



# Before Fanfiction

Recovering the Literary History of American Media Fandom

**ALEXANDRA EDWARDS**

*Before Fanfiction* investigates the overlapping cultures of fandom and American literature from the late 1800s to the mid-1940s, exploding the oft-repeated myth that fandom has its origins in the male-dominated letter columns of science fiction pulp magazines in the 1930s. By reexamining the work of popular American women writers and their fans, Alexandra Edwards recovers the literary history of American media fandom, drawing previously ignored fangirls into the spotlight.

**ALEXANDRA EDWARDS** teaches writing at Texas Christian University. She has won two Primetime Emmy Awards for her work producing interactive storytelling experiences for the popular web series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* and *Emma Approved*.

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## PRAISE FOR *BEFORE FANFICTION*

"*Before Fanfiction* significantly expands, extends, revises, and reanimates our understanding of the multiple histories of fandom and, in particular, fan writing, through a consideration of other transformative literary practices. Edwards's boldly revisionist approach makes this book essential reading, decentering the white male science fiction fan conventions from fandom's origin stories, in favor of women's clubs, circles, and magazines of the early twentieth century."

—Henry Jenkins, author of *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*

"A vivid investigation of the historical bonds that link fandom, criticism, and creative practice. Edwards shows how the fan cultures of today are rooted in a matriarchal and thoroughly literary lineage that extends well beyond our contemporary mediaverse."—Sheila Liming, author of *What a Library Means to a Woman: Edith Wharton and the Will to Collect Books*

"*Before Fanfiction* reenergizes fan studies in exciting new directions that promise to revolutionize the field. Revising the 'fandom creation myth,' Edwards establishes a lineage of fan audiences through varied genealogies, including early literary fan communities, letter columns in literary magazines, and fan mail. Exploring an intersectional history of fan culture, Edwards changes our understanding of fandom today and, relevantly, what fandom can be in the future. A must-read for fan scholars and audiences alike."—Paul Booth, author of *Playing Fans: Negotiating Fandom and Media in the Digital Age*



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