Romance for Any Genre – by Cindi Myers

Handout

**What does adding romance do for your story?**

1. *A romance allows you to show a personal, emotional side to characters that might be otherwise hidden.*
2. *1. Romance adds tension to your story.*
3. *A romance also allows you the perfect opportunity for plot complications.*
4. *A romance can offer a welcome counterpoint/contrast to your main plot.*
5. *A romance in your non-romance genre fiction could help you bring in new readers.*

**Who is the love interest?**

1. *A supporting character you have already come up with for your story.*
2. *An old love who’s back in the picture.*
3. *A rival or enemy.*
4. *A co-worker or someone on the same journey they’re on*.
5. *The love interest in your story might be an existing romantic partner or spouse.*

**How to use the romance to enhance your story.**

1. *How could a love interest reveal a side of this character that most people don’t see?*
2. *What is something that is lacking in their life that a romantic partner would provide?*
3. *What is your protagonist’s goal? How is falling in love going to help them meet that goal? Or better yet, how will falling in love put that goal in jeopardy?*
4. *How can the love interest be an active part of the main plot?*

**How to show romance on the page:**

1. *People in love are attracted to one another.*
2. *People in love listen to one another and pay attention.*
3. *Other people notice when two people are falling in love.*
4. *They can’t take their eyes off each other.*
5. *They will act against their own preferences in favor of their lover.*
6. *They will act on behalf of their lover.*
7. *They will make a sacrifice for their lover.*
8. *They spend time together.*
9. *Their dialogue reflects their understanding of each other.*

**Things to avoid when writing romance into your story:**

1. *The love story should be integral*
2. *The characters’ emotions and reactions must be authentic*.
3. *Avoid clichés*.
	1. *The love interest who shows up solely to be killed in order to provide a motivation for the hero to act later*.
	2. *The love interest who doesn’t do anything else in the story.*
	3. *Characters who are kept apart by a simple misunderstanding.*
4. *Avoid the unmotivated romance* – *Insta-love*.
5. *It’s not all about the sex.*
6. *Avoid letting the romance take over your story.*

**How to avoid letting the romance take over your story:**

1. *Use the genre you’re writing to inform your romance thread.*
2. *Have the protagonist and the love interest work together on a common goal related to your primary plot.*
3. *The protagonist uses the love interest as a sounding board to discuss a problem or strategy related to the main plot*.
4. *The love interest goads the protagonist to take action or make a decision that has a direct impact on the plot of the story.*
5. *The love interest is threatened, which forces the protagonist to act*.
6. *The love interest teaches the protagonist something they need to know in order to solve the mystery or confront the enemy or has some other key to the plot.*
7. *Give your protagonist’s love interest a sub-plot of their own*.
8. *Be subtle***.**

**Books:**

*The Complete Writer’s Guide to Heroes and Heroines: Sixteen Master Archetypes*, by Tami Cowden, Caro LaFever, and Sue Viders

Genre novels I think do a good job of incorporating romance.

**Science Fiction:**

*The Forever War* – By Joe Haldeman

*Never Let Me Go* – Kazuo Ishiguro

*Dark Matter* – Blake Crouch

Fantasy:

*The Night Circus* – Erin Morgenstern

*A Marvelous Light* – Freya Marske

*Serpent and Dove* – Shelby Mahurin

**Mystery/Suspense**

Cormoran Strike mysteries by Robert Galbraith aka J.K. Rowling Slow build over a series

Jeffrey Archer's *The Prodigal Daughter*

*Mistress of the Art of Death* Ariana Franklin (historical mystery)

**Horror**

*Salem’s Lot* Stephen King

*Silence for the Dead* Simone St. James

*The Hacienda* Isabel Canas

**Historical**

*The Prodigal Daughter,* Jeffrey Archer

*You can learn more about Cindi Myers and her books at* [*www.CindiMyers.com*](http://www.CindiMyers.com) *and* [*https://www.facebook.com/authorcindimyers*](https://www.facebook.com/authorcindimyers)