

CRASH COURSE IN ROMANCE

NoveList



Cressy took herself away from him. She walked slowly alongside the tractor, tracing along the edges of its parts with a thin, scarlet nail. "You better get somethin' straight, Troy. When your brother and me was married down in Dallas, that was the end of one kind of life for me, see? Out here I'm Mrs. Tom Bannock, and that's the way it is." She turned and faced him soberly, her chin raised, forcing her eyes to meet his derisive look. "I didn't want to come out here in the middle of nowhere to live, nothin' to do, nothin' to see but miles and miles of flat, empty, dried-up land. No trees, no water, no flowers, no grass, just sand and cold and heat and bugs and wind. Oh, I tried to get Tom to go somewheres else, somewheres where we could have a life of our own, away from the family and all that. I wanted us to

her lips
off into
You asked me if
off. In a moment she
a sharp lift to her to
I ain't changin' noth
that could change an
Troy smoked and v
amusement. When h
shoulders elaborately,
was just askin'," he
makin' a whole godda
She came a little clo
with tension, her eyes
cern. "Troy, there ain
somethin' about you
nothin' like I ever felt

Panelists

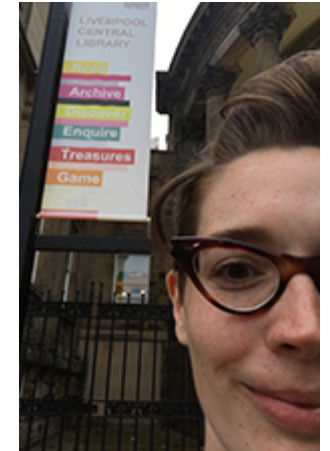


Polli Kenn

Readers' Services Coordinator, Lawrence Public Library

Stephanie Anderson

Assistant Director of Selection, BookOps



Halle Eisenman

Content Development Manager, NoveList

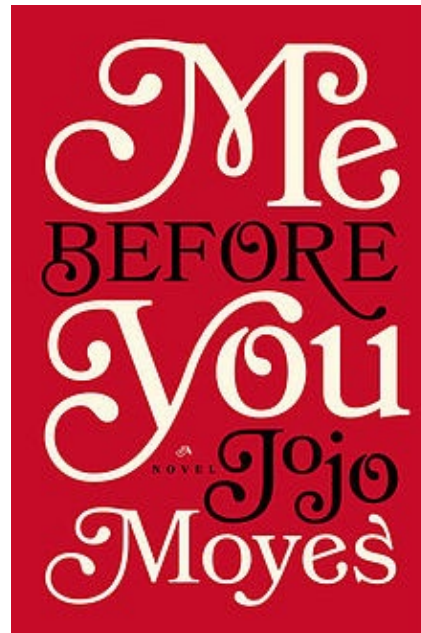
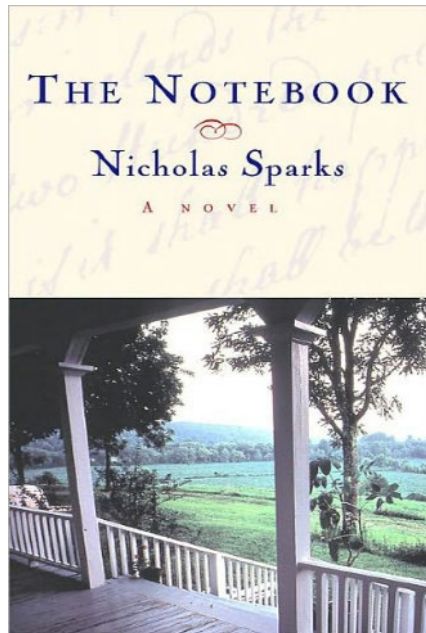


libraryreads.org

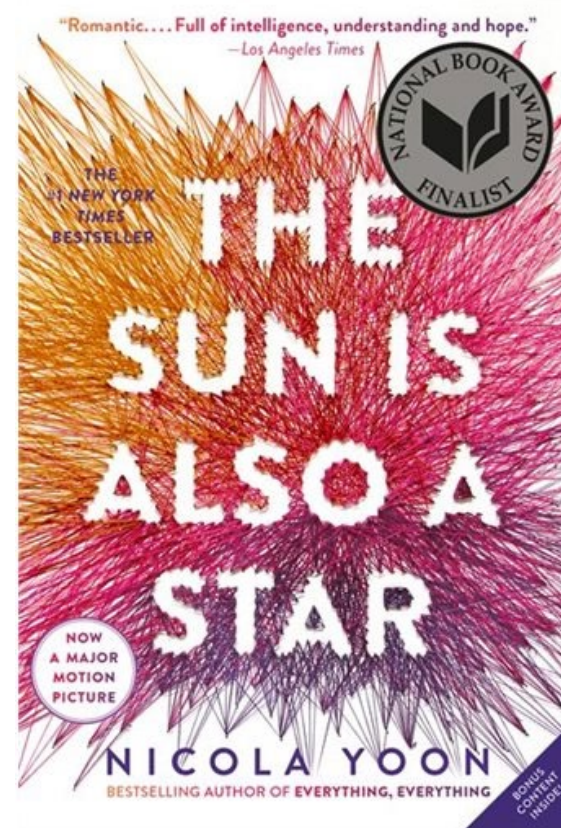
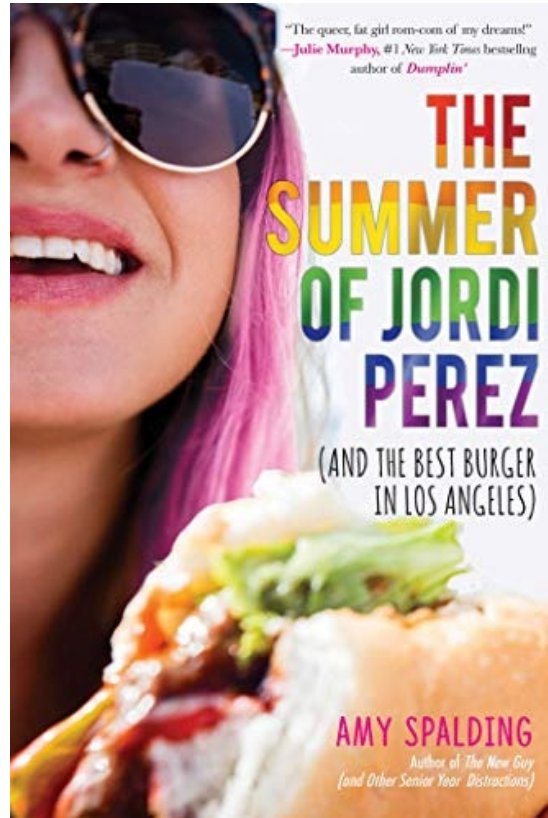
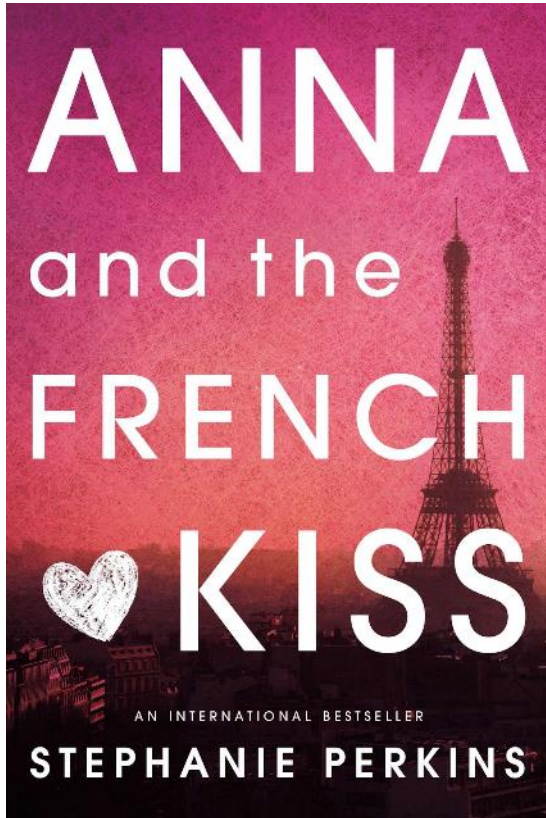
What makes a book a romance novel?

1. A happy ending, also known as a HEA (happily ever after)
2. A central love story

A book *must* have both to be a romance. That's why these are not romances:



Are romance novels for teens?



Romance? Erotica? Erotic romance?

Genre	Happily ever after?	Central love story?	Sexual content?
Romance	Yes	Yes	Optional
Erotic romance	Yes	Yes	Explicit sexual content that advances the plot
Erotica	Probably not	Probably not	Lots of explicit sexual content

RWA[®]

Romance Writers of America
The Voice of Romance Writers

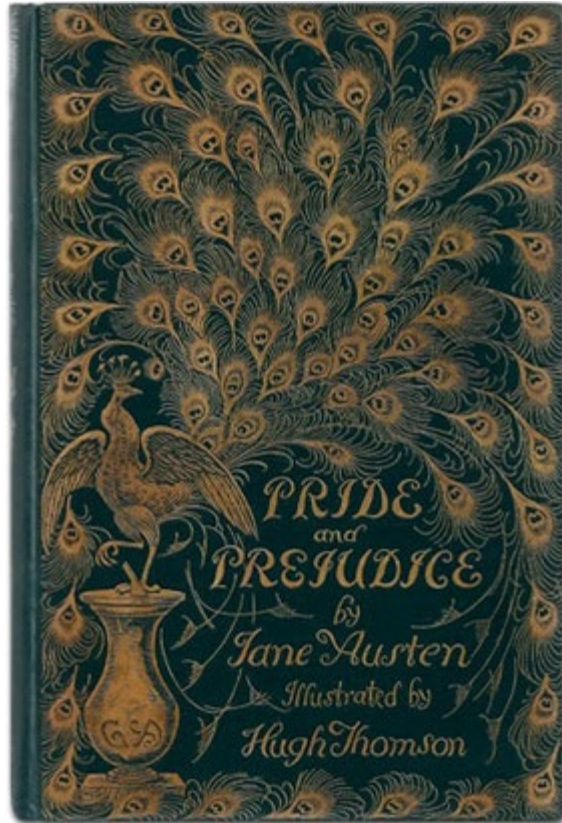
www.rwa.org

Vivian Stephens, a romance editor, founded the Romance Writers of America in 1980. RWA is now 9,500 members strong with 140 chapters throughout the world. RWA hosts an annual conference and a series of awards for romance writing.

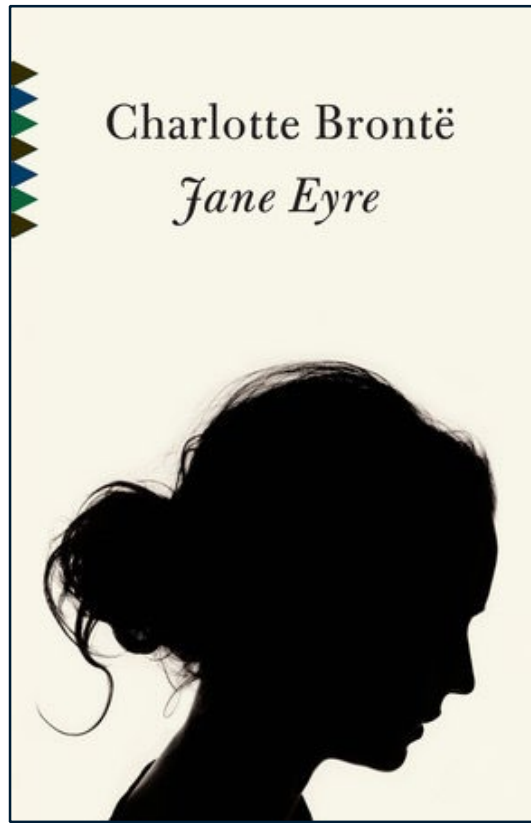
History of the Genre



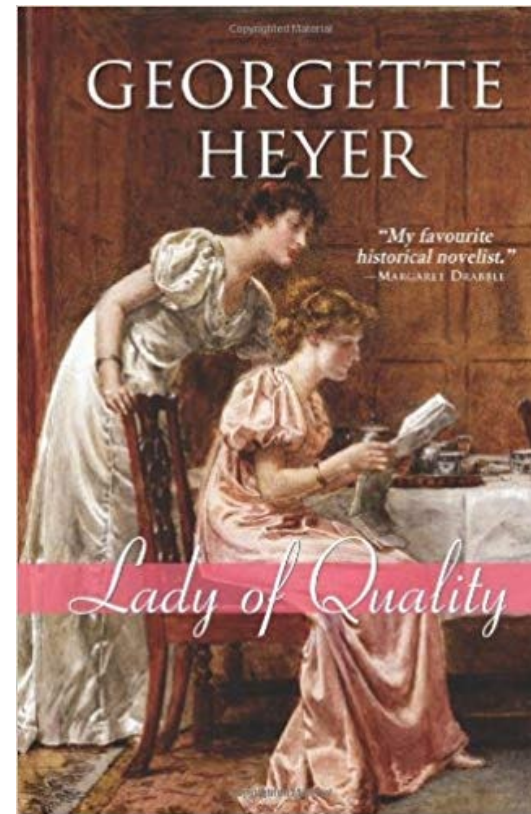
Early Influences



1813

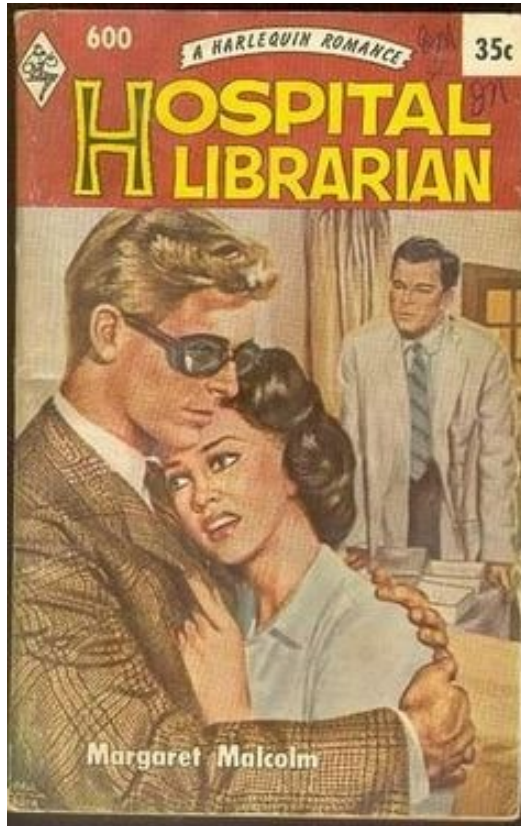


1847

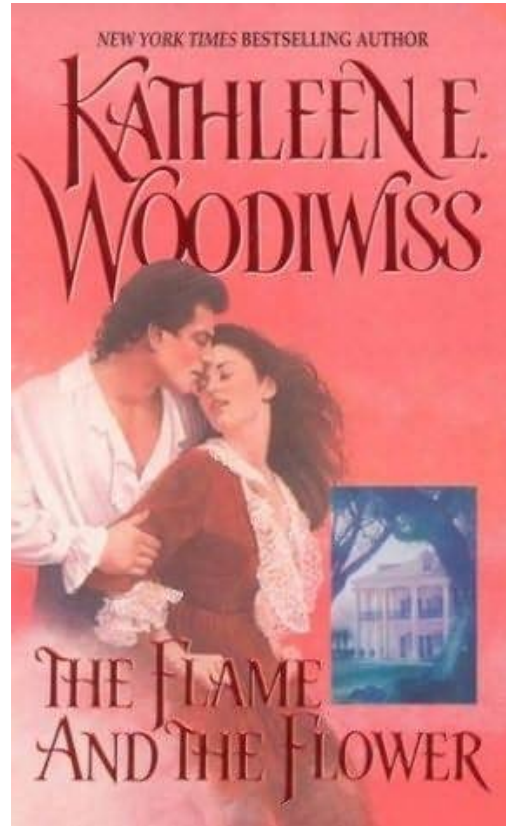


1972

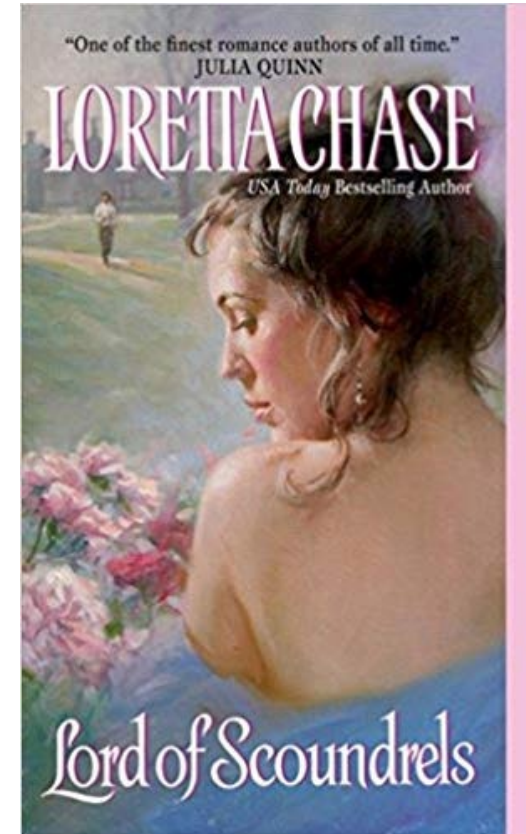
Twentieth Century (American)



1961



1972



1995

Why read romance?

- ♥ Emotion-filled story
- ♥ Character development (Those sassy heroines! Those brooding heroes!)
- ♥ Focus on the relationship
- ♥ Escape (Don't let anyone tell you that's bad)
- ♥ Satisfying sexy times
- ♥ And of course, a happily ever after

Romance leads all other adult genres in sales

Romance readers are:

- ♥ Female: 82%
- ♥ Male: 18%
- ♥ Average age of the romance reader: 35–39 years old
- ♥ Ethnicity: 73% White/Caucasian, 12% Black/African American, 7% Latino/Hispanic, and 4% Asian/Asian American.
- ♥ Sexual orientation: 86% heterosexual or straight; 9% bisexual, pansexual, or other bi+ identity; 2% gay or lesbian.

From "The Romance Book Buyer 2017: A Study by NPD Book for Romance Writers of America."

Reading romance as a feminist endeavor

Romance is generally written by women, for women.

Concern with:

- ♥ Personal agency
- ♥ Womens' pleasure
- ♥ Gender equity
- ♥ Personal fulfillment within a healthy relationship
- ♥ And increasingly...**CONSENT ON THE PAGE**

The romance genre has undergone remarkable changes in the past 30 years. Romance readers give a variety of reasons for why they love the genre: It's empowering, it's an escape, it explores the complexities of relationships in ways that cause them to reflect deeply on their own lives. Incidentally, they're the least cynical people you'll meet, and that makes them especially wonderful — necessary, actually — in this day and age. It is never a romance novel if it condones or normalizes abuse or makes a woman less than she is.

Lisa Kleypas

[Washington Post, Dec 8, 2017](#)

But it's so emotional and formulaic!



- ♥ Genre, as a rule, is formulaic
- ♥ Horror and Suspense are emotionally driven genres
- ♥ Mystery and Fantasy rely on tropes and formulas
- ♥ Tropes/themes can help a reader find their book

NoveList Themes



Characters

Best friend's sibling

Childhood sweethearts

Enemies to lovers

Famous flings

For richer for poorer

Friends to lovers

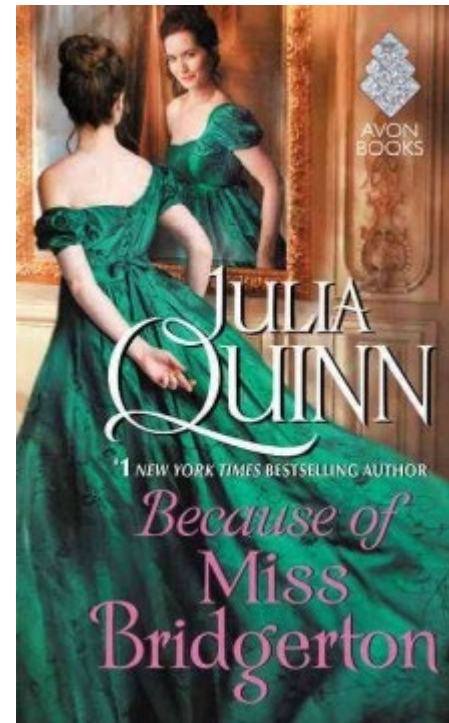
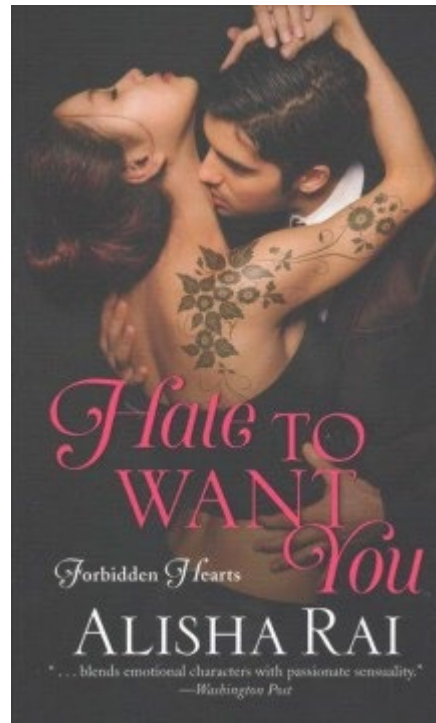
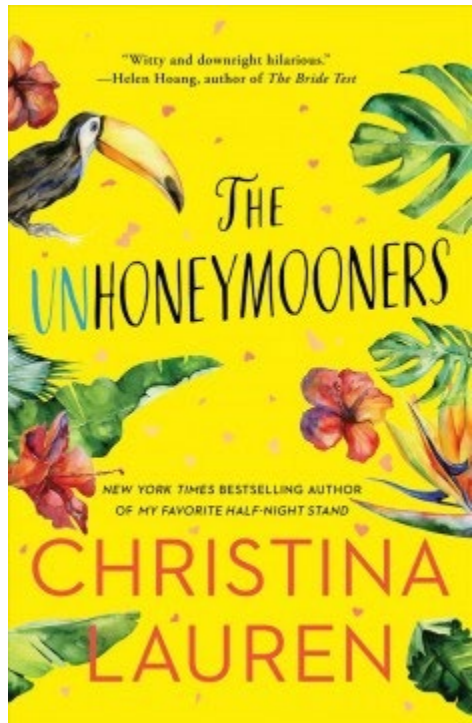
Opposites attract

Second chance at romance

Together again

Enemies to Lovers

There is a thin line between love and hate in these stories where the characters start out as adversaries but end up romantically attached.



Setting

Home again

Love abroad

Love in a small town

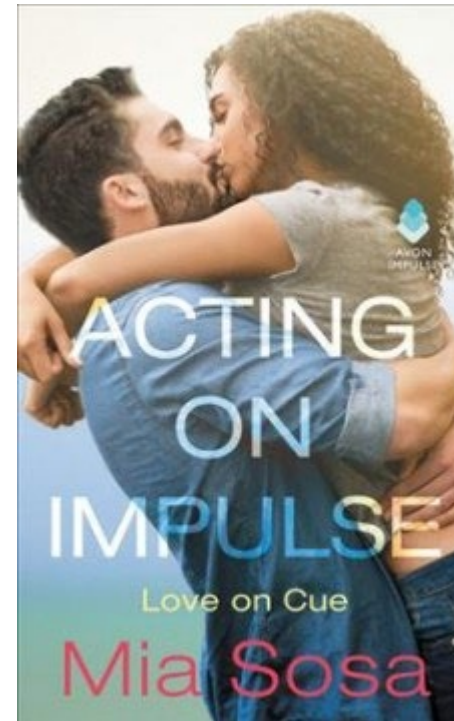
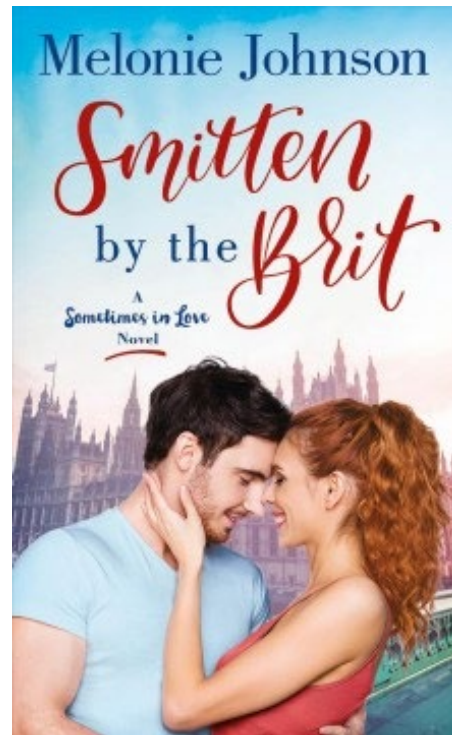
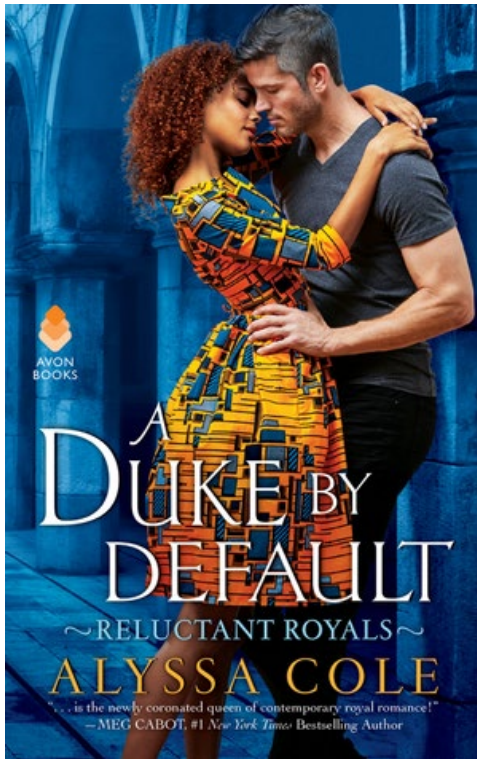
New in town

Snowbound & stranded

Workplace romance

Love Abroad

A travel adventure leads to everlasting love.



Plot

Captive hearts

Childhood sweethearts

Fake relationship

Love in disguise

Marriage of convenience

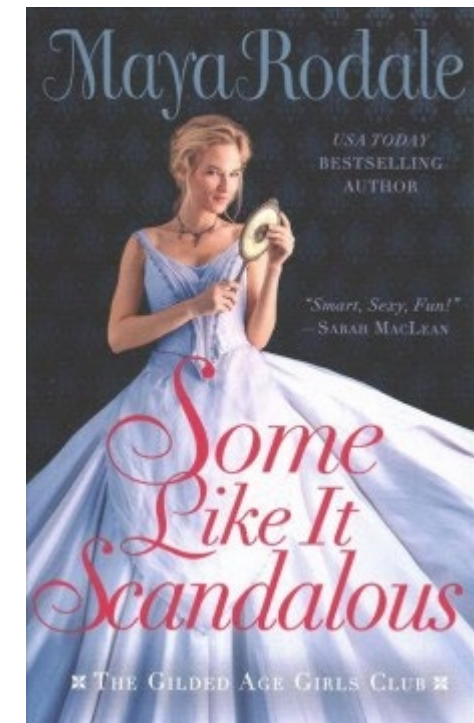
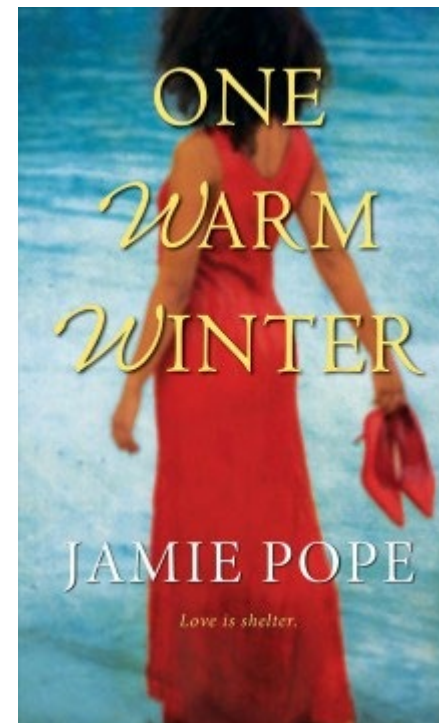
No strings attached

Once upon a time

Unforgettable love

Fake Relationship

What begins as a pretense ends in a happily-ever-after.





Chaste

Witty

Fast-
paced

Well-
developed

Quirky

Upbeat

Heartwarming

Steamy

Mildly
sensuous

Banter-
filled

Brooding

Spirited

Moody

Likeable

Amusing

Explicit

Strong
female

Find the right
Romance



Chaste

Pure & Romantic



Mildly Sensuous

It's getting hot in here



Steamy

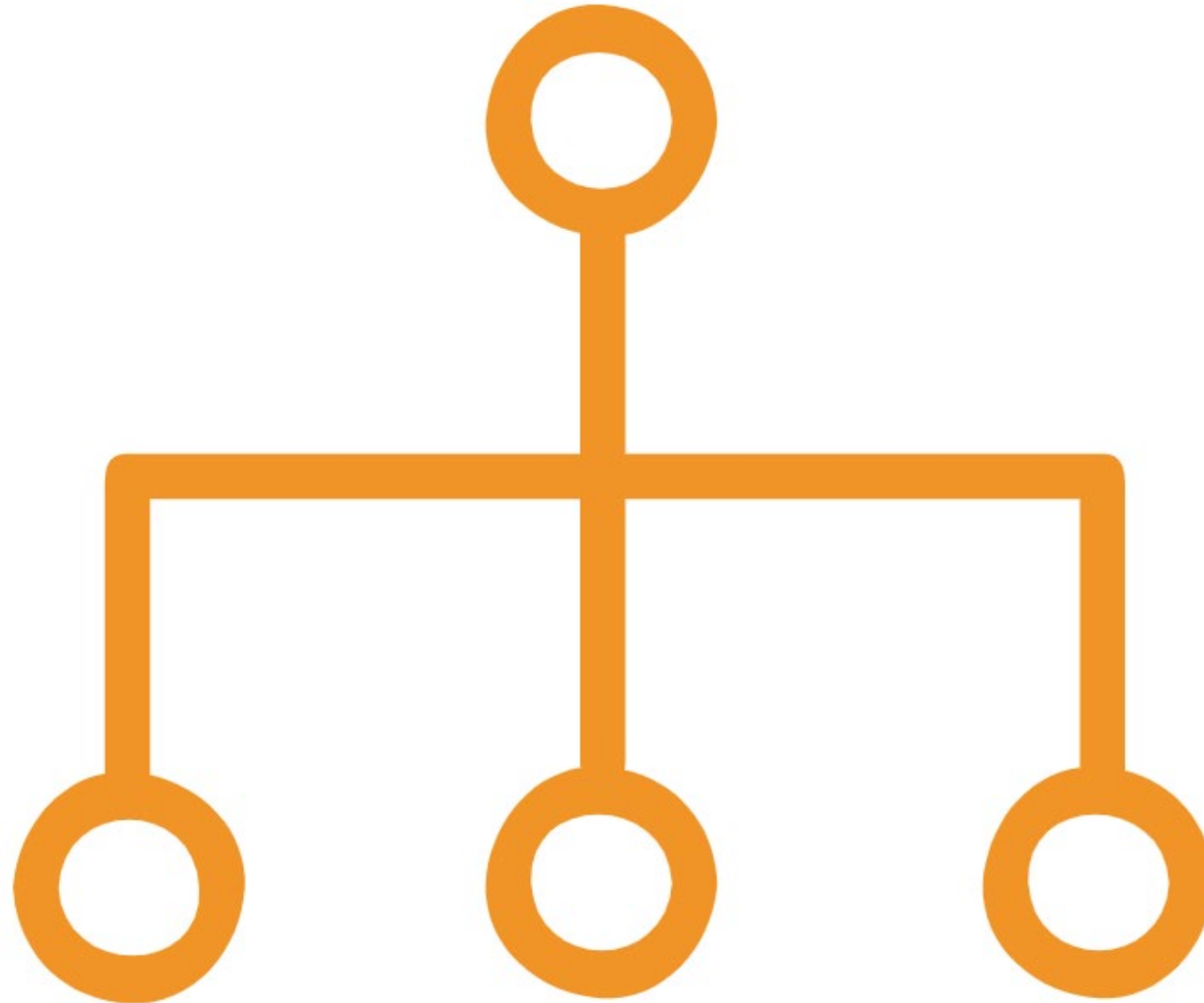
Getting busy & happy about it



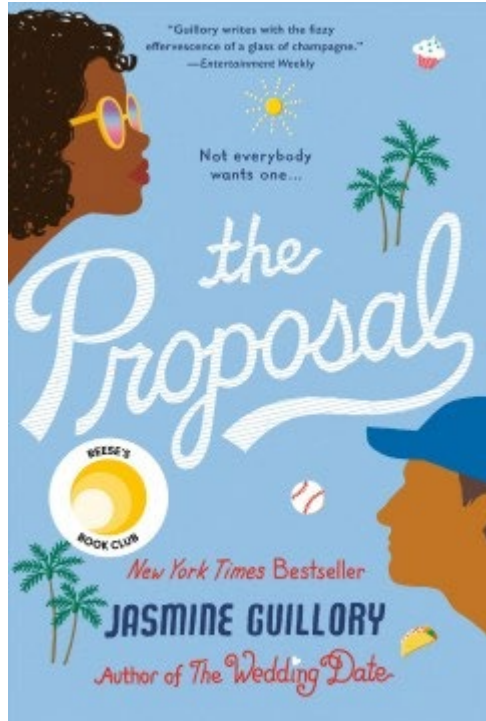
Explicit

All kinds of action

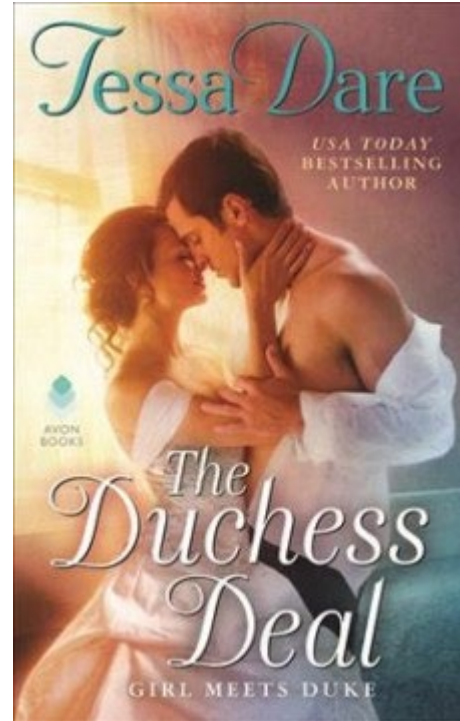
Romance Subgenres



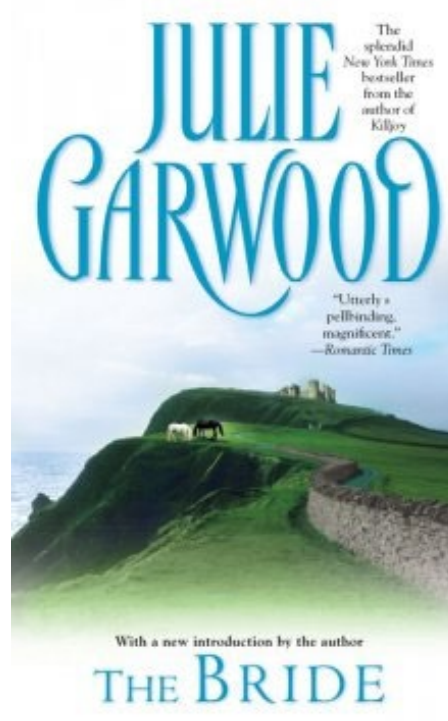
Timeframe



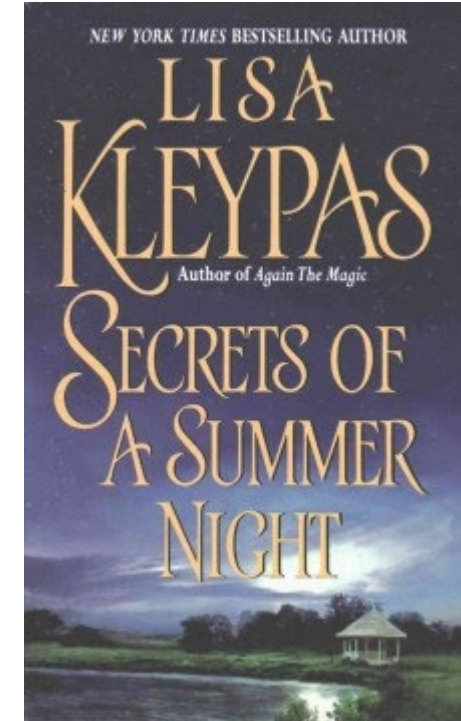
Contemporary



Regency

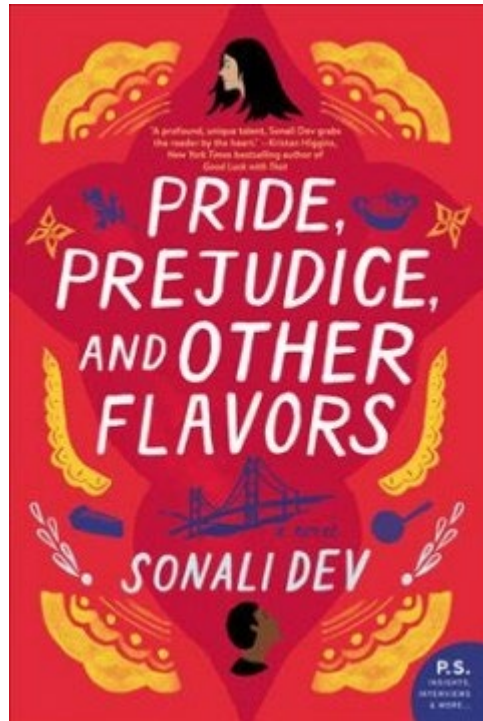


Medieval

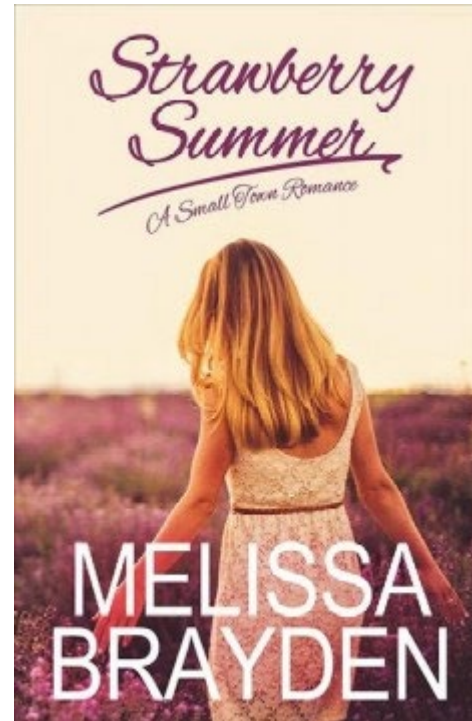


Victorian

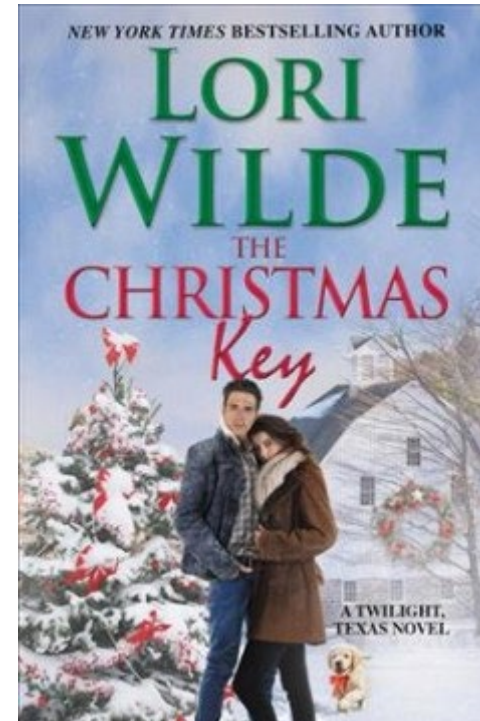
Characters or Events



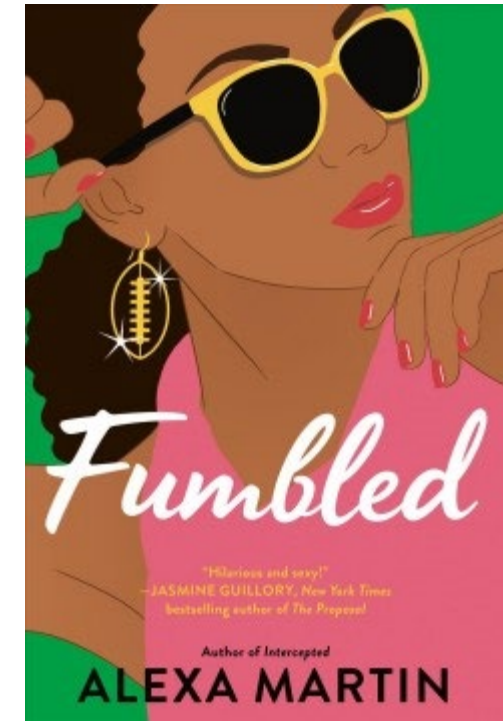
Multicultural



LGBTQIA

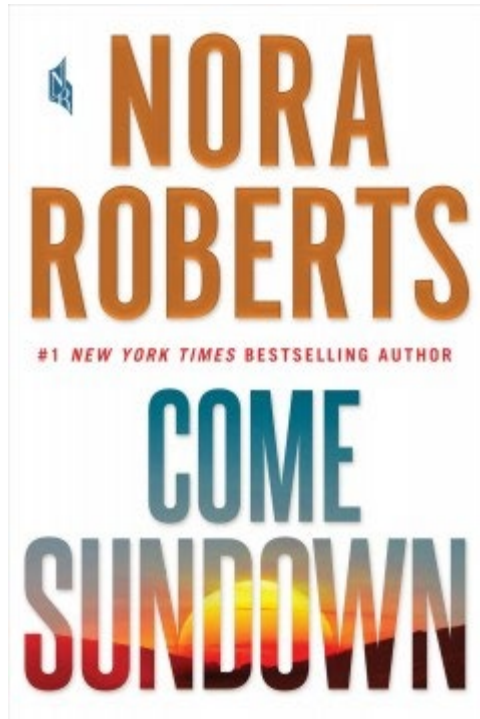


Holiday

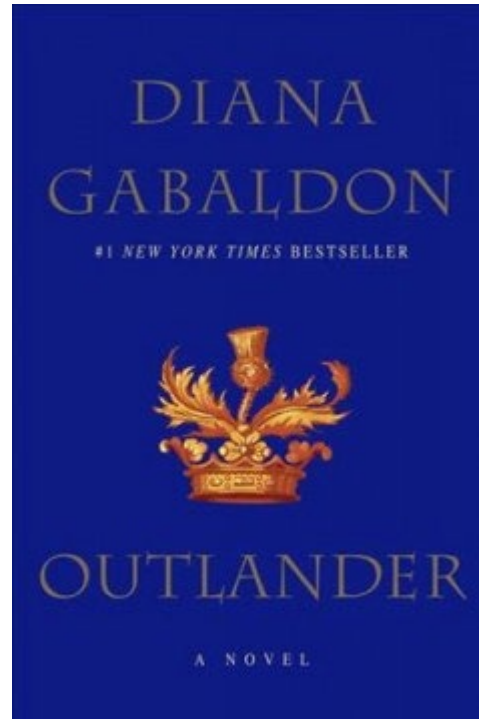


Sports

Genreblends



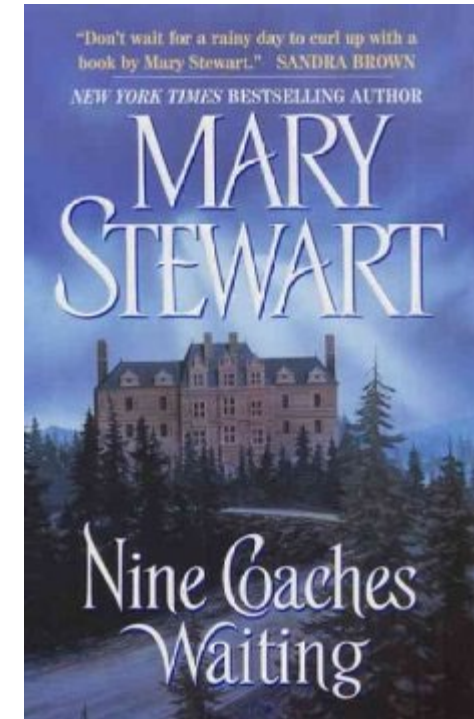
Romantic Suspense



Time Travel



Paranormal

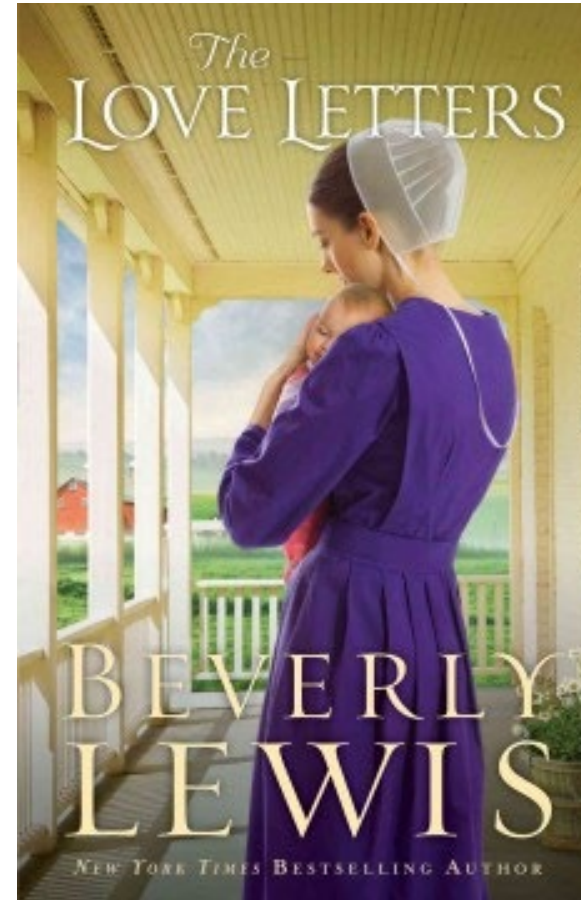
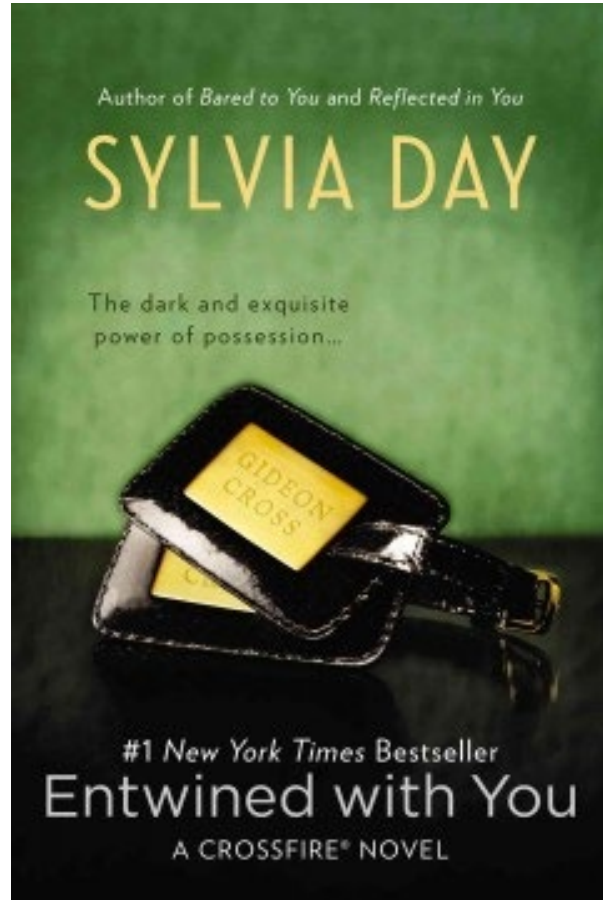


Gothic

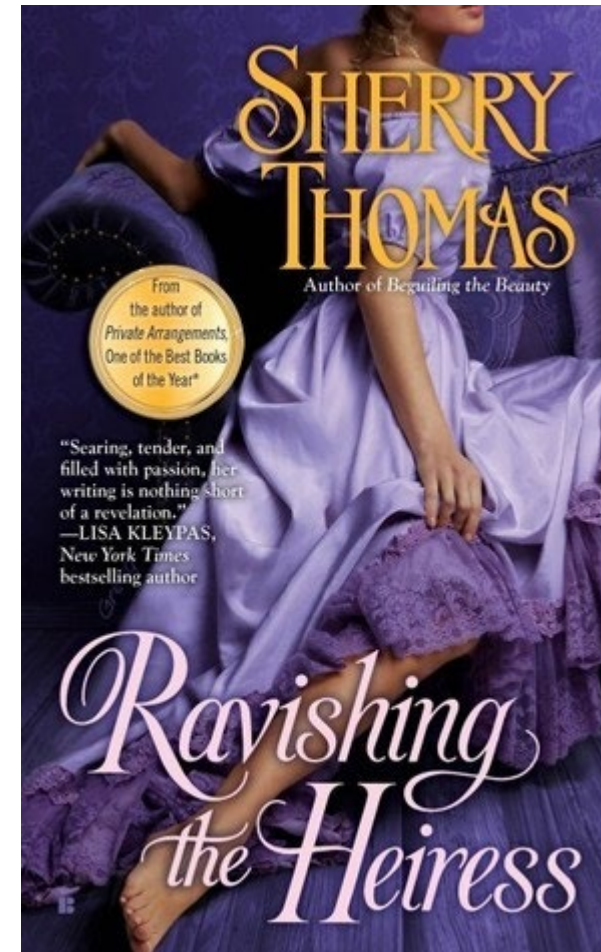
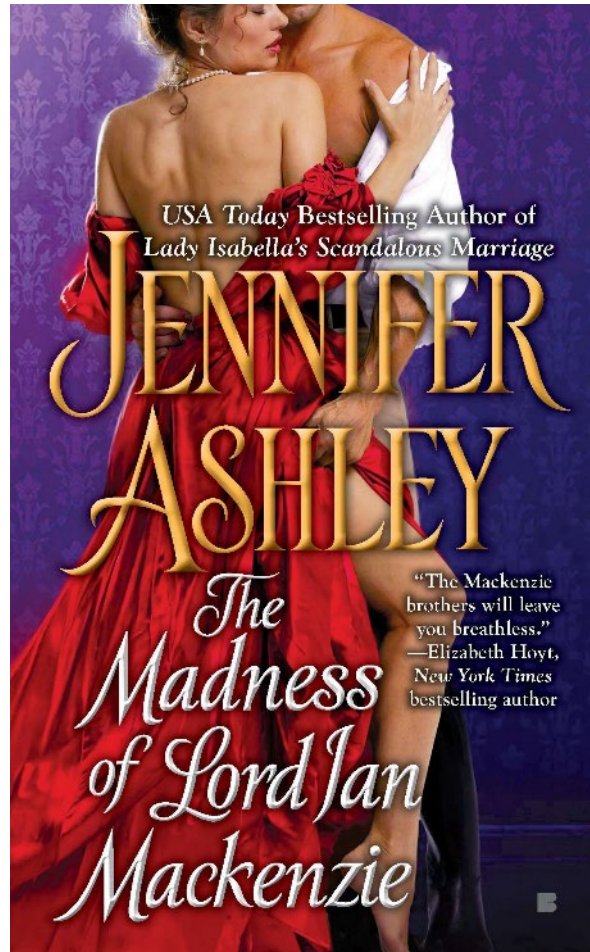
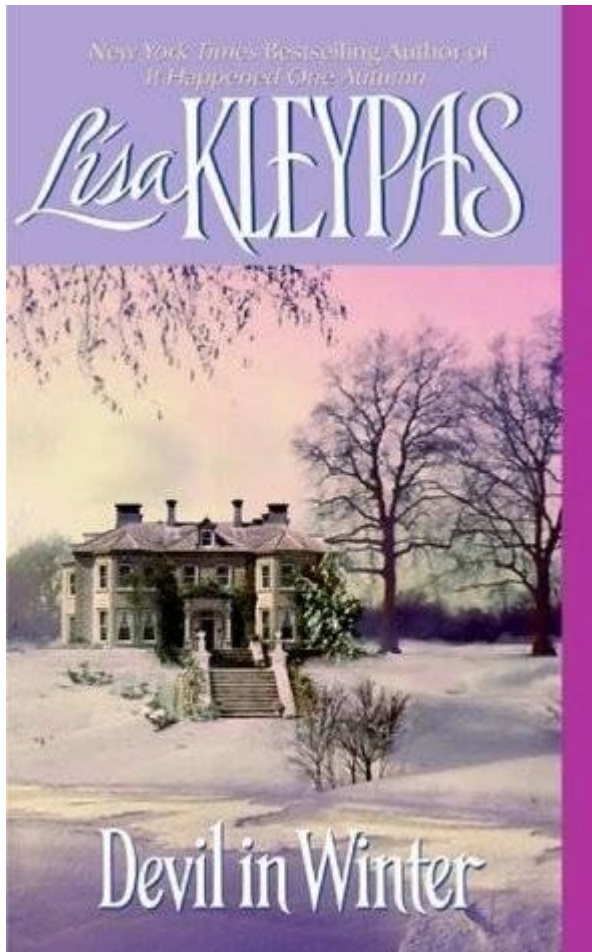


RA Romance Conversations

“How spicy do you prefer your romance?”



“Do you have any favorite tropes?”



“Who’s your favorite romance author?”



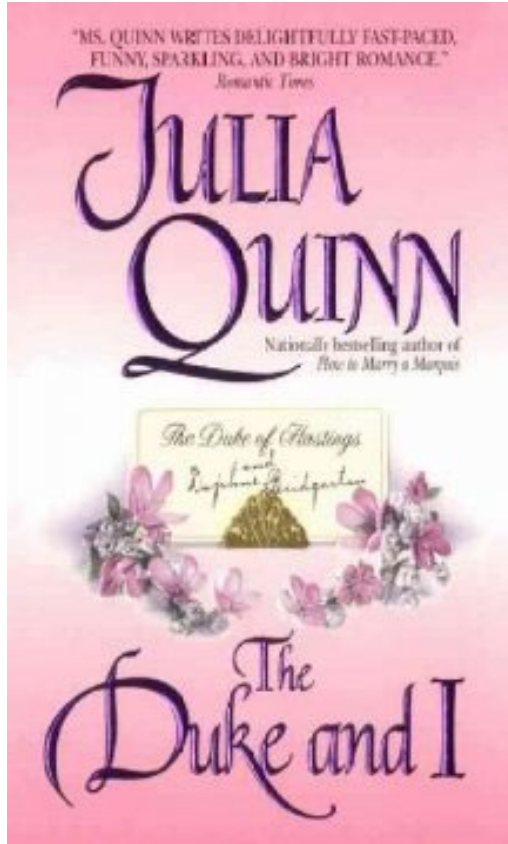
“Do you like romance novels?”



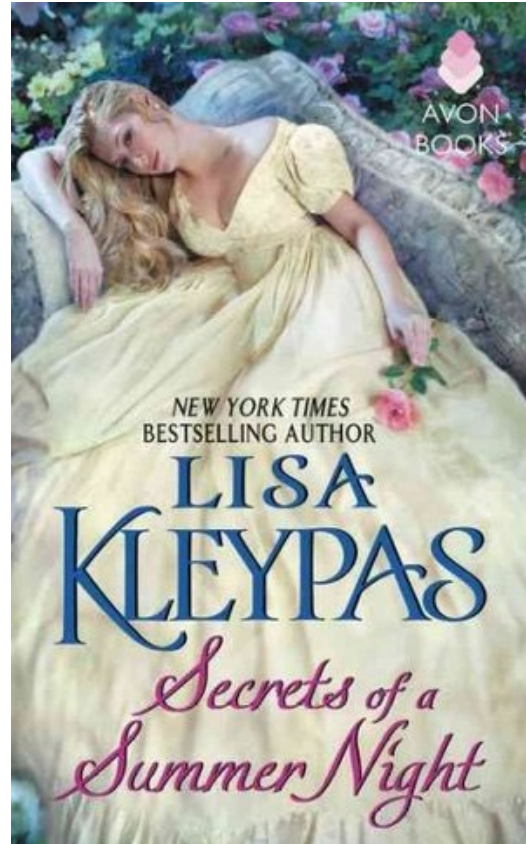
Popular Series



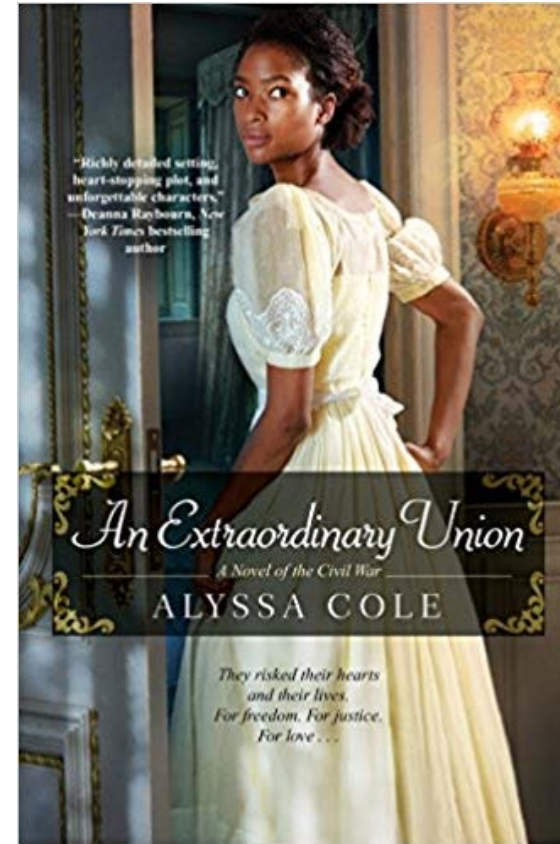
Historical Series



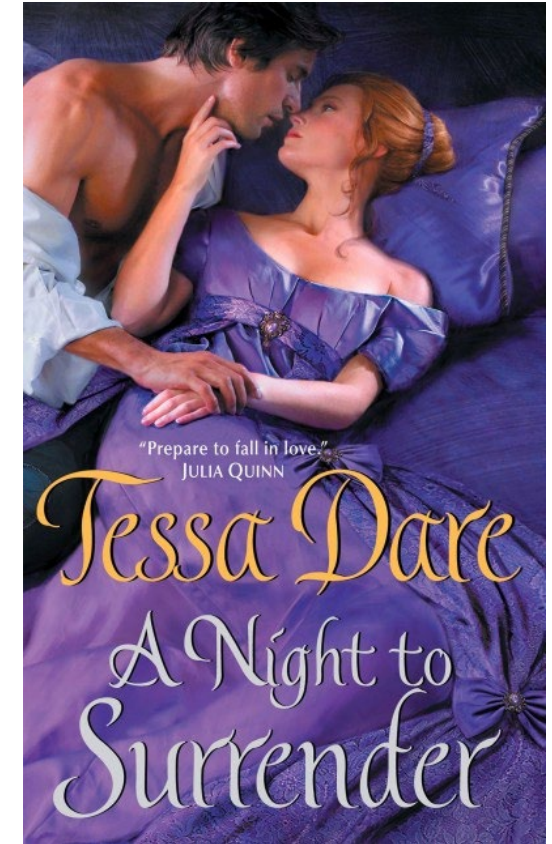
Bridgertons



The Wallflowers

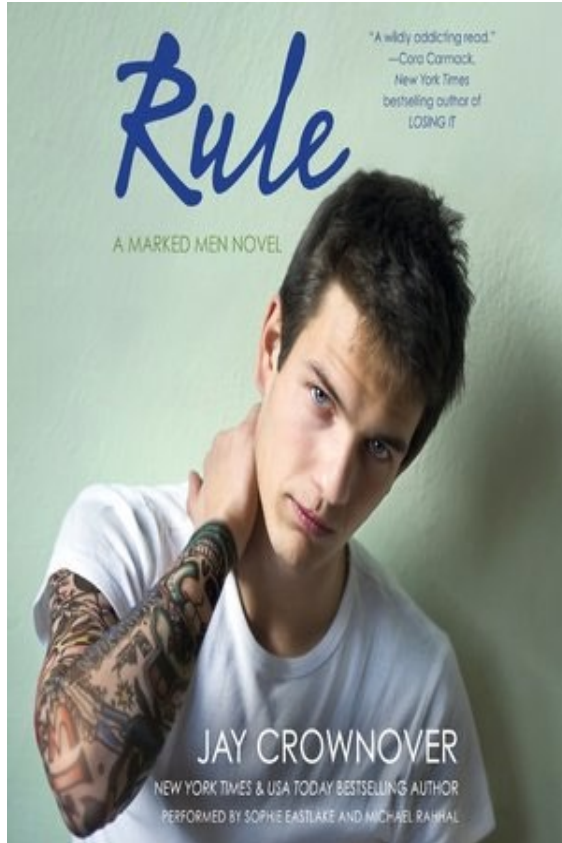


The Loyal League

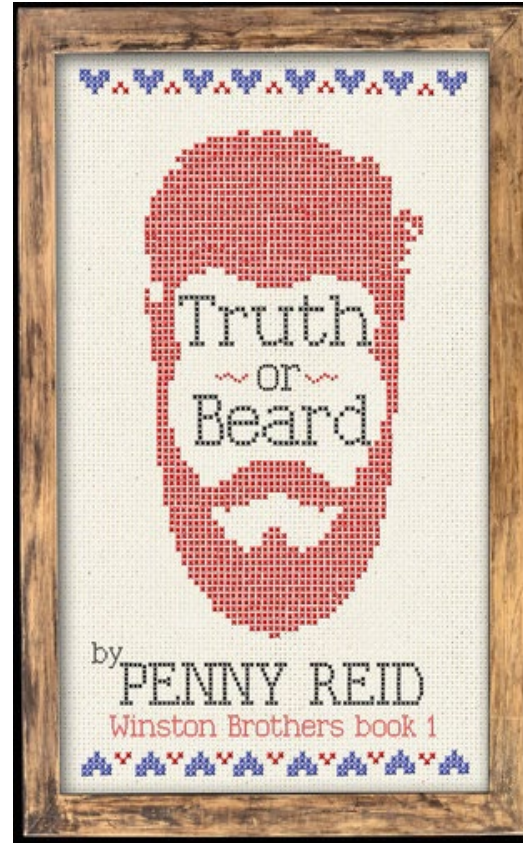


Spindle Cove

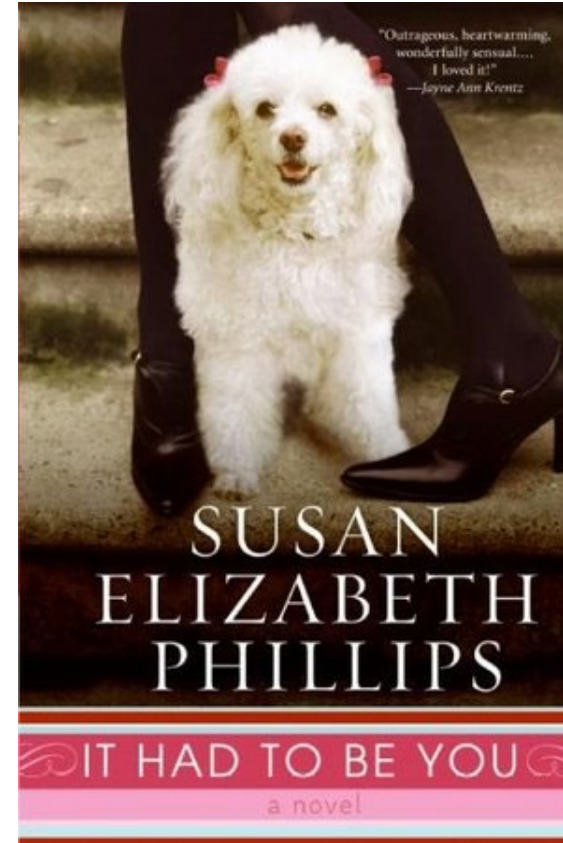
Contemporary Romance Series



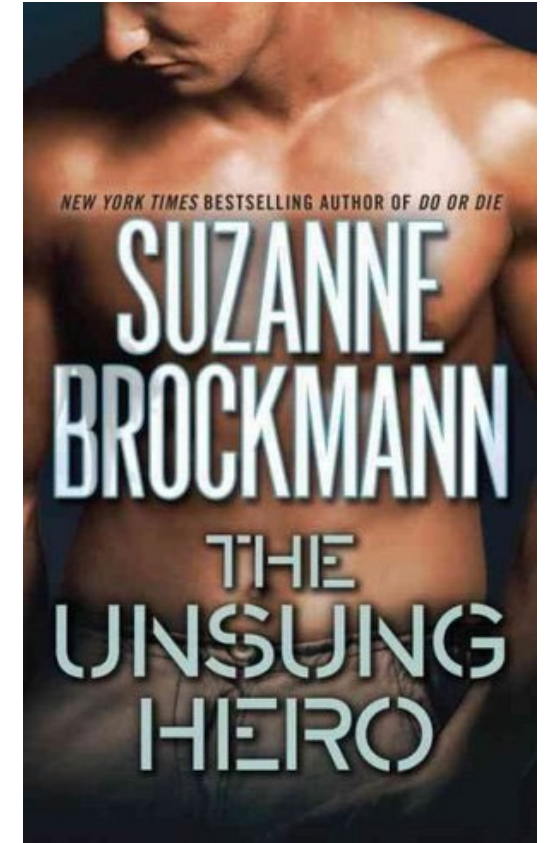
Marked Men



Winston Bros

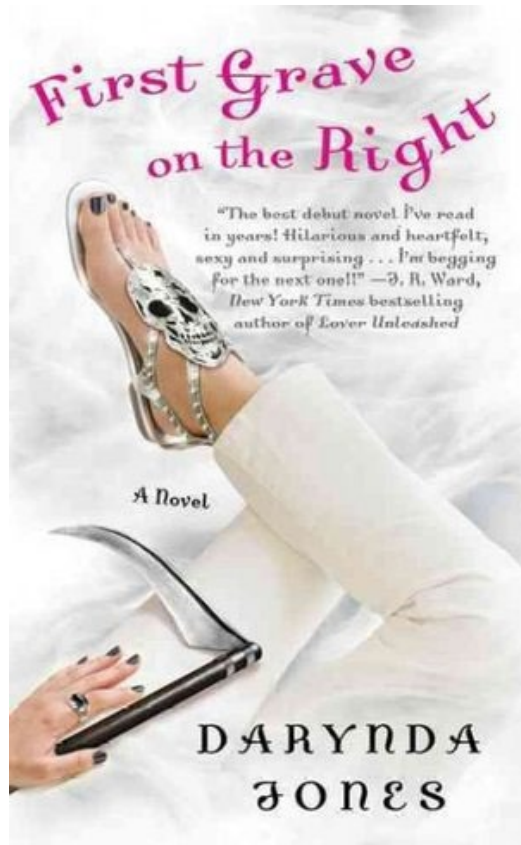


Chicago Stars

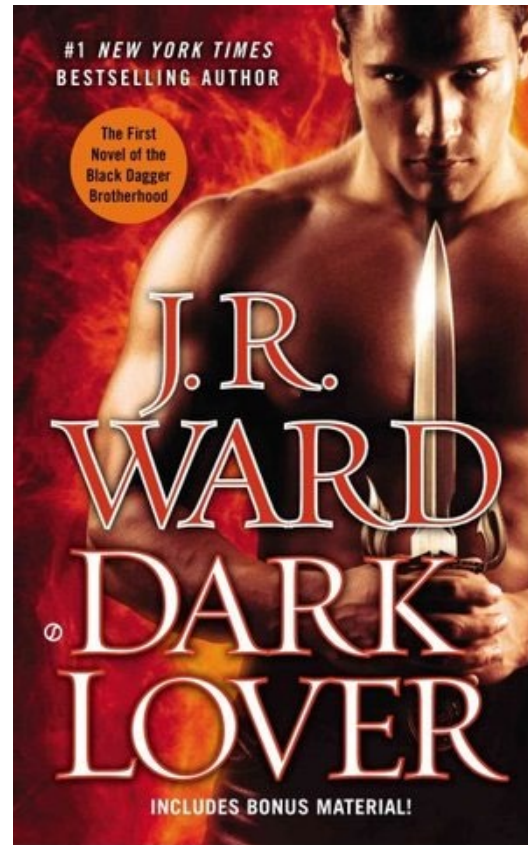


Troubleshooters

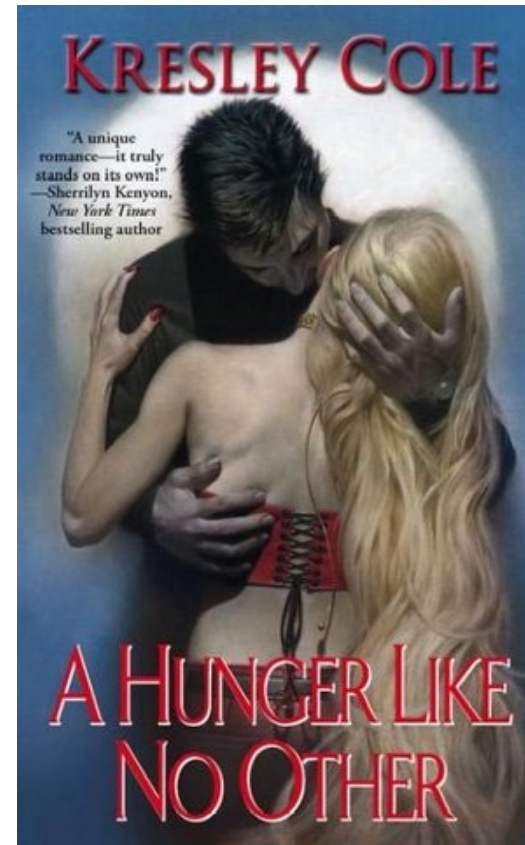
Paranormal Romance Series



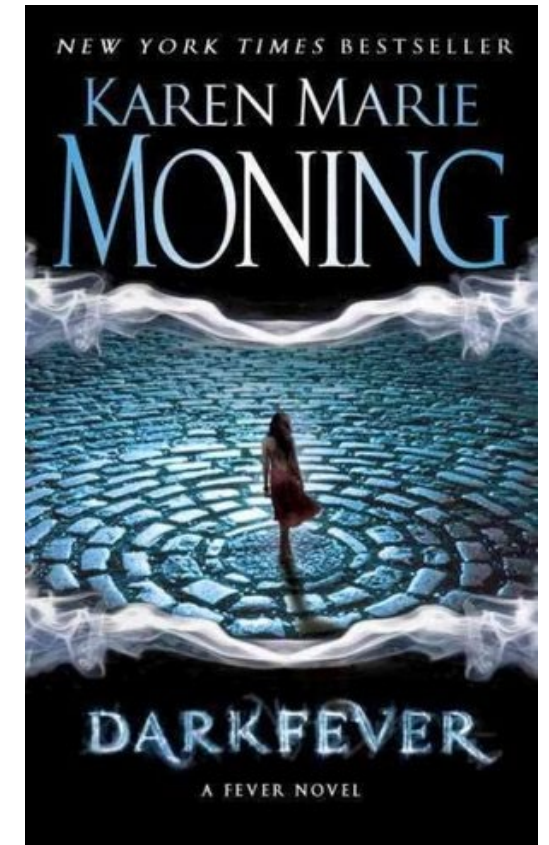
Charley Davidson



The Black Dagger Brotherhood

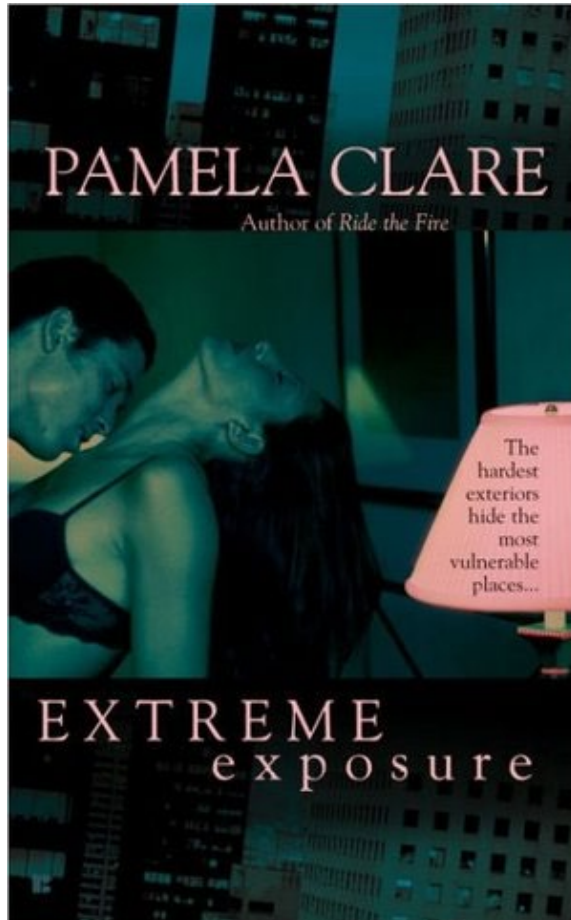


Immortals After Dark

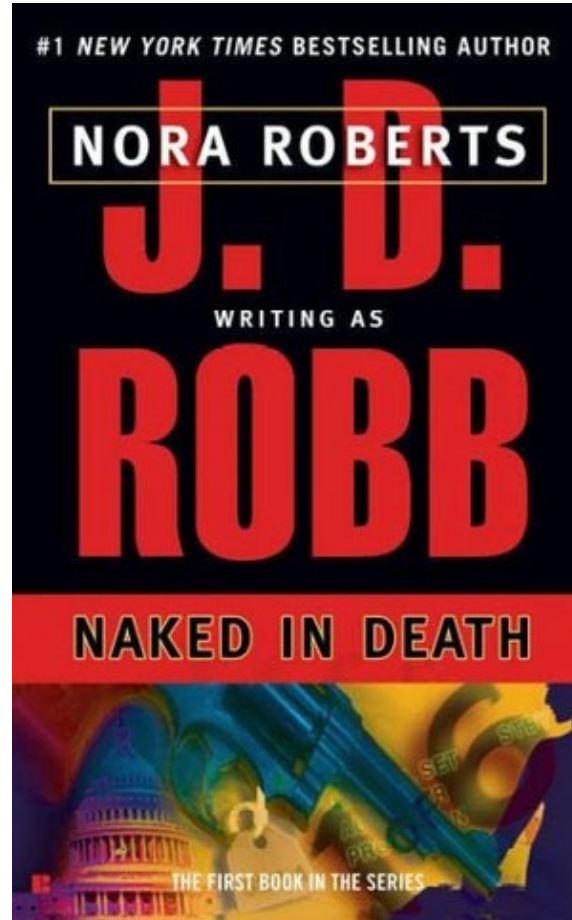


Fever

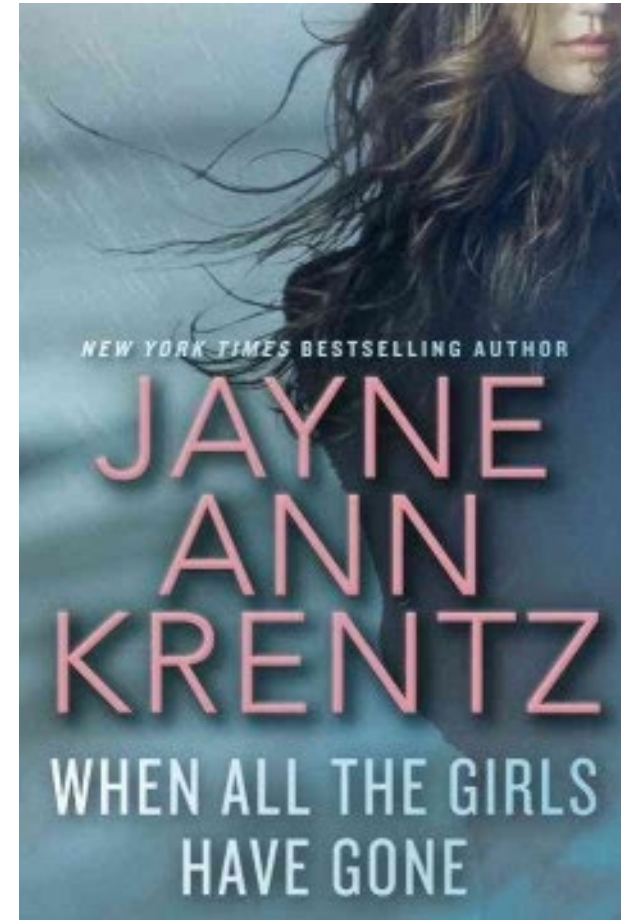
Romantic Suspense Series



I-Team



In Death



Cutler, Sutter & Salinas

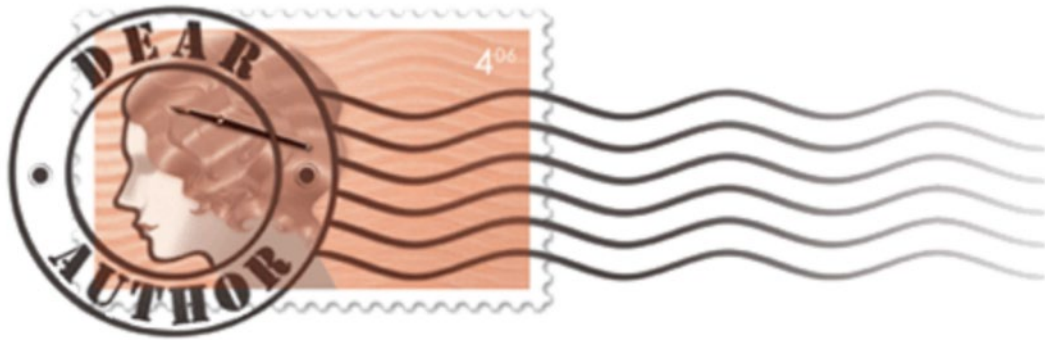
Awards

The **Rita Award** is the most prominent award in romance fiction. It is presented by Romance Writers of America and awards books in 13 romance categories.



Smart Bitches Trashy Books

all of the romance,
none of the bullshit



SARAH MACLEAN

Novelist. Columnist. Advocate.

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recommended by sarah

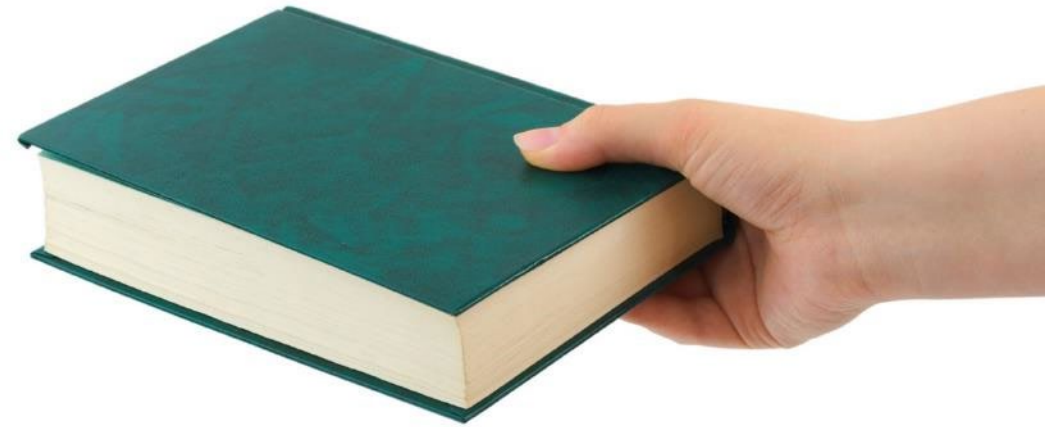
a work forever in progress (and in no particular order)

** indicates a recent addition to the list

[\(click here to download printable list\)](#)

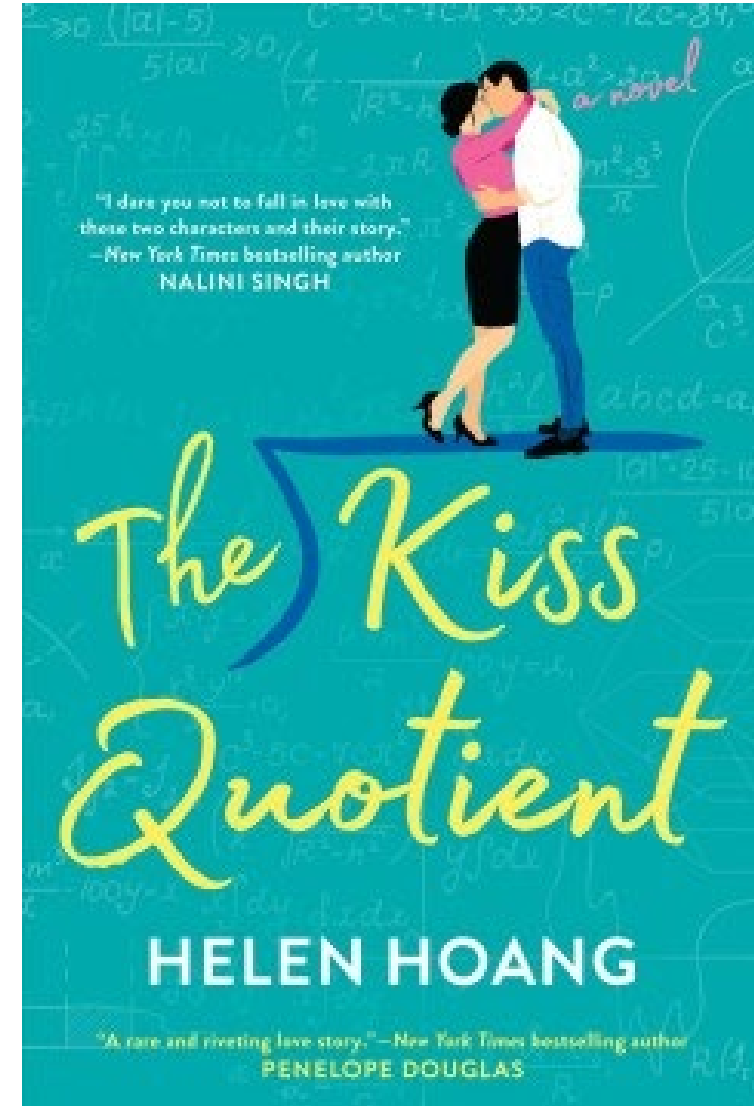
Romance Starter Pack

- ♥ Representative of genre
- ♥ Well-reviewed
- ♥ Wide appeal
- ♥ Stand-alone or series starter
- ♥ Available on audio



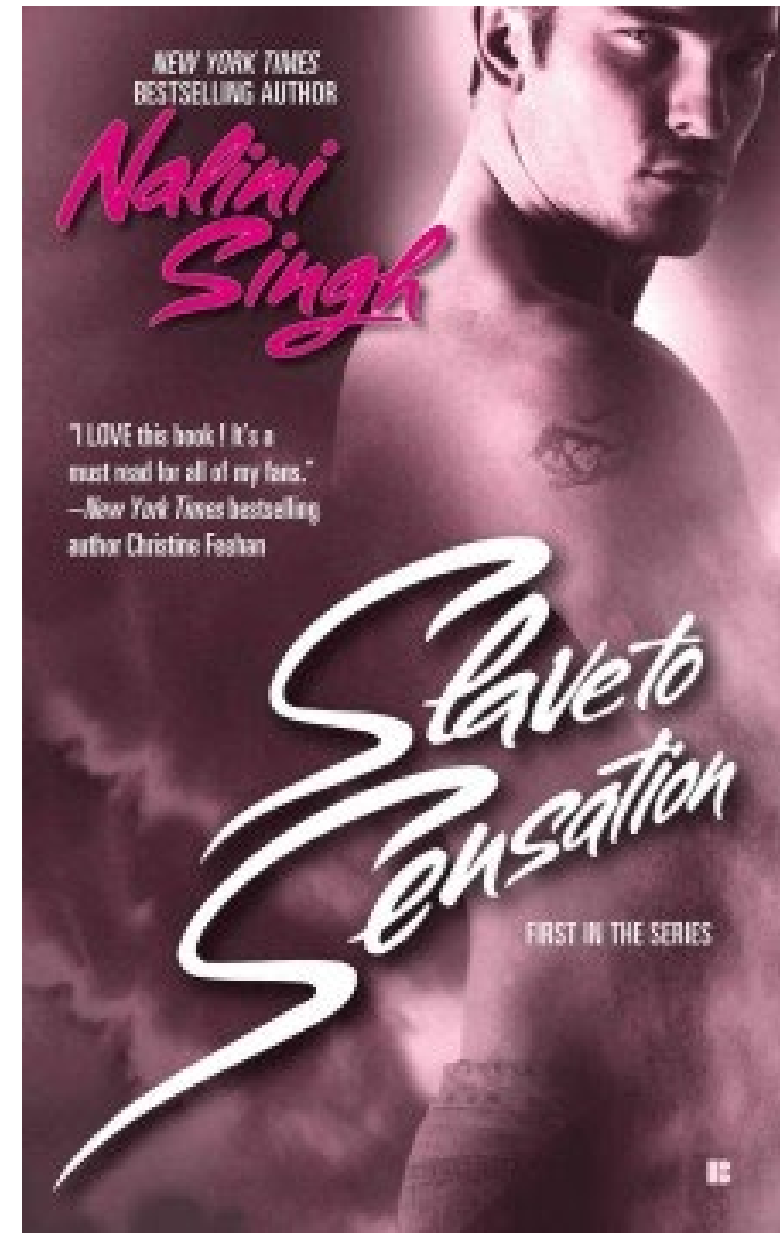
The Kiss Quotient by Helen Hoang (2018)

- ♥ Own Voices
- ♥ Ability diverse heroine
- ♥ Multicultural cast of characters
- ♥ Explicitly erotic
- ♥ Fake relationship



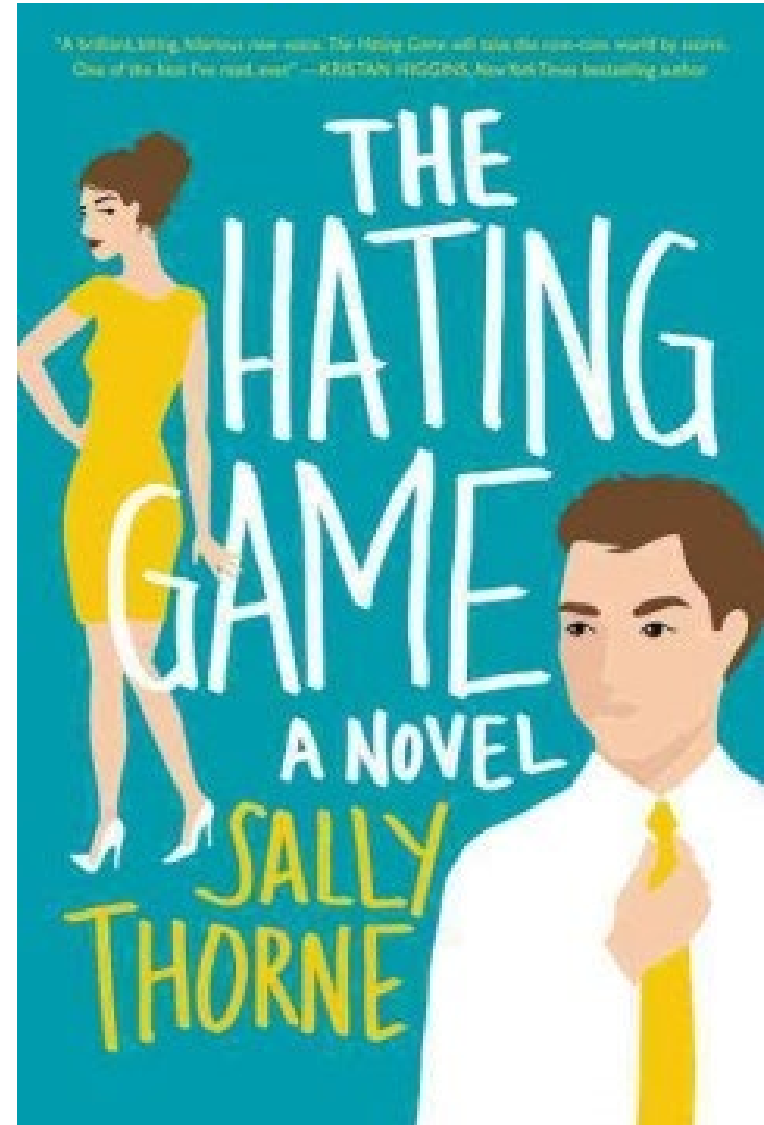
Slave to Sensation by Nalini Singh (2006)

- ♥ Paranormal
- ♥ Steamy
- ♥ Rich world-building
- ♥ Action-packed



The Hating Game by Sally Thorne (2016)

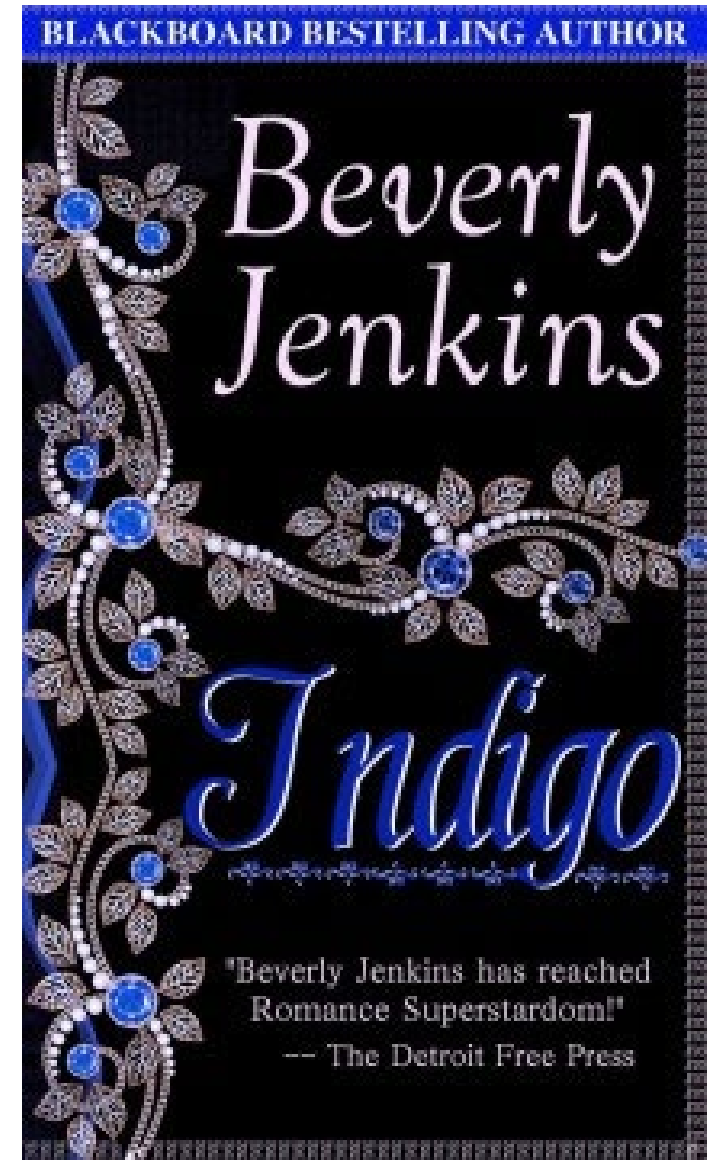
- ♥ Romantic comedy
- ♥ Witty banter
- ♥ Enemies to lovers
- ♥ Australian setting
- ♥ Likeable characters



Indigo

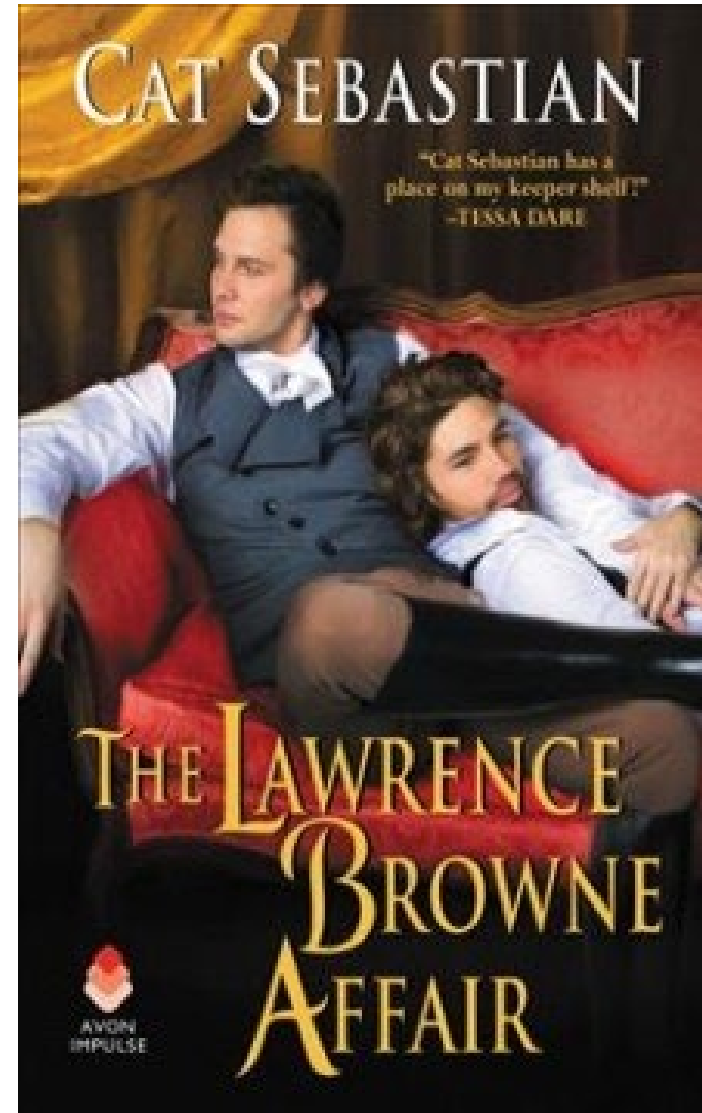
by Beverly Jenkins (1996)

- ♥ Culturally diverse cast
- ♥ Rich detail
- ♥ Well-crafted dialogue
- ♥ Underground Railroad



The Lawrence Browne Affair by Cat Sebastian (2017)

- ♥ LGBTQIA romance
- ♥ For richer, for poorer
- ♥ Love in disguise
- ♥ Regency setting
- ♥ Witty



NoveList Resources



Genre outlines



Getting Up to Speed in Romance

by Joyce Saricks; updated by Krista Biggs

[Print this genre outline](#)

What is Romance?

Romance novels have a central plot revolving around a developing romantic relationship and with an "emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending" (Romance Writers of America), which can be a happily-ever-after or a happy-for-now. While the genre includes books with a wide range of subgenres -- from historical to science fiction to suspense and more -- those settings are secondary to the love story. Romance also includes a wide range of sexuality, from inspirational romances where the characters may share one gentle kiss to erotic romances with explicit kink and more than one partner.

What happens in a Romance novel?

With such a wide range of subgenres to pull from, almost anything can happen in the secondary plot of a romance novel, however the central plot remains the same. Romances follow a romantic relationship from its beginnings through to a satisfactory conclusion, while exploring the misunderstandings that threaten to scuttle the relationship along the way. As the main characters explore their growing passion for one another, the character growth that accompanies love sets the stage for a happy ending. No matter the explicitness of the sex, the buildup of sexual tension beforehand is a must.

"Romance is a genre of emotions and characters. Readers need to feel an emotional link with the protagonists and become invested in the outcome of their story."

Why do people like to read Romance?

Romance is a genre of emotions and characters. Readers need to feel an emotional link with the protagonists and become invested in the outcome of their story. As the genre has changed, character stereotypes have changed too. The ingénue who brings a rich and powerful titan of industry to his knees remains popular, but sexually confident heroines exist as well, with heroes who admire their power and success.

Because romances are stories of emotions, they are written so that readers are pulled immediately into a story that keeps them there, even if life compels them to read in short bits. While the genre has changed to allow books that follow a relationship over a series of books, the emotional pull and happy ending remain sacrosanct. While many readers will read a trilogy with a relationship cliff hanger in books one and two, readers do not want unhappy surprises at the close of the relationship's journey.

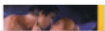
Key titles



The kiss quotient

Helen Hoang

A charming and erotic. Own Voices romance in which Stella Lane, who has Asperger's Syndrome, decides that she needs to know more about dating and sex and takes logical steps to get up to speed. Enter Michael Phan, the escort Stella hires as a teacher. While their original relationship is strictly business, their emotions are soon engaged.



A night to surrender

Tessa Dare

Keeping up pages



ABOUT ROMANCE

Romances offer many kinds of reading experiences, ranging from realistic contemporary stories to historical and paranormal romances. Some romance novels are chaste -- while others get quite steamy! Regardless, all romance novels share two characteristics: a love story is the central focus, and the lovers do find their happily ever after together. NoveList tone appeals can help refine search results to find the perfect romance read.

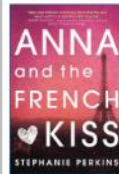
GENRE ESSENTIALS

- Getting Up to Speed in Romance
- But My Book Club Doesn't Read Romance!
- Romance for Teens

AWARDS TO KNOW

- LJ Best Romance Books
- RITA Awards
- Romantic Times Reviewers' Choice
- Australian Romance Readers Awards

Explore ROMANCE themes...



EXAMPLE:

Love abroad
A travel adventure leads to everlasting love.

[Find more books with this theme!](#)

[Learn all about themes here.](#)

LOVE THESE LISTS!

Adults

- Love in a Small Town
- Multicultural Romances
- Category Romance
- Cowboy Romances

Teens

- For Fans of Royal Romances
- If You Like: Simon v. the Homo Sapiens Agenda
- Contemporary Teen Romance

We Recommend...



[Browse more ROMANCE for Adults...](#)

[Browse more ROMANCE for Teens...](#)

FOR LIBRARIANS: Free printables &

Recommended reads lists

Men in Kilts [\(Hide Details\)](#)

Document Type: Recommended Reads

Description:

Fans of Scottish and Highland romances will find this bonny list full of spirit -- and, of course, men in kilts. Enjoy the liltin' speech, fine scenery, and passionate love stories to be found here!



No other Highlander
(Feb 2017)

By: Basso, Adrienne

Popularity:★★★★☆

[Check Availability](#)

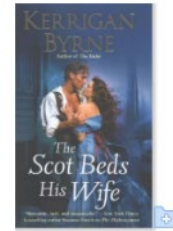


Too Scot to handle
(Jul 2017)

By: Burrowes, Grace

Popularity:★★★★☆

[Check Availability](#)



The Scot beds his wife
(Oct 2017)

By: Byrne, Kerrigan

Popularity:★★★★☆

[Check Availability](#)



Highland dragon warrior
(Sep 2017)

By: Cooper, Isabel

Popularity:★★★★☆



First time with a Highlander
(Oct 2015)

By: Cready, Gwyn

Popularity:★★★★☆



Hero in the Highlands
(Oct 2016)

By: Enoch, Suzanne

Popularity:★★★★☆



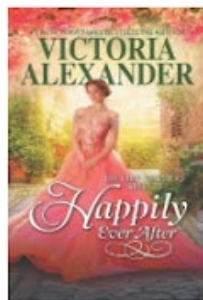
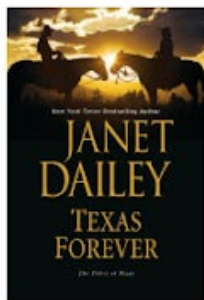
Genre browse

Adult Teen Ages 9-12 Ages 0-8

New and Popular in...

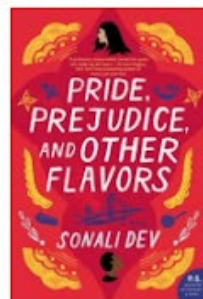
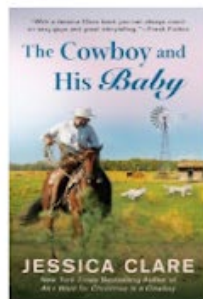
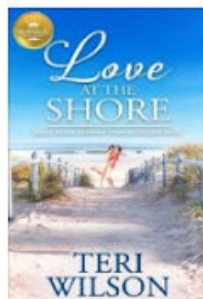
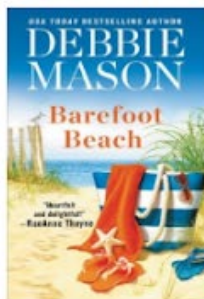
Forthcoming Romance [View All](#)

There's always more fish in the sea...



Contemporary Romance [View All](#)

Modern love? It's complicated!



Historical Romance [View All](#)

True love is timeless.



Lists

- [Cowboy Romances](#)
- [Christian Romances](#)
- [Holiday Romances](#)
- [Multicultural Romances](#)
- [Love in a Small Town](#)

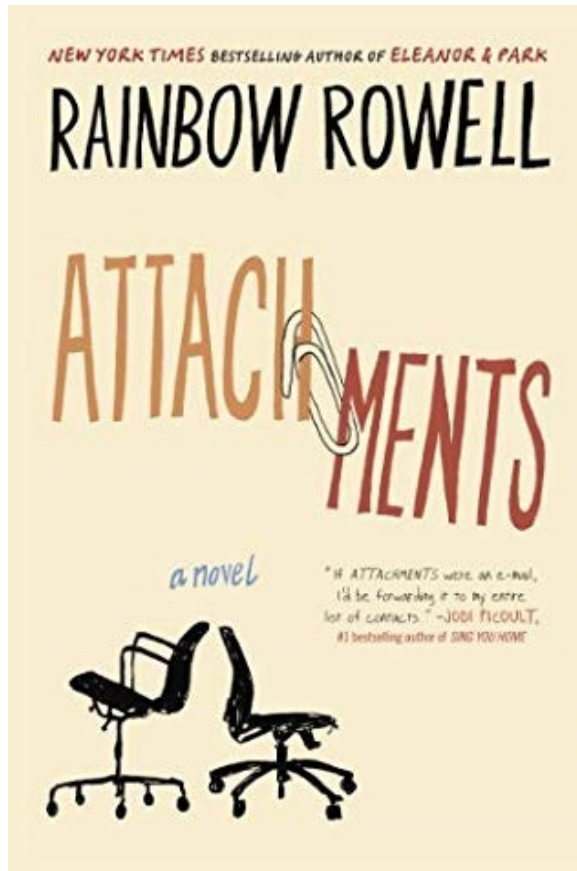
Helping Readers

- [Getting Up to Speed in Gothic Fiction](#)
- [Getting Up to Speed in Romance](#)
- [Diverse Reading: Romance](#)
- [African-American Fiction Authors](#)
- [Subgenre Special: Paranormal Romances](#)
- [Subgenre Special: Humorous Romances](#)
- [Subgenre Special: Gothic Romances](#)

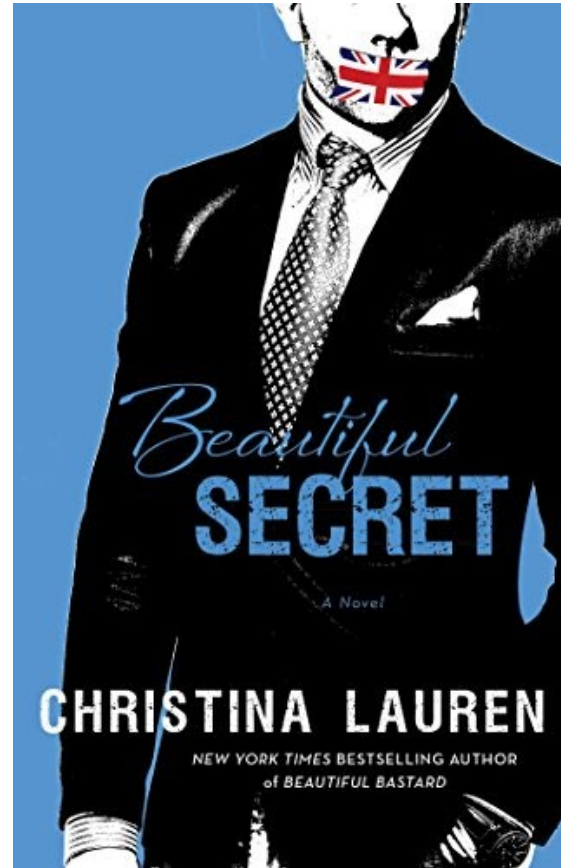
I've read
it all!



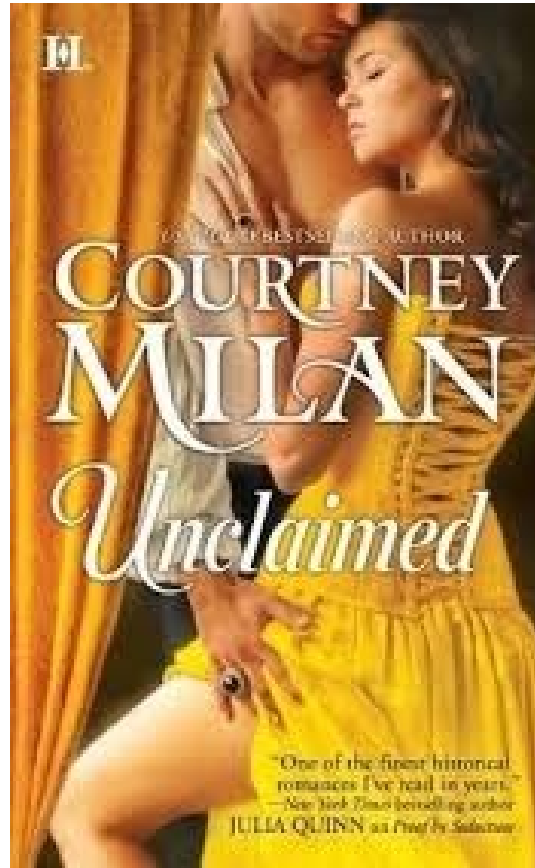
Try... Beta Males!



Sweet



Spicy

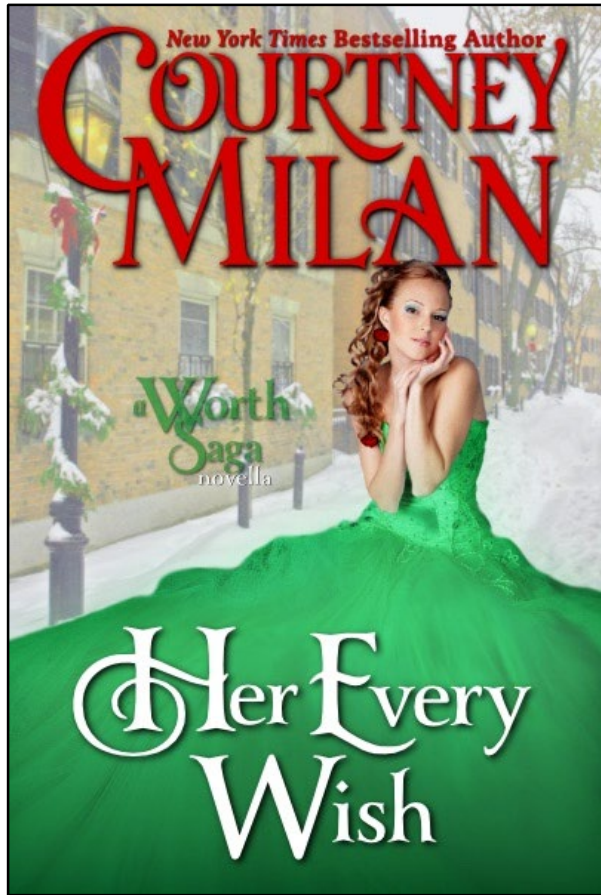


Virgin Hero

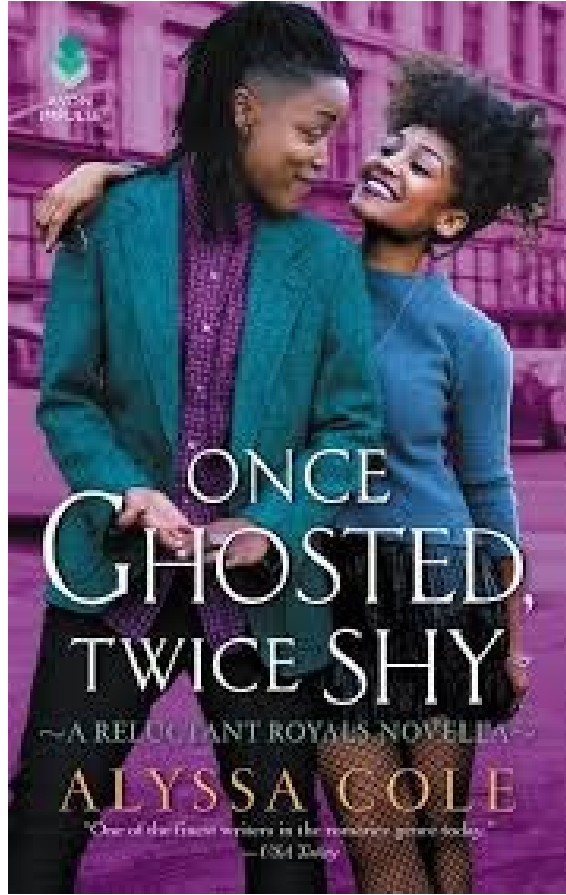


Mr. Nice Guy

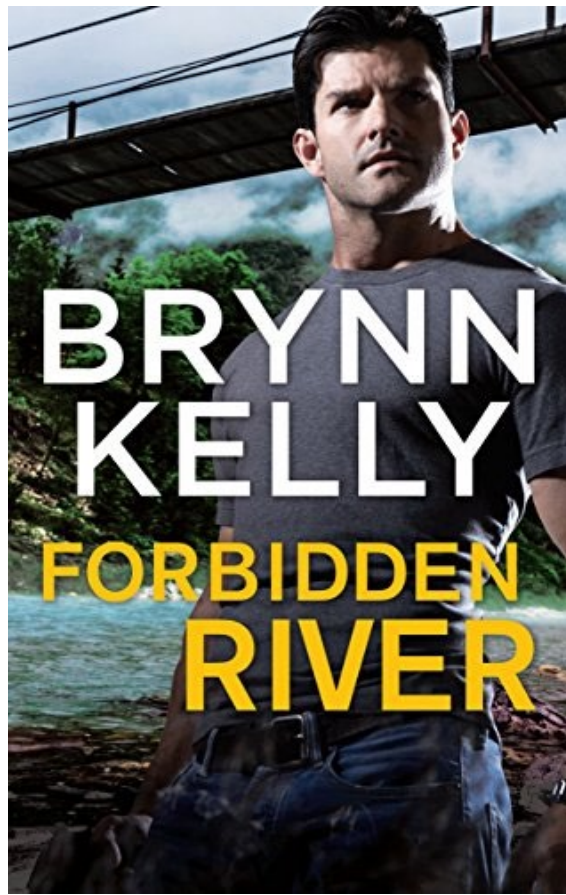
Try Novellas...



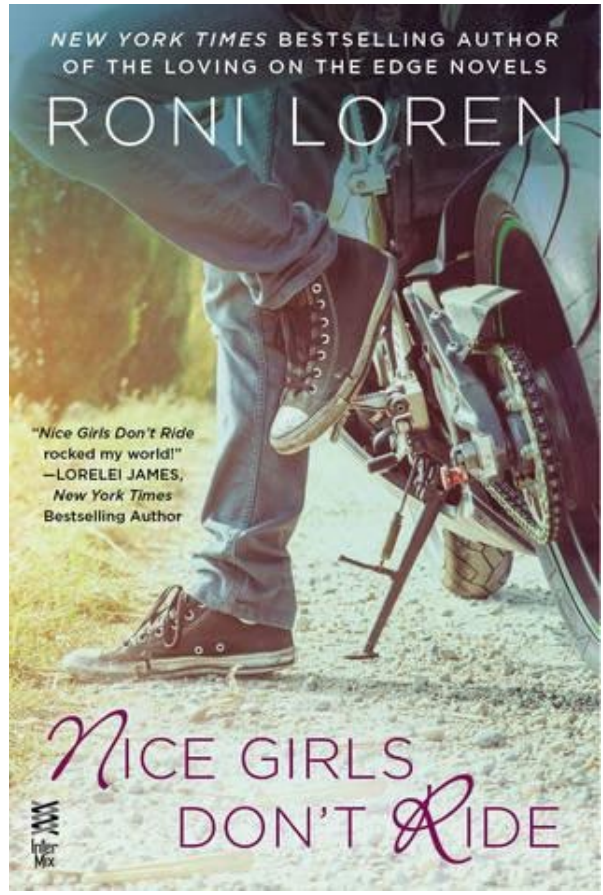
The Worth Saga



Reluctant Royals

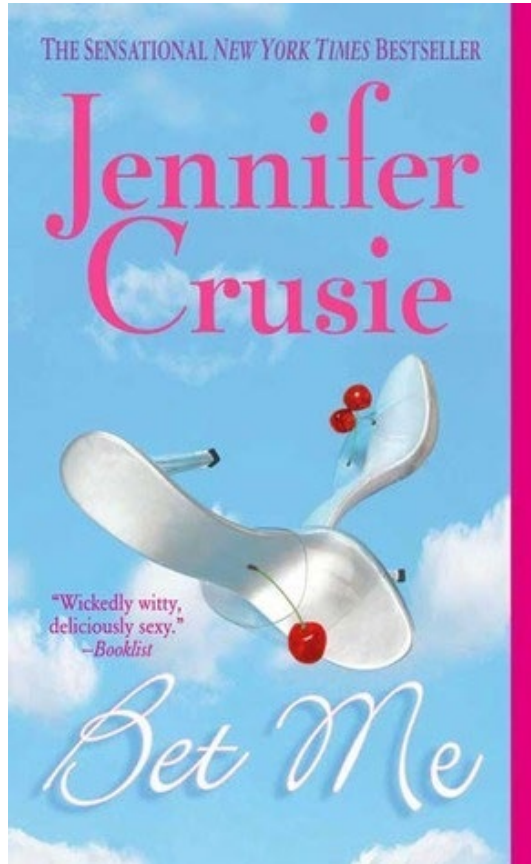


Legionnaires

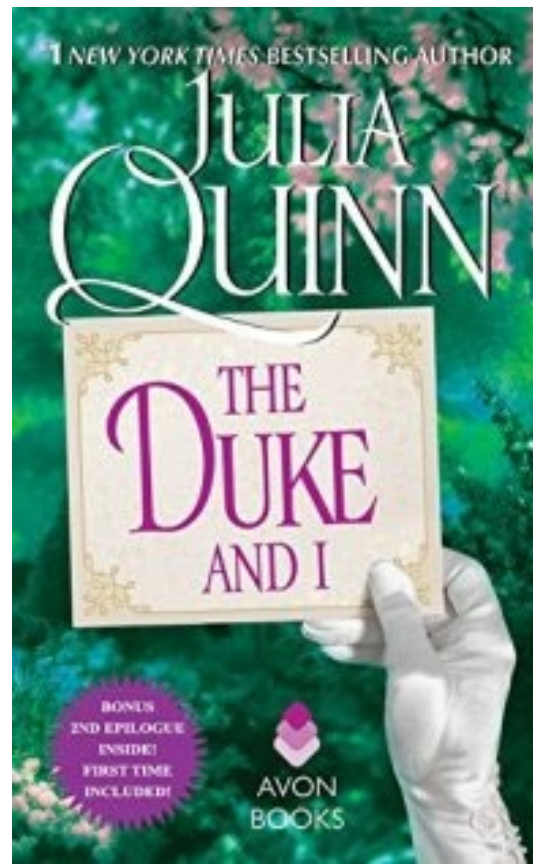


stand alone novella

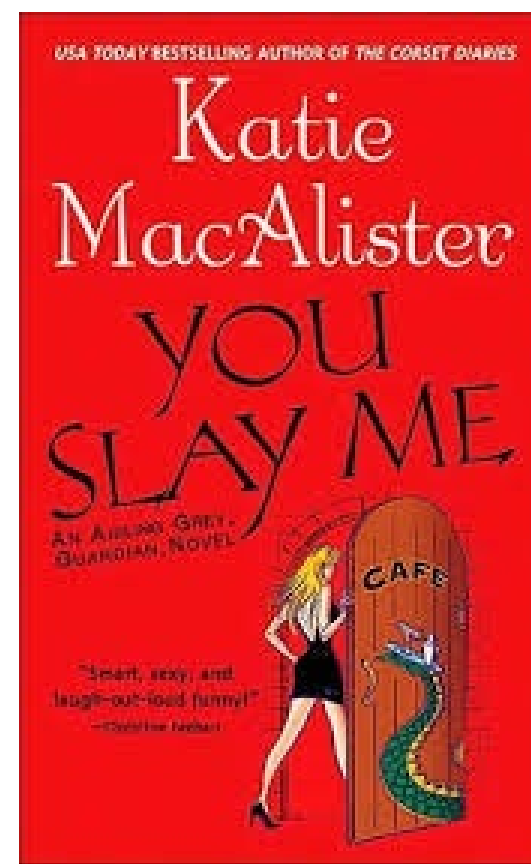
Try Humorous Romance...



Contemporary



Historical



Paranormal



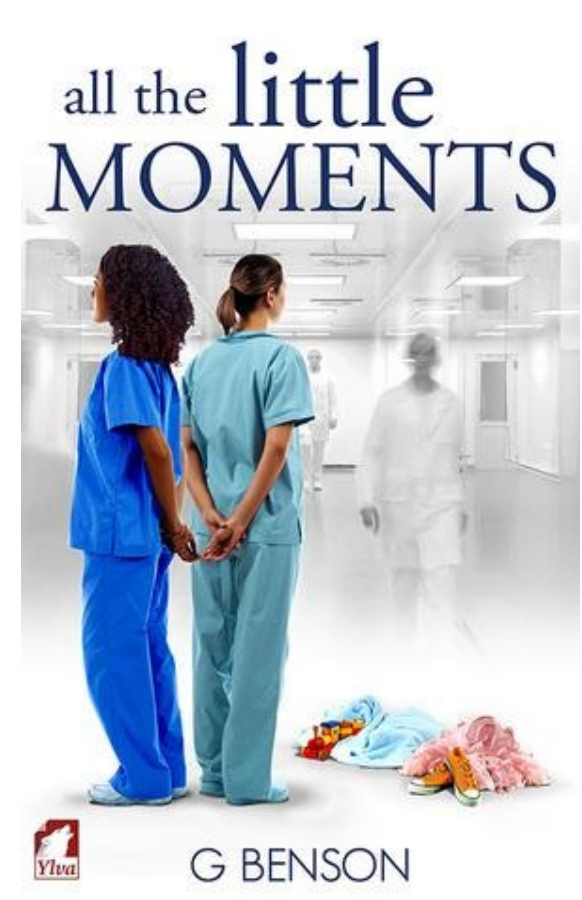
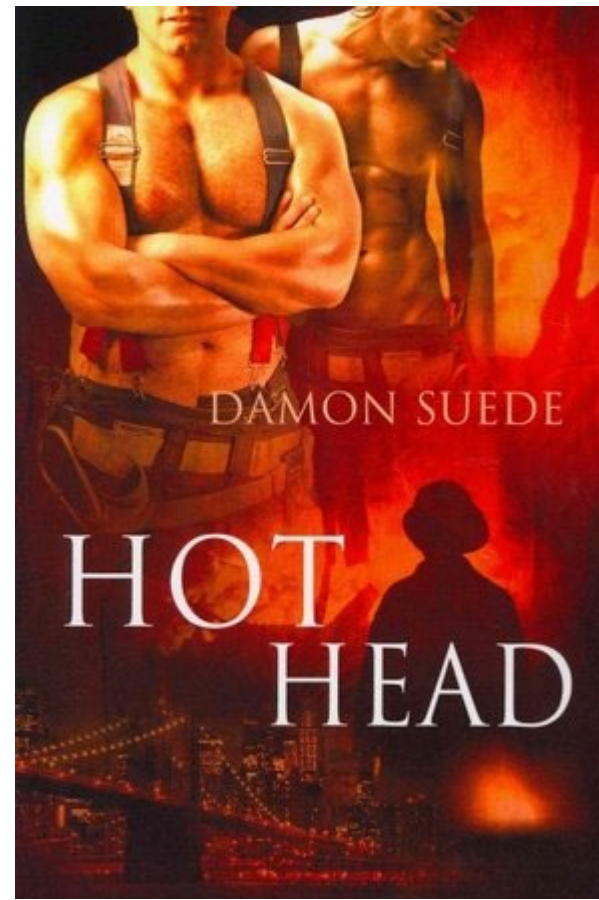
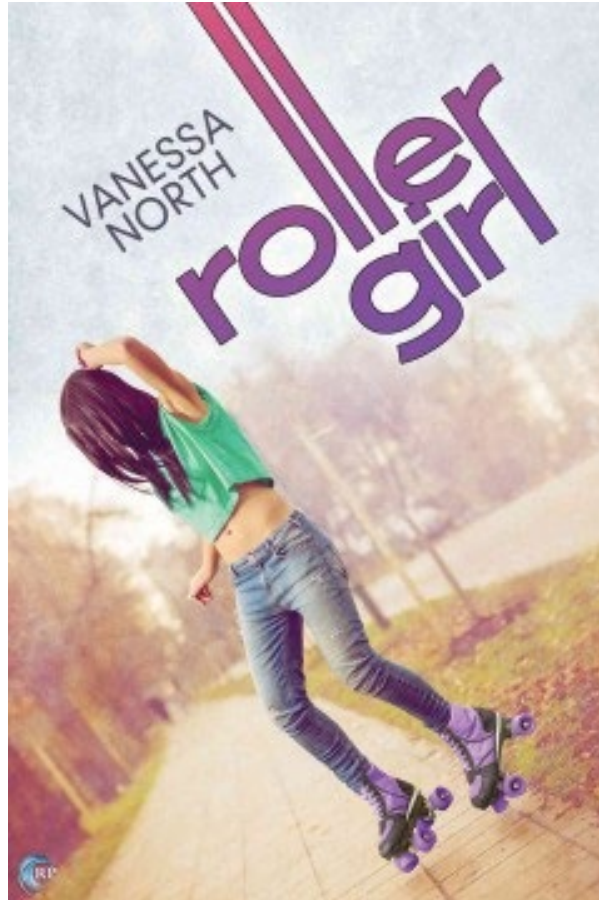
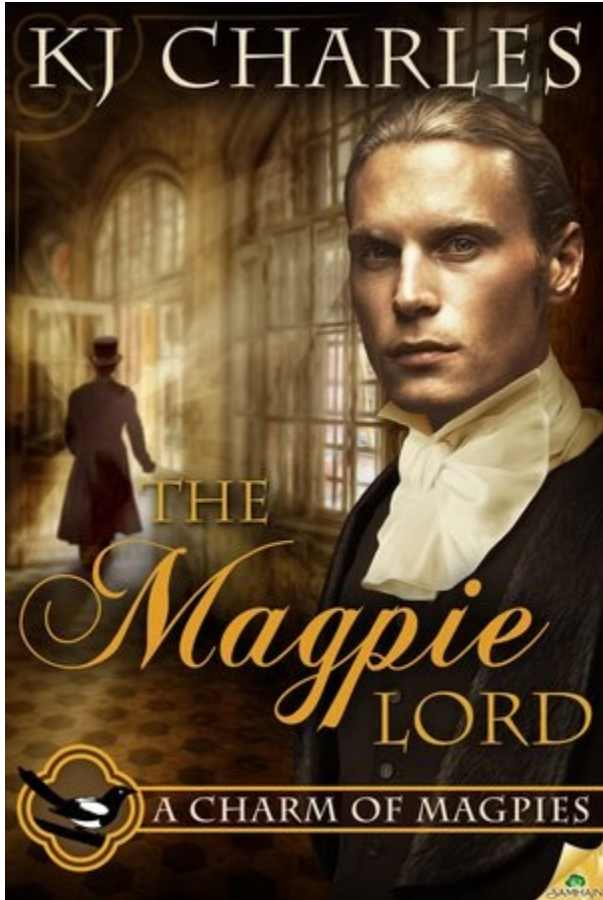
Inspirational

trends

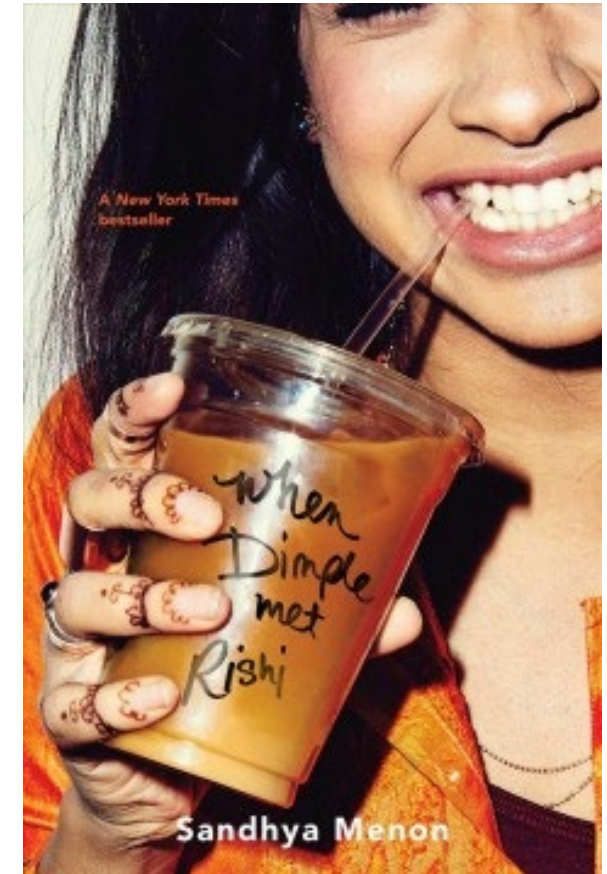
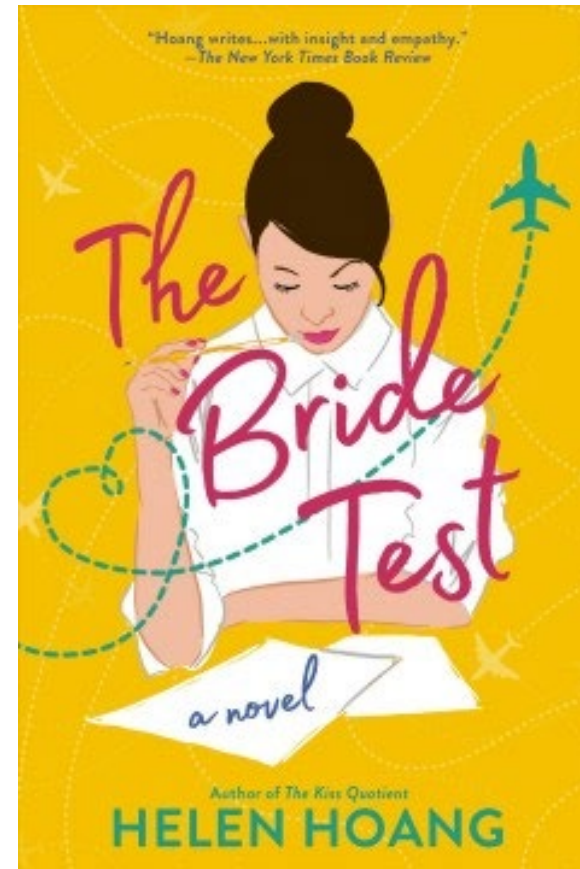
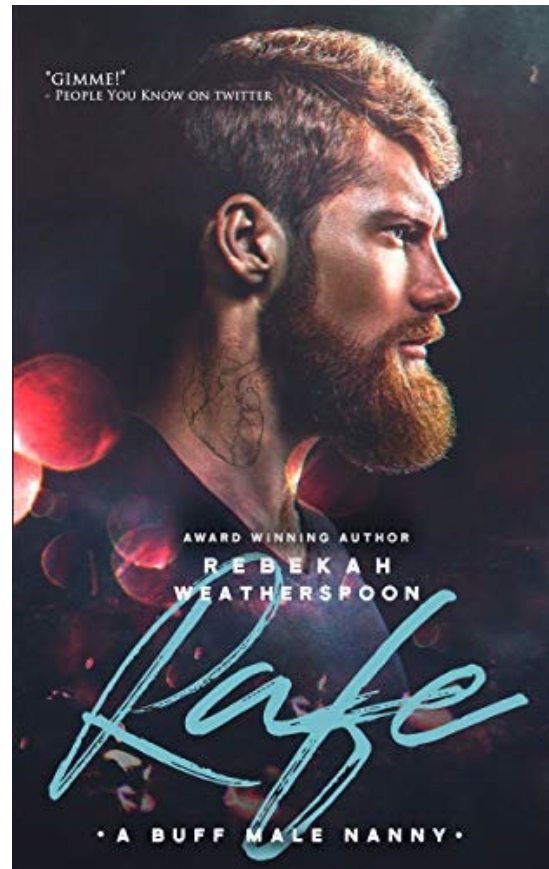
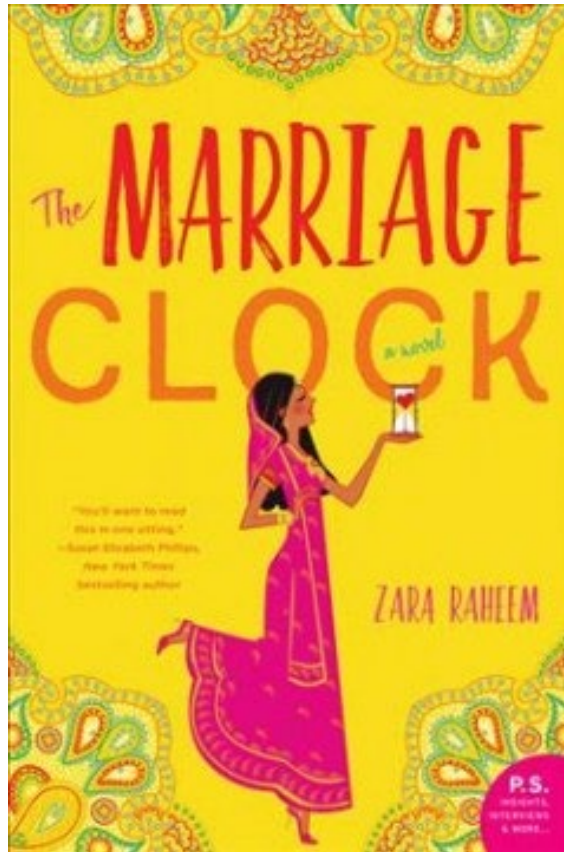


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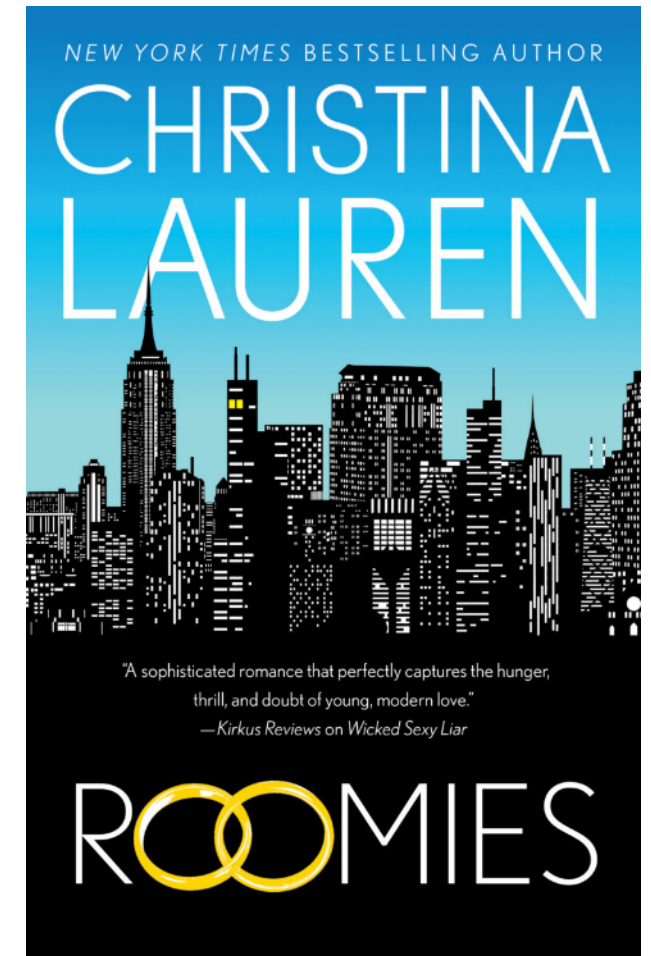
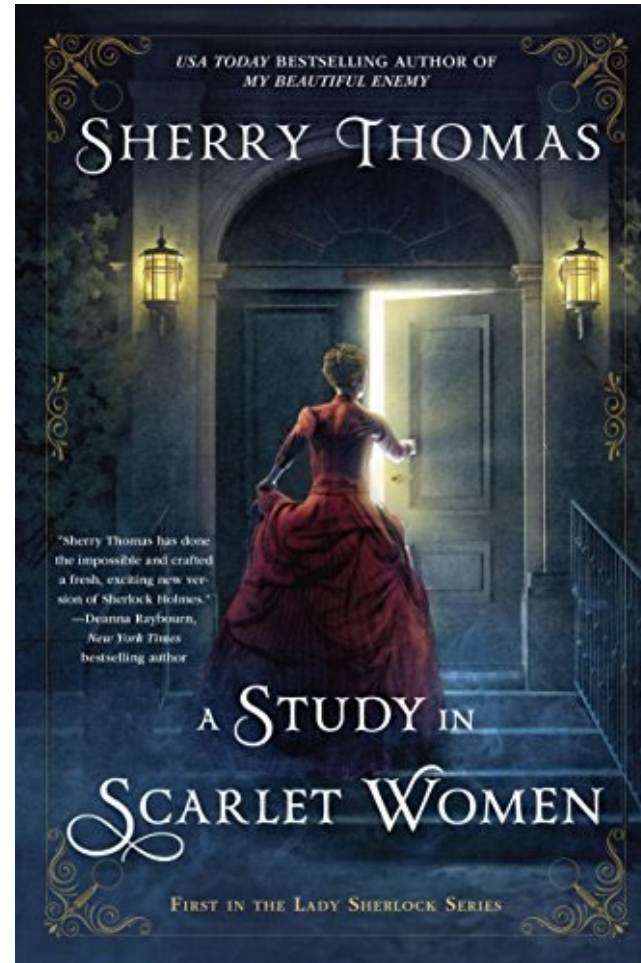
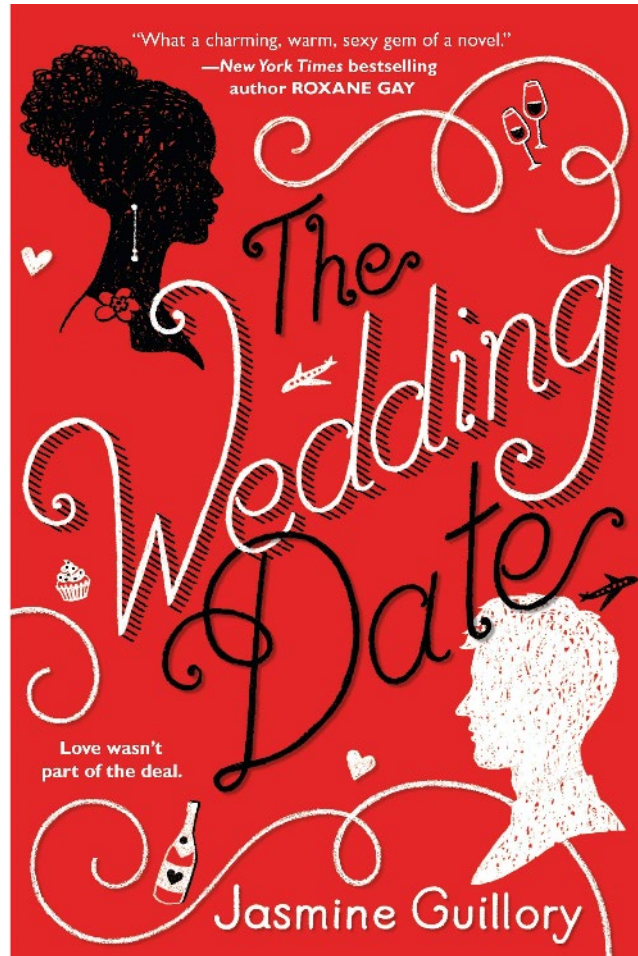
LGBTQIA on the rise!



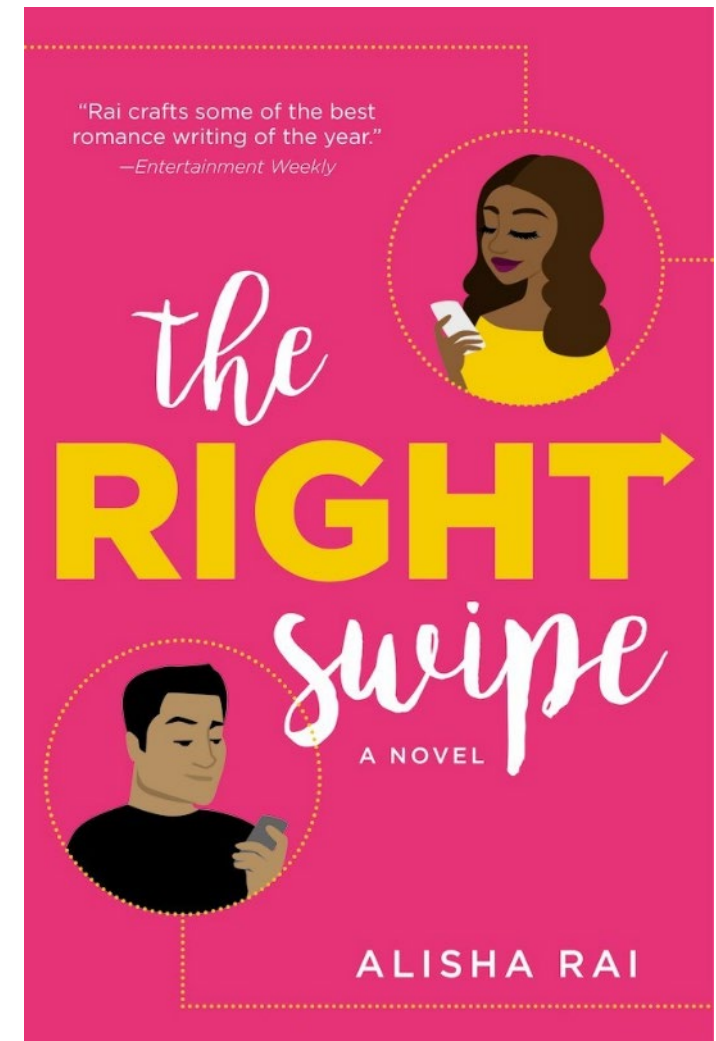
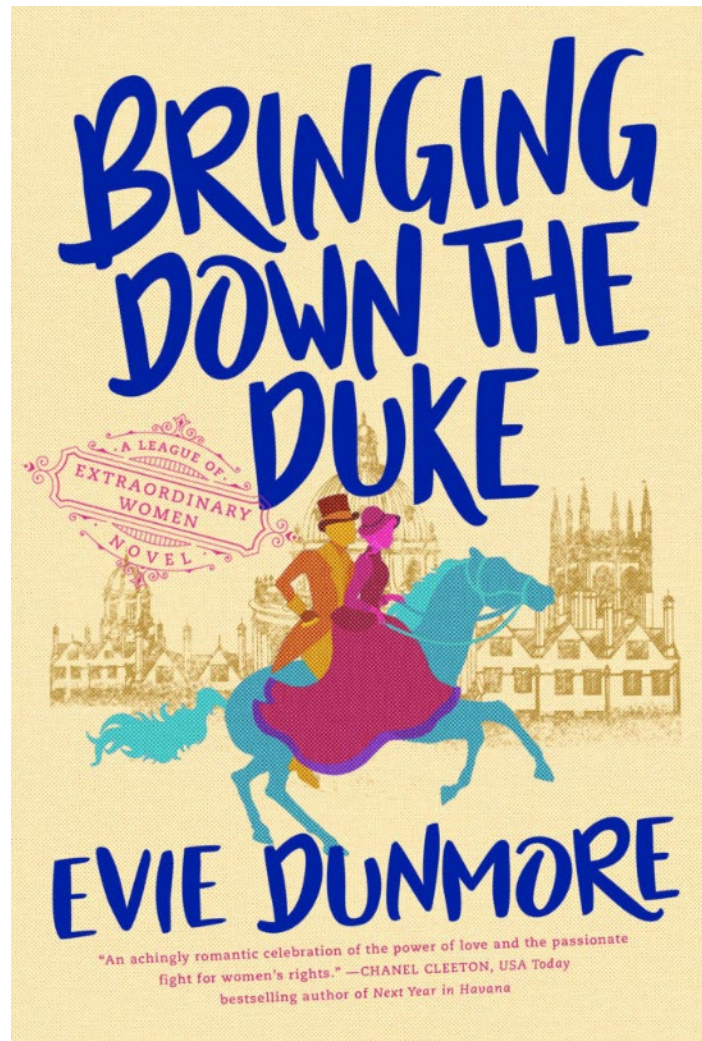
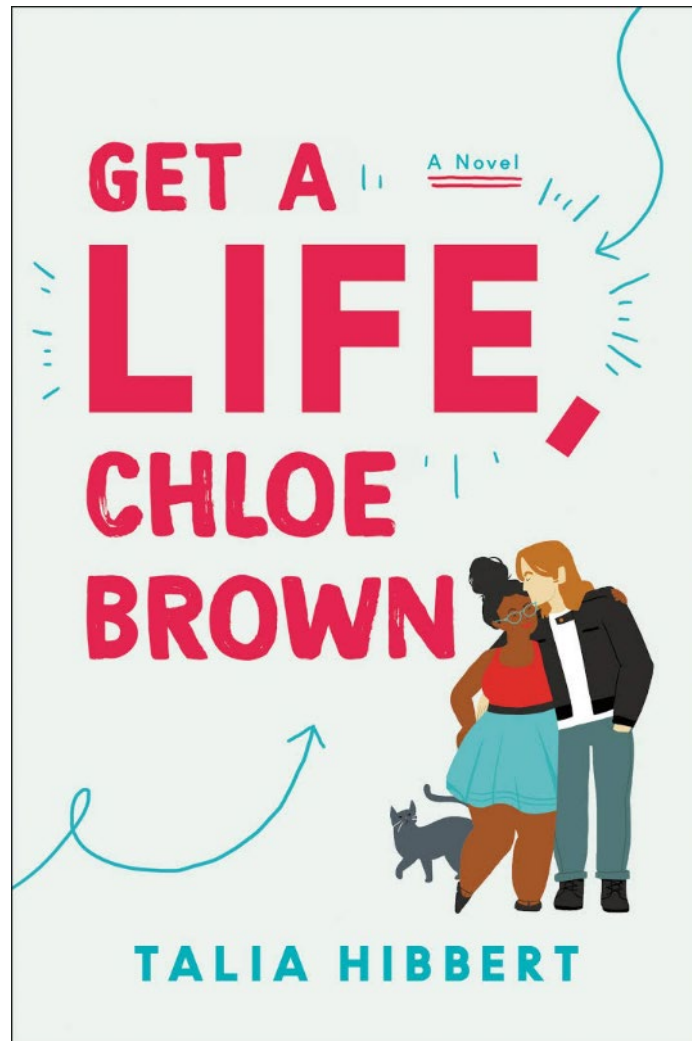
Own Voices



Mainstream-ification



Books we can't wait to read



CRASH COURSE IN HORROR

September 24, 2019 at 2pm Eastern

NoveList



Questions?

Cosmo Quiz

BY HOLLY EAGLESON

Are You Enough of a Bad Girl?

1. Rumors swirl that your ex has been talking trash about you to mutual friends. How do you respond?

- a** By lying low for a few weeks—you won't descend to his level.
- b** By sending him an angry text or voice mail warning that two can play the trash-talking game.
- c** By trying to seduce his best friend. If that fails, you key his car.

2. The kind of men you usually find yourself dating best fit the following description:

- a** So wild, they make *The Hangover* guys look like the Jonas Brothers.
- b** They work hard and play even harder.
- c** They're in bed by 11 p.m. on weeknights, 1 a.m. on weekends.

3. Your closest girlfriend always contacts you first when which of these situations arise?

- a** She craves fun company for a decadent day of shopping or spa treatments.
- b** She has split with her boyfriend and wants a partner in crime for a very hot night out.
- c** She wants to sip cocktails at a hip lounge all night... and needs a designated driver.

4. Which phrase are you most likely to overhear being said about you?

- a** "Did I do something to offend her?"
- b** "Does she always act this crazy?"
- c** "I want her at my next party."

5. Which is the most outrageous thing you would do for cold, hard cash?

- a** Star in a "Girls Gone Wild"-type video
- b** Sing a seductive pop song like "LoveGame" at a karaoke bar
- c** Play strip poker with a coed group of friends

7 TO 10 POINTS

Balls-Out Badass

With your "Go bad or go home" approach, life is a never-ending list of rules to break and drama to whip up. It's a blast being a boundary-breaking, try-anything chick, but you're not earning anyone's respect—just a reputation that could damage your future, says Jodi Lipper, coauthor of *How to Love Like a Hot Chick*. Next time you're tempted to stir up trouble, ask yourself if your hellcat antics will degrade you or someone else. If so, a little self-control is in order.

4 TO 6 POINTS

Naughty When Necessary

You maintain a pretty good balance of sugar and spice: You won't take crap from anyone, nor will you play everything safe, yet you draw the line at being aggressively sexy or vengeful just to turn heads, says psychologist John Valentis, PhD, coauthor of *Brave New You*. You know that a sly dig or R-rated gesture can have way more impact than a nasty rant or triple-X move.

0 TO 3 POINTS

Too Good for Your Own Good

You have a naughty side, but for some reason, you keep it under wraps, where it does you no good. You may be suppressing your wilder impulses because you're afraid you'll be judged poorly, says Lipper. The result? You're overlooked by guys and type-cast by pals as the "responsible" one, says Valentis. Show some backbone when you get dissed and more skin than usual on Saturday night. A little badness is extremely sexy, and it prevents people from taking advantage of you.

COSMOPOLITAN.COM/QUIZ Log on to test yourself with more fun and insightful quizzes!

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COSMOPOLITAN.COM

Cosmo Quiz

BY ROBIN HILMANTEL

Do You Know When a Guy's Into You?

1. You're grabbing a beer with your BFF when she says a hottie across the room is eyeing you. You say:

- a** "Seriously? Sweet! I'll do a driveby the next time I hit the bar."
- b** "I doubt it" without so much as glancing over to check him out.
- c** "Yeah, him and every other guy here."

2. A month after meeting your new male coworker, you notice he's Facebook friends with several of your coworkers...but not you. You:

- a** Hold strong. He's no doubt smitten but trying to seem nonchalant.
- b** Friend him—it'll only take a few posts to find out how he feels.
- c** Avoid him at work the next day since he clearly has a problem with you.

3. You're hanging with a friend and her man, and while she's in the bathroom, he gives you a kinda-friendly, kinda-touchy shove. You:

- a** Pull your girl aside afterward to tell her that her boyfriend totally crossed the line.
- b** Are sure he only did it because your friend told him he has to be nice to you.
- c** Let it slide. It's a first-time offense.

4. If you were a TV character, you would be:

- a** Rachel from *Glee*: talented and adorable but slightly misunderstood.
- b** Serena from *Gossip Girl*: Like her, you pretty much radiate sex appeal.
- c** Jacqueline from *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*, because you'll talk to anyone.

5. While checking the Missed Connections on Craigslist (it's a guilty pleasure!), you usually:

- a** Think about how crazy it would be if a couple actually met through one of them.
- b** Keep an eye out for listings describing the outfit you wore that day...or your gorgeous smile.
- c** Wish a guy would do something that romantic for you.

7 TO 10 POINTS

Blind-to-Love Babe

You may display killer confidence in most areas of your life, but when it comes to guys, your mojo is missing. It's time to stop assuming that you aren't sweatable and start tuning in to the signals men are sending. "Try smiling and see if he smiles back. Also, listen for lots of questions," says communication coach Cynthia Leeds Friedlander, author of *Speak Easy*. "Both are signs he likes you and what you're saying." Get quizzed all the time by grinning guys? Yeah, that's what we thought.

4 TO 6 POINTS

Man-Reading Mama

Guy radars don't get more precise than yours. Because you pay attention to the people around you and value their opinions, you're better at guessing what's going on in their heads, says Linda Papadopoulos, PhD, author of *What Men Say, What Women Hear*. The fact that you're grounded helps too. "You have a healthy self-esteem, but you also don't suffer from an inflated ego," Papadopoulos says. So your man-reading skills aren't skewed by insecurity or wishful thinking.

0 TO 3 POINTS

Confident but Clueless

You're one fierce female, but assuming you bring every guy to his knees can backfire. "You're projecting onto men how you view yourself rather than gauging how they really feel," Papadopoulos says. That means you're probably less than perceptive in other stages of your relationships as well. To get a more accurate read, use your girls as a gut check. Explain his exact man moves, and ask—don't tell—if he's sending off a giggling-you vibe. Soon you'll be able to tell without their help.

COSMOPOLITAN.COM/QUIZ Log on to test yourself with more fun and insightful quizzes!

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COSMOPOLITAN.COM



THANK YOU



FINDING ROMANCE IN NOVELIST



"Well, I don't get much chance to be forgotten here." Troy spoke half humorously through his teeth, holding the lighted match in front of his lips. Cressy took herself away from him. She walked slowly alongside the tractor, tracing along the edges of its parts with a thin, scarlet nail. "You better get somethin' straight, Troy. When your brother and me was married down in Dallas, that was the end of one kind of life for me, see? Out here I'm Mrs. Tom Bannock, and that's the way it is." She turned and faced him soberly, her chin raised, forcing her eyes to meet his derisive look. "I didn't want to come out here in the middle of nowhere to live, nothin' to do, nothin' to see but miles and miles of flat, empty, dried-up land. No trees, no water, no flowers, no grass, just sand and cold and heat and bugs and wind. Oh, I tried to get Tom to go somewheres else, somewheres where we could have a life of our own, away from the family and all that. I wanted us to

THANK YOU

