xaden. This goes on for chapter after chapter until the last 50 pages, into which Yarros manages to squeeze about a dozen different plot twists, a completely new enemy, and the most boring final battle one could possibly imagine.

All this makes for a story that only remotely resembles a reasonable plot; things *happen*, but they are not tied together by a greater storyline. There is no enemy, no greater goal. Our stakes: Will Violet survive? And will she get together with Xaden? Both of these questions can easily be answered by the first quarter of the book. There is simply no need to keep reading from that point onwards, unless you desperately want to know how many different paraphrases of “taking someone to bed” a writer can come up with.

To conclude, *Fourth Wing* is a novel composed of 400 pages of predictable, boring and outrageously cliché-ridden events, barely strung together by a thin thread, ridiculously full of sexual content and devoid of any reasonable or compelling plotline – topped off with the least engaging finale I have come to read in my entire life. If you have, perhaps in a moment of mental disarray, purchased this book, I would recommend not to waste any more time on it than it takes to chuck it into the nearest fireplace.

Lydia Blank, 7A

¹ This became apparent to me when I read how Yarros explains at the very end that “there is a piece of [her husband Jason] in every love interest she writes.”

² In case you were wondering: the school looks like a castle. Obviously.

Fourth Wing – a review

If you are active on social media, whether it be Instagram, Tiktok, or Goodreads, and enjoy reading, you have surely heard about this book. Fourth Wing, the first book of the Empyrean series by Rebecca Yarros was first published in English in March of 2023 and has since been a magnet to both enthusiastic praise and scathing criticism.

Fourth Wing is set in a fictional world with a medieval setting where the nations of Navarre, the homeland of Dragons, and Pomodriel, the homeland of griffins, have been at war for centuries. Consequently, the military plays an important role in the countries regime and its structure is a major part of the world building. There are four quadrants: The Healers, the Scribes, the Infantry and the Riders Quadrant, which trains dragon riders within the stronghold Básgiath.

The protagonist, Violet Sorrengail, is the youngest daughter of the renowned General Lilith Sorrengail and therefore expected to follow her footsteps and join the military. But not just the infantry, no, Violet must join the riders quadrant. Even though she has studied her whole life to become a scribe, her mother's word is law.

During her entrance exam, Violet meets Xaden Riorson, whose father led a revolt six years ago and was killed by her mother, and he therefore despises her.

The narrative follows Violet while she faces challenge after challenge until she eventually forges a bond with her dragon and has to face a truth she doesn't want to believe.

Personally, I found this book abysmal. The characters, including Violet, feel very one-dimensional and experience minimal to no growth at all through the course of the book. It is also a very predictable story, with innumerable clichés and a lack of attention to details. Furthermore, the romantic dynamic between Violet and Xaden is not only extremely predictable, but also terribly toxic and cringeworthy at times. Violet behaves like a horny teenager in the most inappropriate situations while Xaden is supposed to be this mysterious but charming love interest, even though his actions say otherwise. He torments her through the entire first half of the book, single-handedly ruins her mental health and then, without any good reason, falls in love. Violet hates him just as much, but cannot, for Christ's sake, stop gushing over how attractive he is. The quote, "He was flaming hot. Scorching hot. Gets-you-into-trouble-and-you-like-it kind of hot.", sums the love story up quite nicely and shows how it is solely based on superficiality and sexual attraction, lacking any kind of depth.

This one-dimensional writing does not stop at the main characters. In my opinion, the side characters were decent, even though underdeveloped. They did add to the story and had at least individual personalities, as superficial as they were.

Another problem I must address is Violet's chronic illness. It's apparently Ehlers Danlos Syndrome but the portrayal is problematic. My main problem with it is, that Violet *does* suffer from EDS, but it does not seem to hinder her in any way. She just powers through it and at the end of the book, she can fight just fine. She doesn't need to work with or around it, her strength of will is apparently enough. This does not show the realities of living with such conditions and perpetuates harmful misconceptions.

Finally, there is one aspect that does not affect the course of the book but causes headaches for anyone looking for deeper meaning within the names. Gaelic, the old language of Ireland, is used for the names of the dragons among other things. For example, one dragon is called "Tairneanach", meaning "thunder", another "Codagh", which means "war" in Gaelic. However, "Basgiath", which is supposed to mean "Deathwing" actually means "Palmwing", as the author did not bother to differentiate between bas (palm) and bàs (death). Not only are some names incorrect or illogical, Rebecca Yarros has also been mispronouncing the Gaelic words in interviews while insisting that she is saying them correctly and thus causing discontent among the Gaelic community.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend you refrain from reading Fourth Wing. It is not only a complete and utter waste of time but also presents a terrible example for young and impressionable girls. Depicting such a toxic relationship as desirable and the dismissal of chronic illnesses can be detrimental to anyone taking the book to heart.