

ROMANCE TROPES & DEFINITIONS

Accidental Pregnancy	A surprise pregnancy forces the characters to confront their relationship.
Afraid to Commit	One resists deepening the relationship due to fear of vulnerability, past trauma, or loss of independence.
All Grown Up	One knew the other when they were younger, and now they've changed—matured, become more confident, or transformed physically.
Alpha Hero	A dominant, protective, often strong-willed male lead who takes charge in most situations.
Amnesia	One character loses their memory, impacting their romance.
Arranged Marriage	Characters are brought together by family or cultural arrangement.
Athlete	One or both leads are professional or competitive athletes, with sports playing a central role in the plot.
Bad Boy/Good Girl	A rebellious or morally gray hero meets a rule-following heroine, sparking tension and attraction.
Beauty and the Beast	One appears outwardly intimidating, unlikable, or “beastly” but hides a kind or gentle heart.
Best Friend's Rival	Falling for the person your best friend sees as competition.
Best Friend's Sibling	Falling for the brother or sister of a close friend, often with secrecy or protective friend drama.
Bet/Wager	A romance begins because of a challenge or bet, which is usually revealed and causes conflict.
Billionaire Romance	Love story involves a wealthy, often powerful love interest.

Blackmail	One character uses leverage over another, often leading to unexpected feelings.
Blind Date	The romance begins with a set-up date, often awkward or surprising.
Bodyguard Romance	One character protects the other from danger.
Boss/Employee	Against the rules to date employee but they also have to work together creating conflict.
Broken Engagement	A called-off wedding leads to romance with someone else (or the same person later).
Celebrity Romance	One or both leads are famous, adding unique pressures.
Childhood Friends	The couple has known each other since they were young.
Christmas Romance	The love story centers on the holiday season, often with a cozy or magical tone.
Class Difference	Romance between people from very different social or economic backgrounds.
Co-Parenting	Two people raise a child together, sometimes without being in a relationship initially.
College Romance	Set in a college or university environment.
Coming of Age	A love story tied to personal growth and maturity.
Contract Relationship	A romance based on legal or business arrangements.
Cowboy Romance	One or both leads are cowboys/ranchers, often in rural settings.
Cursed Love	A magical or supernatural obstacle threatens romance.
Cynic and Optimist	One character is guarded or skeptical, the other hopeful and open.

Dark Secret	A hidden truth threatens to destroy trust or the budding romance if discovered.
Dating Mr. or Ms. Wrong	One dates the “wrong” person before realizing their true match was right in front of them.
Destined Mates	Supernatural or magical fated-partner bond.
Enemies to Lovers	Two characters who dislike each other fall in love.
Fairytale Retelling	A romance inspired by or directly retelling a classic fairytale in a new setting or style.
Fake Relationship	Pretending to date for personal reasons turns real.
Fallen from Grace	One loses social standing or wealth, and love helps them rebuild
Falling for the Nanny	Love develops between a caregiver and parent.
Falling for the Single Parent	One character falls in love with someone raising a child.
Fated to Love You	External forces or destiny keep pushing them together.
First Love	The story centers on a character’s first romantic relationship.
Fish Out of Water	One character is out of their element in the other’s world.
Forced Marriage	Circumstances compel marriage, leading to love.
Forced Proximity	Being trapped or stuck together forces connection.
Friends to Lovers	Friends realize their romantic feelings.
From Different Worlds	Vastly different backgrounds challenge the relationship.
Grumpy/Sunshine	A pairing where one character is moody, stoic, or pessimistic (“the grump”) and the other is

	cheerful, optimistic, and warm (“the sunshine”). The contrast creates humor, tension, and emotional growth for both.
Guardian/Ward Romance	One character has a duty of care over the other.
Hidden Identity	A character hides who they really are.
Holiday Romance	Love story centered around a holiday season or trip.
Hot Neighbor	Romance with the person living next door.
Hurt/Comfort	One cares for the other after physical or emotional injury.
Imaginary Love Triangle	One believes they have competition for their love interest, but the “third party” is not actually a threat.
In Disguise	A character hides their identity through appearance or role.
Island Romance	The setting is remote, isolated, and often exotic.
Inspirational Romance	Romance intertwined with faith-based themes.
Kidnapping	Abduction leads to unexpected connection.
Later-in-Life Romance	Features older protagonists finding love.
Law Enforcement Romance	One character works in police, FBI, or similar role.
Long-Distance Romance	Relationship develops despite physical separation.
Love at First Sight	Instant romantic connection on first meeting.
Love Potion Gone Wrong	A magical or accidentally catalyst for feelings that might already be there.
Love Triangle	Two potential love interests vie for one person’s heart.

Maid/Housekeeper	A romance involving a domestic worker and their employer or someone connected to the household.
Mail Order Bride	A relationship begins with one character answering an ad or request for a spouse, often historical but sometimes modern.
Marriage of Convenience	Practical marriage leads to love.
Matchmaker	A character tries to set someone up... with themselves or another person.
Matchmaker Gone Wrong	When the matchmaker falls for the person they are trying to match.
May/December Romance	Significant age gap between love interests.
Military Romance	One or both serve in the military, with the lifestyle and challenges playing a central role.
Marriage Pact	Friends agree to marry if still single by a certain age.
Miscommunication	Relationship struggles due to misunderstandings.
Mistaken Identity	One character is mistaken for someone else.
Mutual Pining	Both characters secretly long for each other.
Neighbors	Living nearby sparks romance.
Office Romance	They work together, may not be boss/employee
One Bed	Forced to share a bed due to circumstances, leading to romantic tension.
One Night Stand to More	A casual encounter becomes a relationship.
Opposed by Family	Families actively disapprove of the match, creating stakes
Opposites Attract	Polar-opposite personalities create chemistry.
Orphan	One or both have lost their parents, shaping their character and emotional needs.

Overprotective Hero/Heroine	Deeply protective nature drives the romance.
Paranormal Romance	Love story involving supernatural elements.
Partners in Crime	Characters team up in questionable or adventurous activity.
Pen Pals	Romance through letters or online messages.
Playboy	Charming, non-committal character who dates casually until they meet “the one”.
Political Romance	Romance within a political setting or between public figures.
Prince(ss)/Commoner	One or both are kings, queens, princes, princesses, or heirs, with the romance unfolding under royal pressures.
Rags to Riches	One’s circumstances change dramatically, either financially or socially, and the romance grows around that shift.
Reclusive Hero/Heroine	A withdrawn or isolated character is drawn back into the world by love.
Reformed Rake/Bad Boy	A formerly reckless character changes for love.
Rescue Romance	One saves the other from danger.
Return to Hometown	One goes back to the place they grew up, often facing unresolved relationships, old flames, or family drama, and discovering love in familiar surroundings.
Reunion Romance	Former lovers reconnect.
Revenge Romance	One seeks revenge but falls for their target.
Right Person, Wrong Time	Perfect match but bad timing initially.
Road Trip Romance	Traveling together sparks love.
Rock Star Romance	One or both leads are musicians.
Roommates	Living together builds tension and attraction.

Runaway Bride/Groom	Fleeing a wedding leads to romance.
Secret Admirer	One is anonymously sending tokens of affection or doing kind acts, eventually revealing their identity.
Secret Baby	One character hides the fact they have a child with the other.
Secret/Lost Heir	One inherits wealth, land, or a title they didn't know they had, creating personal and romantic complications.
Secret Relationship	Romance kept hidden from others.
Second Chance Romance	Rekindling a past love.
Self-Made Hero/Heroine	Character has built success through their own efforts.
Single Parent	Raising a child is central to the romance.
Small Town Romance	Love set in a close-knit community.
Snowed In	Weather traps the characters together.
Sports Romance	Romance involving athletes or sports professionals.
Stuck Together While Traveling	Circumstances force shared travel.
Sudden Baby	A child suddenly becomes part of a character's life, such as discovering they have a child they didn't know about or unexpectedly becoming a guardian.
Sudden Inheritance	Romance tied to receiving an inheritance.
Surprise Engagement	Proposal occurs unexpectedly.
Teacher/Student (Adult)	Romance between teacher and adult student.
The Bet	Relationship begins due to a wager.
Time Travel Romance	Love across different eras.

Travel Romance	Romance develops while away from home.
Ugly Duckling	Transformation leads to newfound romance.
Undercover	One is hiding their true job or mission.
Unexpected Roommates	Sudden living arrangement sparks romance.
Unrequited Love	One-sided love becomes mutual.
Vacation Fling	Short-term romance during a trip becomes more.
Vegas Wedding	A spontaneous or drunken decision in Las Vegas leads to an unexpected marriage, forcing the couple to decide whether to annul it or see if love can grow.
Widow/Widower	Finding love after loss.
Wrong Number/Text	A misdirected call or text sparks a connection.
Wounded Hero/Heroine	Emotional or physical scars are healed through love.

I hope you find this list of tropes helpful. For more writing resources, please go to <https://www.lauraashwood.com/resources>.

