

## **Story Summaries and Author's Notes and Reviews, Oh My!: The Activity System of Fan Fiction**

By: Erika Romero

In this article, Romero explores how fan fictions function as activity systems, both as individual stories and on a website solely devoted to these fan texts. To help readers understand the various elements discussed in the article, its format has been designed to mimic that of a story on fanfiction.net.

Rated: S – English – General – Fan, Student – Chapters: 1 – Words: 4460 – Reviews: 12 – Favs: – Follows: – Published: Aug 1, 2015 – id: – Complete

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A/N: So one of my many assignments this semester was to write an article for the *Grassroots Writing Research Journal*. Of course, I immediately knew I wanted to write about fan fiction, but I wasn't sure where to get started. So, my next step? Research, of course! Who was I to deny myself some time on fanfiction.net (the fan fiction website this article explores) for the greater good of a class assignment? After ~~reading~~ researching some stories, I realized just how many activities are involved when reading on this site, and *voilà*, an article topic appeared before my very eyes! "Activities → Activity Systems," my brain screamed at me. ENG 101 instructors at Illinois State University, myself included, often use this term, activity system, but what does it mean? While I can tell you the definition—a system of "goal-directed, historically situated, cooperative human interactions" that have specific subjects, tools, rules, and objectives (Russell 53)—I think applying it to an interesting genre (fan fiction!) will prove more satisfying. Fanfiction.net is one website that definitely qualifies as an activity system, but it builds on the systems within each individual story posted on the site, as well. So, without further ado, let's dive into one specific fan fiction and explore how the various components work together to create a so-called activity system.<sup>1</sup>

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Have you ever wondered what happened to Dexter Morgan or Rory Gilmore after their shows ended? Do you wish [insert name here] survived the final battle in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*? Are you upset that Arthur Pendragon didn't find out about Merlin's magic until the last episode of the BBC series, *Merlin*? If your answer to any of these questions is yes, or if you can think of any other book, television show, movie, video game, or other text that you would change if you could, then fan fiction is here to make your wishes come true. If you don't know what fan fiction is, just ask any search engine and you'll get thousands of results about what it is and

where you can find some to read (or write). Basically, fan fictions are stories written by fans that explore “what if” situations, like filling in plotline gaps or creating alternate universes where an event from the original storyline does not occur or happens differently, changing the rest of the plot. For the sake of space and time, I can’t discuss all the sites that have fan fiction here, so as I mentioned above, I’m going to focus on one particular site, fanfiction.net, as it is well known and often used by the global fan fiction community.<sup>2</sup> I also won’t be able to describe the site as a whole, as explaining every facet of the site would require all the pages of this journal. Instead, this article explores the components that make up a fanfiction.net fan fiction, as readers must juggle multiple elements when interacting with fan texts on this and other fan fiction-focused sites. As I mentioned in the author’s note (A/N) above, this site is an example of an activity system, one in which “people, texts, tools, and rules [. . .] work together to achieve a particular objective” (Sheets 134). I’ve included a diagram of an activity system below. I have intentionally made the illustration quite simple to reflect the limitations of fanfiction.net. This particular site does not allow writers to attach or paste image into their stories. If writers wish to incorporate an image, however, they might produce one similar to the following diagram.

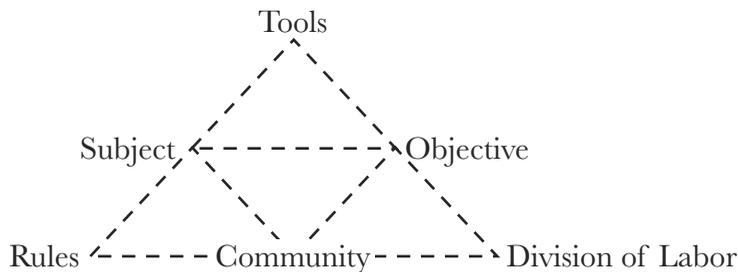


Figure 1: Diagram of an activity system.

If you’d like to experience our fan fiction activity system exploration firsthand, complete the following instructions now. For those who’d rather just read about it without going to the website, this article includes some screen shots of the example text, so you can keep track of the various components. To find the specific story I’m analyzing, follow these steps:

1. Find and turn on a device that has access to the Internet.
2. Open your Internet browser.
3. Type in fanfiction.net into the address bar. Press enter.
4. On the site’s home page, the search bar appears on the top right of the screen. Change the search category from “Story” to “Writer.”
5. Type in the username “Lynse.” Hit enter.
6. Click on “Lynse.” You’ll be taken to her profile.

7. Scroll down until you find the story titled *Intentions*.
8. Click the title. The story web page will open.

(Note: The process I just described is one of the fastest ways to find a specific story. However, it is exactly that: just *one* way, not the “correct” way. Searching for a new story to read involves a completely different set of steps. For that process, the home page is a great starting point; just click on one of the categories—Anime/Manga, Books, Cartoons, Comics, Games, Misc, Movies, Plays/Musicals, TV Shows—and find the fandom you want to explore.)

At this point, some of you are on the site and some of you are just reading this article. In either case, let's start exploring an actual fan fiction story. What's misleading about the definition of this term is the assumption that it consists solely of the story—the plotline a writer has decided to create for his or her readers. This belief does not hold true in reality, however, as this site both imitates and plays with other genres. Genre, in this specific case and for the purposes of ENG 101 at Illinois State University, is defined as “any type of specific textual production that you can examine as a unique example of some kind of communication, created in response to situational requirements” (Illinois State University Writing Program 3). For example, consider a novel that you've checked out from a library or bought at a bookstore. Does it only consist of the story being told? No, it likely has a book cover, a table of contents, a blurb on the back cover, and perhaps an audience age range listed, if it's marketed towards children or young adults. These are examples of the genres that make up a book, as each communicates different information (or perhaps different versions of the same information), due to the situations that require them. Is the book extremely long? Perhaps a short, exciting blurb summarizing it will attract readers. The table of contents can help them keep track of when different plot points occur. The age range can signal the difficulty or ease of the story's language. Reading a book, then, doesn't only involve reading the story; it is just one element in the activity system of reading.

Nonetheless, readers can choose to skip certain elements, like the blurb, and go straight to the first chapter. This jumping around is more difficult with fan fiction, though, due to the way the digital medium affects the activity system. When searching for a story to read on fanfiction.net, you cannot skip the blurbs, which are referred to as summaries, because the stories are listed by their summaries, not just their titles (Figure 2). In addition, the summaries don't just include the writer's short description of the story, but also multiple data points that help readers decide whether or not they want to give the story a chance.

The screenshot shows a search results page on fanfiction.net for the keyword "Merlin". The page header includes navigation options like "Browse", "Just In", "Community", "Forum", and "Betas", along with a "Story" button. Below the header, there are filters and a "Crossovers" icon. The search results are displayed in a list format, showing the title of the story, the author's name, a brief summary, and various statistics such as ratings, chapter counts, word counts, reviews, favorites, follows, and publication dates.

22.1K | Page 1 2 3 4 11 .. Last Next »

**A Mingling of Magics** > by Astraea802 *reviews*  
 A warlock questioning his impact. A sorcerer's apprentice afraid of his destiny. A seer-turned-spellcaster still discovering his limits, and his past. When these three are drawn together through time and space to 21st-century New York, can they face their demons, \*and\* save the world? AU, time travel, crossover, reincarnation. Pre-"Coming of Arthur." See profile for full summary.  
 Rated: K+ - English - Friendship/Fantasy - Chapters: 9 - Words: 31,289 - Reviews: 37 - Favs: 20 - Follows: 46 - Updated: Oct 2, 2014 - Published: Jan 6, 2012 - Merlin, The Great Dragon/Kilgharrah

**The Land Beyond the Fence** > by dlouc *reviews*  
 Arthur used to have a good life in Berlin until the war started, and his family was forced to move for his father's job. Arthur hates his new home in Poland. Then he meets Merlin, a boy who lives in a strange place on the other side of the fence. What starts as a friendship morphs into something more, as the two get caught in a sinister secret that could cost them their lives.  
 Rated: T - English - Mystery/Tragedy - Chapters: 2 - Words: 9,085 - Reviews: 7 - Favs: 8 - Follows: 10 - Updated: Feb 20 - Published: Jan 14 - Morgana, Merlin, Arthur

**The One True Queen** > by VeryShy *reviews*  
 Just a Season's Greeting to everyone and a promise I'll finish the story... Maybe the legend had it wrong; maybe there was no love triangle between the queen, a knight and the king... Maybe because there was another person who stole the Prince's heart. A Queen fit for the great King. Arthur/OC Chapter 41 is up.  
 Rated: T - English - Romance/Adventure - Chapters: 42 - Words: 189,932 - Reviews: 259 - Favs: 148 - Follows: 158 - Updated: 23m ago - Published: Aug 8, 2010 - Arthur

**The woman who craved knighthood** > by ClaraLuna *reviews*  
 Melanie is an old friend of Merlin from Ealdor. She travels to Camelot when Arthur is king to become a knight. But women cannot be so. She must find a way. All while attracting the attention of a certain knight named Gwain. Rated T cuz chapter 21 is inappropriate for some audiences.  
 Rated: T - English - Adventure/Friendship - Chapters: 21 - Words: 12,218 - Reviews: 23 - Favs: 19 - Follows: 23 - Updated: 35m ago - Published: Aug 17, 2013 - [Gwaine, OC]

Figure 2: *Merlin* fan fiction story list, found by doing a story search for “Merlin” on fanfiction.net.

As I mentioned in my first endnote (are you reading them?), the beginning of this article is formatted to mimic a fan fiction summary, along with the data points that are still applicable for this article.<sup>3</sup> This article is rated ‘S’ for student, for example, and its main characters are fans and students.<sup>4</sup> As part of the fan fiction’s activity system, summaries involve their own tools (words and data points), rules (character limit), and objectives (enticing readers to read the full story). Some readers might decide to only use the title, writer’s username, and data points to decide which stories to read (similar to only using the title, author’s name, and age range to choose a book), instead of reading the full summaries. This is a very inefficient approach to this site, however, considering there are over a million stories to choose from. Yes, you read that correctly. Over a million stories are currently on fanfiction.net, with *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* fan fiction alone almost making up the first million. By excluding certain genres in the activity system, these readers are hindering their ability to fully engage with the fan fiction and the community. Likewise, if the writers don’t take part in the full activity system, creating only the data points but not a written summary, for example, they limit their chances of gaining readers. But even if a halfhearted approach is taken, you can’t escape the summary, because once a story is chosen and opened, the first story element that appears underneath the website header is the summary, not the story itself. Take, for example, Lynse’s *Merlin* fan fiction story, *Intentions*. Once a reader opens the story’s web page, the following information appears at the top of the page (Figure 3).

TV Shows &gt; Merlin

**Intentions**By: Lynse 

Sorcery is banned in Camelot, so Arthur can't fathom why anyone would seek the sorcerer Emrys within the castle walls. That would mean he's unwittingly harbouring a sorcerer, and that's ridiculous. Isn't it? (No slash; possible reveal fic) Sequel posted.

Rated: Fiction K+ - English - Friendship - Merlin, Arthur - Chapters: 14 - Words: 62,209 - Reviews: 497 - Favs: 530 - Follows: 422 - Updated: Nov 9, 2013 - Published: Feb 20, 2013 - Status: Complete - id: 9030577

 Follow/Fav

Figure 3: Story summary of *Intentions*, a fan fiction written by Lynse on fanfiction.net, accessible via [www.fanfiction.net/s/9030577/1/Intentions](http://www.fanfiction.net/s/9030577/1/Intentions).

Readers can interact with multiple components of this activity system element. You can click on the writer's username and go to her profile page, which includes whatever information she provides about herself as well as links to all her stories. You can click the story rating to see what qualifies as a "K+" story.<sup>5</sup> You can click on the number of her reviews, which takes you to where all her reviews are compiled in a list by chapter and date submitted. Finally, you can click on the "Follow/Fav" button, which allows you to set reminders for when a chapter is uploaded (follow story) and/or when the writer uploads any story (follow writer) or bookmark the story and/or writer in your profile (favorite story/favorite writer). Keep in mind, this button only appears if you are a member of this site, which you can become by clicking the "Sign Up" option on the top right corner of each of the site's web pages.

While you now know how the various interactive aspects of the story summary work, it is also important to know that covert meanings are often included in the written summary itself. Lynse's summary for *Intentions* is short, giving readers just enough information to get them interested in the story line. However, it's the information after her rhetorical question that illustrates multiple subtle, but extremely important, functions of summaries that are not immediately evident to new members of the activity system. First, consider Lynse's statement that there is "no slash" in this story. Slash is one of the many slang words used by the fan fiction community. A slash story is one where a romantic relationship between two men is central to the plotline (femslash is the term used for female same-sex couples). So, in this case, the phrase "no slash" lets readers know straight away (pun intended?) that the following story does not feature homosexual relationships. At this point, you might be wondering, why does she feel the need to mention this in the summary? While some might turn this into a discussion of homophobia (which is one possible reason, if not in this story, then in others), it is more likely that she includes this statement because Merlin/Arthur slash fan fiction is quite prevalent in the community, and therefore she can prevent readers from being disappointed (one way or the other) and leaving angry reviews by warning them in advance. Next, she writes, "possible reveal fic," which is another signal to readers who have strong preferences on whether or not Arthur Pendragon should find out about Merlin's magic in the story. Once again, she uses her summary as a warning to readers, attempting to help them decide whether or not to read her story.

Lastly, in the story summary, Lynse lets readers know that a sequel is currently on the site as well. These two words, “sequel posted,” tell those familiar with fan fiction more than a novice member might first assume. Is it just her attempt to advertise another story? No, not completely, because by including this information, the writer signals that while this story is labeled as complete, it might not feel complete, as there is another story that follows it, one that might be unfinished. This is important, as it once again illustrates that the writer cares about her readers’ feelings when reading her story, enough for her to take the time to update the summary of a completed work. This story summary consists of two short sentences, a rhetorical question, and three short warnings. Depending on the readers’ familiarity with fan fiction, the amount of meaning created by this summary varies greatly, illustrating how just one element of the fan fiction story’s activity system strongly affects the reading experience. It also shows that the character limit rule of this genre—story summaries are limited to 384 characters, around the size of three Tweets—does not necessarily limit the amount of information the author can provide to readers.

Now that the story summary has been explored and analyzed, we can finally get to the fan fiction story itself, right? Well, the answer to this is actually “No,” because most stories on this site have an “author’s note” before the story itself begins. For those of you not following along on fanfiction.net, here is the author’s note for *Intentions* (Figure 4).

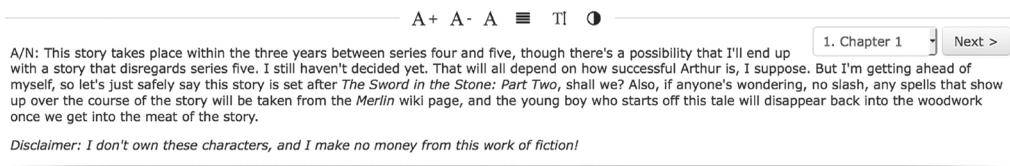


Figure 4: Author’s note for *Intentions*, a fan fiction written by Lynse on fanfiction.net, accessible via [www.fanfiction.net/s/9030577/1/Intentions](http://www.fanfiction.net/s/9030577/1/Intentions).

Like my author’s note at the beginning of this article, this author’s note lets the reader know this paragraph isn’t part of the story by labeling it “A/N.” Some fan writers use different forms of this abbreviation or the full term, depending on their personal preferences. Others use visual cues instead, bolding, underlining, or italicizing the author’s note, distinguishing it from the story that follows. Likewise, the information provided by the authors differs depending on what they feel they need to impart to their readers. Why not just include this information in the summary? Because the character limit rule of that genre restricts them. By placing an author’s note after the summary and before the story, these writers have found a way around the rules of the site. There is also the possibility that they are familiar with another popular fan fiction website, archiveofourown.org, which has a separate section for an author’s note built into the page layout.

Whatever the reason, most stories have an author's note, even if it is just used for purposes of the disclaimer. Figure 4 shows Lynse's disclaimer, and most stories on fanfiction.net have a variation of this statement. Disclaimers let readers know that the writers don't own the characters or texts that they are basing their stories on. Why bother letting the reader know that they don't own them or profit from their stories? Isn't that pretty obvious? Disclaimers are an unwritten rule of fan fiction, an attempt to protect writers from copyright infringement. However, due to a few recent publications, like the *50 Shades of Grey* trilogy (based on the author's *Twilight* fan fiction), and Kindle Worlds, where fan fiction can be published for profit, disclaimers are not as prevalent as they were a few years ago. For this reason, the other information provided in the author's note is likely of primary importance to writers and readers, as it often provides additional warnings about what readers can expect to see in the story. Some writers also use their notes to explain why they are writing their stories or how often readers can expect a new chapter.

For the purposes of our analysis, how does Lynse's author's note affect, or try to affect, the reader's reading experience? She begins by placing her story in the television series' timeline, explaining that it takes place between season four and five of *Merlin*. She takes the time to warn readers that she might discount season five in her story. This is another example of how meaning-making occurs differently depending on the specific activity system, as the distance between the TV series' plot and her own might upset some readers. Once again, this writer is making writing decisions that help ensure her readers have a high chance of enjoying her work, since some prefer fan stories that keep the show's plotlines largely intact. As I mentioned earlier, filling a gap in a text's plot is a major reason why fans write and read fan fiction. This brings us to two more terms used by the fan fiction community (and fandoms in general): canon and fanon. In the fan fiction activity system, canon refers to the "original" storylines that fans adapt in their own stories.<sup>6</sup> So, for example, a fan writer might explain in his/her author's note that s/he is not including the *canon* couple of Arthur Pendragon and Guinevere, but the *fanon* couple of Arthur and Merlin. Fanon can be loosely defined to include any plot that occurs in a fan fiction story, but it is more often used to describe plot lines that largely reoccur in fan fiction stories, like the Arthur/Merlin relationship in the *Merlin* fandom. Once again, familiarity with the community that surrounds the fan fiction is an important factor when navigating this system.

In Lynse's case, the majority of her author's note focuses on letting the readers know which areas of canon she is and isn't diverging from in her story. At the end, her last statement before her disclaimer assures the reader that the unknown character whose point of view begins this story is not a main character. I say *assure* for a very specific reason, one that originates once again from my understanding of the fan fiction community. Original characters (referred to as OCs) are characters that writers create and include in their fan fiction stories; they are not

part of the canon, but the writer’s specific fanon. Unfortunately for this specific story, OCs are not well liked by a large number of fan fiction readers; many will refuse to read a story that has characters not at the very least mentioned in the canon texts. This is why the final piece of information Lynse provides in her note isn’t just a fact about the story—the unknown boy is not a main character—but a promise to readers that the OC will not be there to bother them for long. Instead of another warning, this is a plea to give her story a chance and not stop when they immediately encounter an unfamiliar character. They just need to get past the first chapter, she promises. By using her knowledge of the fan fiction activity system when writing both her story summary and author’s note, Lynse increases her readership numbers, her readers’ chances of enjoying the story, and the likelihood of receiving positive reviews. As her objective for publishing fan fiction is likely to get as many readers and positive reviews as possible, the decisions she makes for every element of her text goes towards meeting this hoped-for outcome.

Having explored the story summary, data points, and author’s note, we’ve finally reached the largest element of the reading experience: the fan fiction story. The stories, of course, vary depending on many factors, including (but not limited to): the author’s reasons for writing, writing style, age, gender, sexuality, country of origin, and language knowledge. The length of the story and its chapters, the time between updates, if it’s ever completed, and more are all story characteristics that depend upon the individual writer’s circumstances. Because the whole story need not be published all at once, the power dynamics in this system favors the writer over the reader. Readers often become attached to stories that take years to finish, if they are finished at all. Some uncompleted stories are “adopted” by a reader and completed by this fan of the fan texts, but this isn’t that common of a practice.<sup>7</sup> Fanfiction.net does have features that give readers the opportunity to limit their negative experiences on the site. Consider Figure 5 below.

The image shows a screenshot of the fanfiction.net filter options interface. It is organized into two main sections: "Plus Filters" and "Without Filters".

**Plus Filters:** This section includes a "Pairing" checkbox. Below it are two columns of dropdown menus:

- Column 1: Sort: Update Date, Genre (A): All, Rated K -> T, Length: All, All Characters (A), All Characters (C).
- Column 2: Time Range: All, Genre (B): All, Language, Status: All, All Characters (B), All Characters (D).

**Without Filters:** This section includes a "Pairing" checkbox and two dropdown menus: Genre and Character (A). Below these is another dropdown menu for Character (B).

At the bottom of the interface, there are three buttons: "Cancel", "18.4K" (representing the number of results), and "Apply".

Figure 5: Filter options on fanfiction.net.

These filter options, which appear at the top of the story summaries list, allow readers to limit the stories in the list by their word length, their status as complete or in progress, their main characters, their rating, their language, and/or their “genre.” Keep in mind, the use of the word genre in the fan fiction community differs from the Illinois State University Writing Program’s definition. In fan fiction, the genres listed in the filters are categories that help classify the story’s plotline, similar to when categorizing movies or books by genres like “comedy” and “tragedy.” In this case, the author is asked to specify if his or her story focuses on friendship, horror, romance, humor, or any of the other twenty-one genres listed. In this way, readers have some control over what the site offers them; instead of needing to search through thousands or hundreds of thousands of stories centered on plotline types that don’t interest them (I’ll pass on any “Western” *Harry Potter* fan fictions), they can narrow down the list to those that have the most potential to meet their interests. In addition, the filter options match multiple data points that appear in the story summary, forming another connection in the fan fiction activity system.

There is one final written element that plays a role in this system, and it is one that also offers some control to the readers: reviews. Once the reader reaches the bottom of his or her screen, s/he has finished reading the chapter and is now staring at a blank textbox, just waiting to be used (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Review textbox.

If the reader is not a member of the site, or just not logged in, s/he has the option of including a name or username as part of the review. If logged in, the username automatically appears beneath the review textbox. Reviews have no character or number limit, so readers can send brief or detailed comments or critiques about each chapter, and they are often encouraged to do so by the writers in their summaries and author’s notes (or by a final

“Please Review” included after each chapter ends). Writers may also ask their readers if they are interested in becoming a “beta” or “beta reader,” someone who edits their chapters and offers suggestions for improvements. In this way, the division of labor component of this activity system does not solely fall on the writers of the stories. Readers’ suggestions sent through reviews or private messages can influence future chapters. Likewise, beta readers can offer suggestions to a story’s organization or plotline in addition to grammar and syntax edits. Both the writers and readers can see story reviews, though they only appear in the story’s immediate activity system as a numeric data point. Readers can click on this number and go to a new page with all the reviews listed in chronological order, with the most recent appearing first. This option gives readers the chance to look behind the scenes and trace if any future plot points were affected by the reviews.

Some authors admit to being influenced by reviewers in their author’s notes, but others leave that to the reader to research if they feel the need. Through reviews, the line between writer and reader becomes blurred, making this final element an integral one in the activity system. In order to continue mimicking a fan fiction story, I’ve included this article’s version of reviews: my editors’ feedback (Figure 7). Due to the difference in medium, you’ll have to imagine that you’ve clicked the **12** in my article’s summary in order to see this final image.

**Comment:** I don’t think you need to talk about other sites, like Editor 1 suggested, but you should probably mention a bit earlier that you’re **ONLY** going to talk about “fanfiction.net” so that your readers don’t expect a wider range of subject matter.

**Comment:** I don’t have too much to say overall, which is a good thing! My main concern is the large number of footnotes. You may want to consider changing these to endnotes as to not continuously distract the reader in the middle of the essay. That, and you may want to consider moving some of those notes into the body of the article, as a few of them (mentioned in previous comments) would work well incorporated in the actual text. Overall, this is a pretty “finished” article in my opinion.

Figure 7: Feedback on an early draft of my *GWR7* article, written by assistant editors.

I received these two reviews after turning in my second draft; both of them affected the final version of this article. Due to the comment on the left, I added the fact that fanfiction.net was my sole focus to my author’s note. Due to the one on the right, I made my footnotes into endnotes and lowered their number from nineteen to seven (by deleting a few and adding the rest into the body of the article). These reviews, among others, led to changes in this article, but it was left for me to decide whether or not I’d take my readers’ advice when revising. Such is the case for fan fiction, but with one major difference: while I needed to make

changes in order to get this article published, fan fiction writers are only limited by the rules of the site, not the suggestions of their reviewers. Site administrators can take down stories they feel break the rules given to the writers (acting outside of the genre's situational requirements can lead to harsh repercussions), but they cannot require writers to change elements of their stories in order to have them published in the first place. This is just one difference between fan fiction and an article about fan fiction and one example of how the rules and objectives of different activity systems guide the subject's writing decisions.

If someone attempted to map the entirety of fanfiction.net's activity system, she or he would need a lot more time and space than I have here. However, while the building blocks of this system can be perceived as the subjects (writers and readers) who are trying to meet their objectives for writing and reading fan texts, there is also the possibility of seeing the fan fictions themselves as the foundational elements of this global system. Taking this second approach, I've broken down the components and genres that make up a fan fiction's activity system. If a fan is inspired to become a writer of fan fiction, and that individual author's goal is to spread his or her stories and gain as many readers as possible, then each element of the fan text—its summary, data points, author's note, chapter, and reviews—must be considered and combined together in order to achieve this objective. I've only explored the first chapter of one story on fanfiction.net, as *Intentions* has fourteen chapters and its sequel has thirty-five. There is plenty left to discover about this story's activity system and that of others on this site. This article is just a first step on a very long journey. I hope you continue it now that this fan-fiction article has come to an end.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>For those of you unfamiliar with fan fiction, you should know that this article imitates its format, starting with a story summary, then an author's note (A/N), followed by the actual story (the main body of my article), and ending with reviews (Figure 7). Even parenthetical notes like the one after the instructions to find *Intentions* can be found in fanfiction.net stories.

<sup>2</sup>Why am I introducing the site here, when I already did so in the A/N? Like many fan fiction community members, some readers of this article might skip the author's note and go straight into the story, or in this case, article.

<sup>3</sup>For the other articles in this journal, the summary takes the form of an abstract instead, which illustrates the fluid boundaries between genres.

<sup>4</sup>“General” is one of the options of fanfiction.net, as this data point is used to signal the focus of the story (for example: adventure, romance, hurt/comfort, horror, etc.). “Published” lets the reader know when it was first put on the website (or the first draft completed, in my case), and “updated” shows when the latest chapter was uploaded (or when my article was officially completed).

<sup>5</sup>“Suitable for more mature children, 9 years and older, with minor action violence without serious injury. May contain mild coarse language. Should not contain any adult themes.”

<sup>6</sup>I use quotations around original because a lot of these texts are themselves adaptations, including the television show, *Merlin*. Other examples are TV shows and movies based off of comic books, like *Arrow* and *The Avengers*.

<sup>7</sup>Another interesting fact: Most community members consider it unacceptable for a reader to continue an unfinished story without the writer’s permission. Beliefs about who owns a text are more complicated than they first appear.

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