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ROMANTASY AS AN INTERTEXTUAL GENRE: RESPONSES OF AND TO SARAH J. MAAS' *A COURT OF THORNS AND ROSES*

Keywords: Sarah J. Maas, *A Court of Thorns and Roses (ACOTAR)*, romantasy, intertextuality, chain reaction

Introduction

Sarah J. Maas' *A Court of Thorns and Roses* series became one of the most significant books of romantasy literature—a subgenre of fantasy that combines fantastic elements, such as fae, dragons, magic, and hidden magical realms, with romance in the foreground rather than the background. Bloomsbury Publishing, Maas' publisher, actually claims to have coined the term to refer specifically to *ACOTAR*[1] in 2015, even though the initial appearance of this term can be found in the Urban Dictionary in 2008 (Creamer). Nonetheless, the significance of the term, and more importantly the genre, is undeniable, especially after the "*ACOTAR* boom" during the pandemic of 2020, when the term became widely known and used by readers, book media creators, as well as publishers and bookshops in their advertisements and new book announcements. Moreover, *ACOTAR* has influenced the emergence of other romantasy titles with similar elements, most notably the creation of the male protagonists and the dynamics between the male and female characters, which could be described as a chain reaction within the genre, a phenomenon discussed further later in this article. John Barth (138) stated that postmodernist writers had already exhausted their creative capabilities,

leading to literature that is, as Jean-François Lyotard (8) remarked, only an eclectic mix of everything that was created before, or, in the words of Julia Kristeva, "a mosaic of quotations [where] any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (67). Although the abovementioned claims were primarily constructed to describe the literary phenomena of postmodern fiction, they still are relevant in today's popular culture. This article's aim is to show how different romantasy titles respond to *ACOTAR*—the phenomenon referred to here as a chain reaction—as well as how *ACOTAR* responds to other cultural texts, and how other romantasy books are repeating the schemes established in the aforementioned book series.

Intertextuality

What was called before a "chain reaction" is not merely the sequence of influences, but also the phenomenon known in literary theory as intertextuality. Most notably, it was developed by Julia Kristeva who discovered that texts do not exist in a void, but are "generated in relation to another structure" (64), hence making the whole of the cultural world interconnected.

According to Kristeva, it is possible to distinguish "three dimensions ... of dialogue [between texts:] writing subject, addressee, and exterior texts." This dialogue can be defined as both horizontal—meaning that "the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee"—and vertical, where there is a connection between the text and its context (66). This shows that intertextuality does not only concern the influences between texts, but also between texts and the people; moreover, both horizontal and vertical axes often coincide with one another, creating the literary space where two works not only clash, but also create something new (66). In fact, when the author combines two different texts—what Kristeva calls "joining of two sign systems" (73)—their text becomes ambivalent, therefore relativized and stylized, portraying "a writer's exploitation of another's speech—without running counter to its thought—for his own purposes" (73). Consequently,

intertextuality is in essence the author's usage of the pool of already existing texts for their personal needs by adapting them rather than changing, which may result in coexistence of both new and adapted text within the same work, "the transmission of essence through form, and the configuration of (literary) space as revealing (literary) thought" (88).

In addition, a strong emphasis is also put on the relationship between the reader and the writer—the text interacts with both of them, making the literary world even more connected and therefore intricate. This personal view is also important for not only everyone sees the world differently, but also due to the fact of polysemy—the possibility of several different interpretations of one text. The concept known as the death of the author—a philosophical thought developed by Roland Barthes to illustrate that when an author publishes their work, they "die" as the reader of their text brings a variety of different approaches which may not be in accordance with the author's intentions (49–55)—is equally important for the intertextual relationship between the reader and the writer.

Furthermore, in times of globalization and easy access to the Internet and social media, the relationship between a reader and the writer or a reader and the text is intensified, which can result in widespread responses to the text. As it will be developed further, books are now not only a source of social media content but also engage the readers in fan art making, creating social media posts and building the Internet community around certain titles, increasing a sense of social belonging. Romantasy has, therefore, offered readers a place on the internet with like-minded people, sharing an extreme affection towards the books of the genre. Because of its recognizability and popularity, it has served as a label and tool of categorization for the other texts within the genre that are oftentimes portrayed in social media as "*ACOTAR*, but with vampires/werewolves/etc.".

What is also important to note prior to the analysis of the intertextual relations between romantasy novels is the notion of the exhaustion of

literature, a phenomenon described by John Barth in his essay "Literature of Exhaustion," in which he claims that the postmodern world not only is intertextual, but that also the writers of that time have exhausted their creative capabilities (138). Therefore, Barth's essay further illustrates not only the fact that the texts are not created in a void, hence they are inextricably connected, but also the fact that the so-called "chain reaction" is only a natural process in the creation of a specific genre of literature after the postmodern turn. It, therefore, supports the claim that *ACOTAR* undisputably initiated not only the widespread recognition of romantasy, but also influenced the emergence of other books that are, in fact, only a copy of *ACOTAR* with additional twists and turns. This makes the entire genre not only intertextual in nature, but also eclectic, which further proves Lyotard's point that literature is an eclectic mix of texts that have been already created before (8).

The Response of Maas' *A Court of Thorns and Roses* to Other Cultural Texts

The main aim of this article is to show the connections between *ACOTAR* and other cultural texts, as well as how other romantasy books could be seen as copies of Maas' under a different name. However, a quick overview of the study of genres may seem crucial at this stage, as romantasy is a rather new phenomenon and *ACOTAR* seems to be a mother-piece of the whole genre. The genre itself is rather a paradox—it is an unnatural classification that both needs to be pure and is never pure (Derrida 55, 61). Romantasy is a mix of two distinct genres, romance and fantasy, which makes it "impure." Romantasy "has a mark of belonging" (65) in its own genre for it is distinguished as a separate category, recognized by the internet book communities, average readers, and publishing companies. Its being technically a blend of two generic forms illustrates Derrida's observation that every genre is both loyal to and a betrayal of its own genre (55, 61, 80). The emergence of romantasy not only broadened the experience of the reader, but also allowed both readers and writers to find their place in the literary world. Moreover, it also contributed to a new

approach to contemporary popular literature, as well as created a wider recognition for women writers within the fantasy genre without the condemnation of the texts for being too "feminine" or too relationship-centered.

A Court of Thorns and Roses was primarily written as a retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*. Both narratives feature a beautiful young woman (Feyre and Belle, respectively) and a prince turned into a beast or, in the case of *ACOTAR*, a High Lord of the Spring Court Tamlin who can turn himself into one on command. Another significant similarity is a curse bestowed upon the male protagonists, although the underlying reasons for it seem to differ. In *B&B*[2], the curse functions as an opportunity for the Beast's redemption and moral transformation. In *ACOTAR*, on the other hand, Amarantha—wicked witch equivalent—curses the entire Spring Court due to Tamlin's refusal to become her lover, therefore forcing him to find a woman who would fall in love with him without ever seeing his true face, as he and his court wear masks on their faces that cannot be taken off. This curse's outcome is rather unexpected, however, for even though Tamlin is rescued, his behavior eventually deteriorates, ultimately leading Feyre to part from him. Furthermore, it is also worth mentioning that the female protagonist in both stories is confined in a castle or court, eventually developing a romantic connection with her captor, whom she finally saves. Despite those connections, however, *ACOTAR* differs significantly from *B&B*, especially from the second book onwards, establishing its unique character.

Another crucial cultural pretext for ACOTAR is connected to the character of Tamlin, a High Lord of the Spring Court and the owner of a remarkable rose garden, a detail crucial to forming an intertextual link between *ACOTAR* and Scottish folk tales. In the first instance, Tamlin is portrayed as a high fae, whereas in the second instance, Tam Lin from the Scottish ballad "Tam Lin" is usually depicted as an elf who accosts young women entering the forest of Carterhaugh, often taking their virginity as well (Jacobs & Batten). A key

similarity between the two texts forms when a young woman comes to this forest and plucks a rose, an event that summons Tam Lin to question her reasons for doing that. As a result of this acquaintance, the woman ultimately becomes pregnant and has to free Tam Lin from the imprisonment by the Queen of Fairies by going through numerous challenges—a notion which in some versions confirms the woman's love for Tam Lin. This folk tale is crucial for *ACOTAR* not only due to the shared character's name, but also because of the similarities between both plots. Feyre is similarly found by Tamlin and also eventually proves her love for him and frees him from Amarantha's imprisonment through a series of challenges towards the end of the first book, in scenes frequently referred to as "Under the Mountain," as the plot literally unfolds in a city under a mountain. And ultimately, in both stories, both antagonists are defeated, making both Tams live happily—or not so much—ever after with their partners.

Yet another integral part of *ACOTAR* and its cultural response to other texts is its connection to romance and romantic fantasies of women. The creation of the main male character in Maas' novels, as well as the books that emerged as a reconstruction of her stories, is similar to the creation of male characters in Harlequins: a tall, tattooed, dangerous, mysterious man who is surprisingly tender with his woman. The relationships established in Harlequins between a woman and a man can also be traced in *ACOTAR*—especially the ones where the man seems unsuitable for the female protagonist (Modleski 6). These similarities, as well as vast popularity of the genre, may be connected with the satisfaction of "imperishable desires and fantasies of women" (19). While this statement can be true in many contemporary romances, *ACOTAR* flips this image. Even though the male protagonist seems taken out of a Harlequin and has a great power over his female counterpart, it is the woman that is not only central to the plot, but also equal to a man. In Maas' books, it is the woman that rescues the man; it is the woman that fights for the man; it is the woman that is given a choice of whom to love. Another important difference is that the female

protagonist in Maas' *ACOTAR* is not a virgin—an opposite quality to the one prevalent in Harlequins, in which there is an insistence upon woman's purity (7). Moreover, in the first novel in the series there are no signs of "self-mutilation" as a response of anger towards male power[3] and at no point is Feyre "married off to a man toward whom she felt nothing" (15); if anything, she is rescued from such fate. Even more interestingly, "the male power," though present in the novels, does not outshine the female power—Feyre is not only one of the most powerful fae—of both sexes—but also the first High Lady in history of Prythian, a title created specifically for her. Yet another difference, that is contrary to the notorious nickname of "faerie porn," is that the sexual fantasies are being conveyed on the pages of both Harlequins and *ACOTAR*. While this may be true to some extent, it is pivotal to understand that the first three installments in the series are heavily fantasy-based. There are only about eleven chapters with any sexual encounters among those three books combined (the first one being almost 500 pages long and the other two—almost 700), whereas the fifth installment contains around eight such chapters over the course of almost 800 pages. That is a significantly small number considering both the infamous nickname of the series—"faerie porn"—as well as the highly-sexual nature of the Harlequins. Consequently, as much as the creation of the male protagonist and the relationship between the two main characters may seem highly Harlequin-based, *ACOTAR* does not follow its usual pattern. Instead, it takes what is alluring to women and changes it into a feminist utopia, where the woman is equal to the man, cherished by him regardless of her status or purity, and—most importantly—is always given a choice.

The Internet Response to *ACOTAR*

Responding to earlier texts and genres, *ACOTAR* has also summoned massive responses from the Internet community, proving that literary texts can serve not only as a response to already existing narratives. The readers of the story of

Tamlin and Feyre have created a substantial number of social media posts—more specifically, over 1.7 million TikToks under #acotar alone (with other hashtags such as #acotarseries, #acomaf[4] or #acowar[5] containing 226.8 thousand posts, 385.2 thousand posts and 247.5 thousand posts, respectively) and achieving similar numbers on other social media platforms, such as Instagram, and countless fan-based Facebook groups. Within those posts, there is a number of fan-generated artworks based on the series, as well as TikTok reenactments of certain scenes (most notably, Feyre throwing a shoe at Rhysand) and thirst traps (sexually implicit videos, usually featuring "Hello, Feyre darling" (Maas 2016: 42) delivered in a suggestive manner by male BookTok[6] users), and cosplays. This extensive social media coverage has enabled *ACOTAR* to permeate the lives of the general public, as many BookTok creators have claimed that *ACOTAR* facilitated their renewed interest in reading and an increase in their overall book consumption.[7]

Furthermore, *ACOTAR* has also been made into coloring books and a TV series is speculated to be created despite allegations of initiating, cancelling and re-initiating this project. However, at the time of writing this article, there is an unconfirmed rumor of a meeting between Sarah J. Maas and Margot Robbie regarding the possibility of her directing the series (Rosenstein). Ultimately, the response from the bookish community crossed the lines of what is expected of an ordinary reader by organizing *ACOTAR*-themed balls with their participants cosplaying as their favorite series characters. While the primary difference between those balls and other fan conventions, such as Comic Cons or Renaissance Fairs, may be questionable, the key is that unlike the aforementioned conventions, which cover a wide range of fictional characters, the *ACOTAR*-themed balls are exclusively created for and, more significantly, by the series' enthusiasts.

Romantasy Chain Reaction

The so-called "romantasy chain reaction" is a focal point of this article. It showcases the connections between the novels, as well as their allusions and references to each other. Diagram 1 below does not only show those influences, but also the motherpiece that gave birth to the entire chain reaction of resemblances. Moreover, with *ACOTAR* being the main prototype of the modern romantasy genre, it also contributed to its recognition across the media platforms, readers, and publishers. Finally, it has become a staple piece to which many writers refer, even if subconsciously.

Diagram 1. Romantasy chain reaction.

Even though the analysis of intertextual relations in *ACOTAR* has been centered around the character of Tamlin, he is not the main protagonist in the whole of the series. Instead, the main male character is Feyre's mate, Rhysand, who is referred to by the book community as "shadow daddy." Rhys is the High Lord of the Night Court, who initially helps Feyre to go through the challenges Under the Mountain, but becomes a more significant figure in *ACOMAF*. There, it

is revealed that he is Feyre's fated mate and a crucial character in helping Feyre heal her psychological trauma from the events from Under the Mountain.

Rhysand is a half-Illyrian[8] high fae, a heritage that left him with wings that can be concealed at will, but also marks him as a powerful and gruesome warrior. His physical appearance is also rather striking—he is a tall, tattooed fae with dark short hair and violet eyes in which the stars sparkle, and his character is very mysterious and dangerous, with a profound affection towards only Feyre and his friends, whom he calls family, but who are collectively known as his Inner Circle. His fae powers are enigmatic and perilous as well, as he is a *daemati*, a type of a fae psychic. This grants him the ability to read and control minds, erase memories or project highly detailed visions of events that never truly happened in the minds of others. Additionally, Rhysand is able to manipulate and control shadows, hence the title "shadow daddy," a combination which grants him the title as the most powerful fae in the history of Prythian (the faerie land in *ACOTAR*, which is also a response of *ACOTAR* to the existing world, as its geography is based on the British Isles).

The character of Rhysand has become an archetype for male protagonists in the romantasy genre. One example of a novel to follow the said pattern is Laura Thalassa's *Rhapsodic*. The novel tells the story of a siren Callypso Lillis, referred to as Callie by most. At the beginning of the story, it is revealed that she killed her stepfather after a long period of abuse (a consequence of her siren nature) and therefore needed help concealing this crime, which leads her to meet the Bargainer. The Bargainer is actually Desmond Flynn, a winged fae and a king of the hidden Kingdom of Night (that rules not only the illegal actions, such as theft, but also more sensual and intimate experiences performed under the cover of the night). The creation of his character follows closely that of Rhysand—he as well is a tall, tattooed male fae with an aura of mystery and danger, yet surprisingly tender with Callypso. Desmond's powers include the shadow manipulation, as well as the ability to make deals, which comes with the notion of reading people's intentions. All these make him the most powerful

fae in his world. The significant difference between Desmond and Rhysand, however, lies solely in their hair, as Desmond's is long and blond in contrast to Rhysand's, which is short and dark. The similarity between the two extends beyond physical appearance, as even in their backstories there are significant parallels. Both characters were raised mainly by their mothers, with the father figures either absent, as in Desmond's case, where the identity of his father was revealed to him rather late in life, or cold and cruel in the case of Rhysand. Moreover, both characters exhibit extreme possessiveness and protectiveness over their respective mates, a trope more commonly known in the book community as "touch her and you'll die." The relationship between Callie and Desmond from *Rhapsodic* is also almost identical to the one between Nesta (Feyre's sister) and Cassian (Rhysand's Inner Circle member), with some added characteristics of Feyre's and Rhysand's relationship from *ACOTAR*—initial curiosity of one another turned into hatred and eventual highly sensual and possessive love with a strong female voice in the relationship and intense reciprocal need for care, as well as quick-witted humor and repartees.

Furthermore, the influence of *Rhapsodic* appears to extend to other romantasy works, most notably *A Song of the Forever Rains* by E. J. Mellow and *Quicksilver* by Callie Hart, contributing to the effect of romantasy chain reaction. The first novel is set in the Thief Kingdom—a hidden city where theft and pleasures thrive, with a notable resemblance to the fields of interest of the Kingdom of Night in *Rhapsodic*. Moreover, the ability to sing in the novel by Mellow is a magical power, which is parallel to the siren's song in Thalassa's book. Similarly, *Quicksilver* features Saeris Fane, who is inadvertently transported to a hidden fae realm—a motif that can be observed in both *Rhapsodic* and *A Song of the Forever Rains*; in *ACOTAR*, however, the fae realm is not hidden, but behind a magical border which Feyre crossed with Tamlin in the first book in the series—where she encounters Kingfisher. His physical appearance aligns closely with already-established romantasy standards of male protagonists: a tall, tattooed, enigmatic, and dangerous fae with a

surprising affection towards his mate. Parallel to Desmond, he is also capable of making deals with others, and is connected to a sword—*Solace*—that is speaking to both him and Saeris, an indication of their great power and special abilities. This weapon is also to be touched only by a person worthy of its potential, which draws a clear connection to Excalibur from Arthurian legends that is to be wielded only by the rightful ruler. Interestingly, *Solace* circles back to Sarah J. Maas' books, as in her *Crescent City* series, Bryce Quinlan at some point wields *Starsword* that also speaks—or rather sings, which further connects to *Rhapsodic* and *A Song of the Forever Rains*—to her and is a symbol of great power, crucial for the development of the plot and a significant artifact in the whole of Maasverse[9].

ACOTAR has also sparked another very well-received romantasy series—*the Empyrean Series* by Rebecca Yarros, better known for the title of the first book in the series, *Fourth Wing,* and dubbed by a book influencer Jack Edwards "the biggest book series since *Harry Potter*." The series introduces Violet Sorrengail, a wannabe scribe forced to join the Basgiath War College and become a dragon rider. There, she encounters Xaden Riorson, whose description also aligns with the established norms for the romantasy male protagonists: tall, tattooed, mysterious, inherently dangerous, and curiously tender with her partner. Interestingly enough, he does not only wield shadows—one of the rarest signets (powers) in existence—but also possesses a second signet, which grants him the ability to discern others' intentions, mimicking the powers of Desmond Flynn from Thalassa's *Rhapsodic*, and making him the most powerful dragon rider in history. Furthermore, Xaden's bond to the second most powerful dragon in Navarra, Sgaeyl, further solidifies his powerful status. Interestingly enough, Sgaeyl's mate—Tairn—is bonded with Violet, who herself wields a rare signet of lightning, as well as a secret one attributed to her dual bond with another dragon, Andarna. The simultaneous existence of both a lighting wielder and a shadow wielder is an extremely rare phenomenon, as the records indicate only one such instance before, which makes the relationship between

the two not only rare but also even more powerful. That relation, however, closely mimics the one between Feyre and Rhysand in *ACOTAR*, as Feyre's inherited powers from every High Lord of Prythian make her an exceptionally powerful High Lady, which contributes to the portrayal of her relationship with Rhysand as the most powerful and skilled couple in their realm. Feyre is also the first High Lady to exist in Prythian, which further fortifies her power and significance.

Contrary to Rhysand and Desmond, though, Xaden is not a fae king or a High Lord, but rather Violet's Wing Leader and, further in the series, her professor in the aforementioned college. And while similarities to Rhysand are easily observed here—the fact that Riorson ultimately becomes Sorrengail's teacher also parallels Rhysand and Feyre's relationship, as he taught her how to read—a key difference lies in Xaden's lack of wings, a fact compensated by his bond with a dragon. Similarly to Rhysand, Xaden is also referred to as "shadow daddy" in the bookish community; however, his title is often abbreviated to "Xaddy" to differentiate him from Rhysand.

The draconic element of *Fourth Wing* not only establishes the series' status as a reimagining of Maas' *ACOTAR*, but also indicates a possible inspiration from the movie *How to Train Your Dragon*. This claim can be supported by the fact that dragon descriptions in both titles are similar (with regard to colors, abilities and classes), as well as the progression of the relationship between the protagonists who initially resist and hate each other, ultimately developing a close romantic bond through forced proximity and fight.

Moreover, it is crucial to note that the combination of both dragons from *Fourth Wing* and *HTTYD*[10] and the relationship between Nesta and Cassian from *ACOTAR* appear to have served as an inspiration for Sarah A. Parker's *When the Moon Hatched*. This story, however, is categorized as "dark fantasy," indicating a pervasive presence of violence. This element's influence may be attributed to *Rhapsodic* and its depiction of the Kingdom of Night, particularly when considering the opening of *WTMH*[11] and the initial thievery attempt performed

by Raeve. However, as this story happens within Three Kingdoms, each ruled by a different brother and characterized by a unique climate, it bears close resemblance to the land of Prythian and the split between the seven courts governed by a different High Lord and with a different landscape and/or season[12] in *ACOTAR*, as well as the seven levels of Hel in *CC*[13] that are similarly ruled by a different brother and characterized by a unique aura. Furthermore, while in *ACOTAR* and the whole of Maasverse there is a strong emphasis on the importance of stars, in *WTMH* there is a strong emphasis on moons, which are regarded as dragon tombstones, for when a dragon dies, they "sail skywards" (Parker 4) and become a moon.

Intriguingly, the relationship dynamics between Raeve and Kaan in *WTMH* are not only similar to those of Nesta and Cassian, but also echo the ones between Feyre and Tamlin in the first *ACOTAR* book, as shown specifically through Reave's capture by Kaan, leading to the creation of their romantic relationship. And even more intriguingly, there is yet another connection between the character of Raeve and another female protagonist from Maasverse—Aelin Galanthynius from the *Throne of Glass* series, a lost princess of Terrasen, living under a fake identity of the assassin Celaena Sardothien. This closely resembles Raeve's personal loss of the identity of Elluin, princess of one of the Three Kingdoms, as well as her adopted identity as an assassin. Moreover, a significant similarity between *WTMH*, *Throne of Glass*, and *Fourth Wing* lies in the fact that there is a distinct religious cult within their respective realms, with each deity representing the forces of nature, magic, but also death or sun, which further demonstrates the interconnectedness of the romantasy titles, as well as proves the hypothesis of the chain reaction initiated by Maas' *ACOTAR*.

Conclusions

The above analysis of intertextuality and the romantasy chain reaction portrays high responsiveness levels of the romantasy books to *ACOTAR*. It shows that the

authors of this genre constantly perpetuate the archetype of a male protagonist, as well as draw heavily on Maas' *ACOTAR* in other aspects of their novels, more notably in the construction of the world of the novel, the relationship dynamics between the main protagonists, as well as the power dynamics of the couple and their magical abilities. However, that does not mean that their works are just a copy of *ACOTAR* but with different characters' names; quite the contrary, their works are simply examples of the interconnectedness—and henceforth, intertextuality—of the literary world. Even though the multiple intertextual references developed around *ACOTAR* could be claimed to testify to the cultural exhaustion already discussed by Barth, they can also be seen as novel and original combinations by the application of relativizing and stylizing processes (Kristeva 73) that result in the emergence of new eclectic pieces that are just as captivating as their predecessors.

Endnotes

1. An abbreviation for *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas; this abbreviation concerns both the title of the whole series and the first book in the series.
2. Abbreviation for *Beauty and the Beast.*
3. The only character who exhibits signs of self-mutilation and anger towards any kind of power in Maas' books is Nesta, Feyre's sister. But there is an important difference between self-mutilation as an angry response to man's power and Nesta's anger and self-mutilation. She is not angry because of man's superiority—she is angry because she was taken captive and changed into a Fae without her consent. While some scholars may claim this is an angry response to man's superiority and a potential for feministic studies, this article is not concerned with this kind of approach towards what happened to Nesta. Moreover, the fact that she is then recovered, using her new-found Fae powers, and in love with a Fae man, proves that her self-mutilation is not as much aimed at men, as much as it is aimed at her capturer and her faith, over which she had no control whatsoever.
4. Abbreviation for *A Court of Mist and Fury,* the second book in the *ACOTAR* series by Sarah J. Maas.
5. Abbreviation for *A Court of Wings and Ruin,* the third book in the *ACOTAR* series by Sarah J. Maas.
6. Bookish community on TikTok.
7. For example @itsfeyre2, @therealrahulrai, @karissawalker, @darthhdaddy, @what.jordan.reads, @jezelle.x, etc. on TikTok.
8. Winged fae warriors in *ACOTAR.*

9. The literary universe of Maas' books. Only two out of her three series are confirmed to be connected, but her readers speculate that all of her books are interconnected, especially after the discovery of a shadow watching over Aelin in the *Throne of Glass* series, who is confirmed by Maas to be Rhysand from *ACOTAR*.
10. Abbreviation for *How to Train Your Dragon*.
11. Abbreviation for *When the Moon Hatched* by Sarah A. Parker.
12. There are seven courts in *ACOTAR*: Spring Court, Summer Court, Autumn Court, Winter Court, Day Court, Dawn Court and Night Court. Each of these courts has a different landscape and in the case of seasonal courts—a different season; unlike in *WTMH*, however, they are governed by a different High Lord with no familial connections between them.
13. Abbreviation for *Crescent City* series by Sarah J. Maas.

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Abstract

This article analyzes intertextuality within the genre of romantasy, as well as what I call a romantasy chain reaction (the influence of one title on subsequent ones), initiated by Sarah J. Maas' *A Court of Thorns and Roses* series. After exploring the theoretical aspects of intertextuality, the paper examines this phenomenon in practice on the example of the abovementioned series. The analysis discusses the responses of *A Court of Thorns and Roses* to the cultural world, but also the responses of other romantasy works (namely *Rhapsodic*, *Quicksilver*, *Fourth Wing*, and *When the Moon Hatched, Crescent City*, as well as *A Song of the Forever Rains*) to those books, henceforth creating the aforementioned intertextual chain reaction.