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The Romance Novel Success Map



THE FIVE SCENES EVERY ROMANCE
NOVEL MUST HAVE AND HOW TO
CRAFT THEM

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READY FOR LOVE?

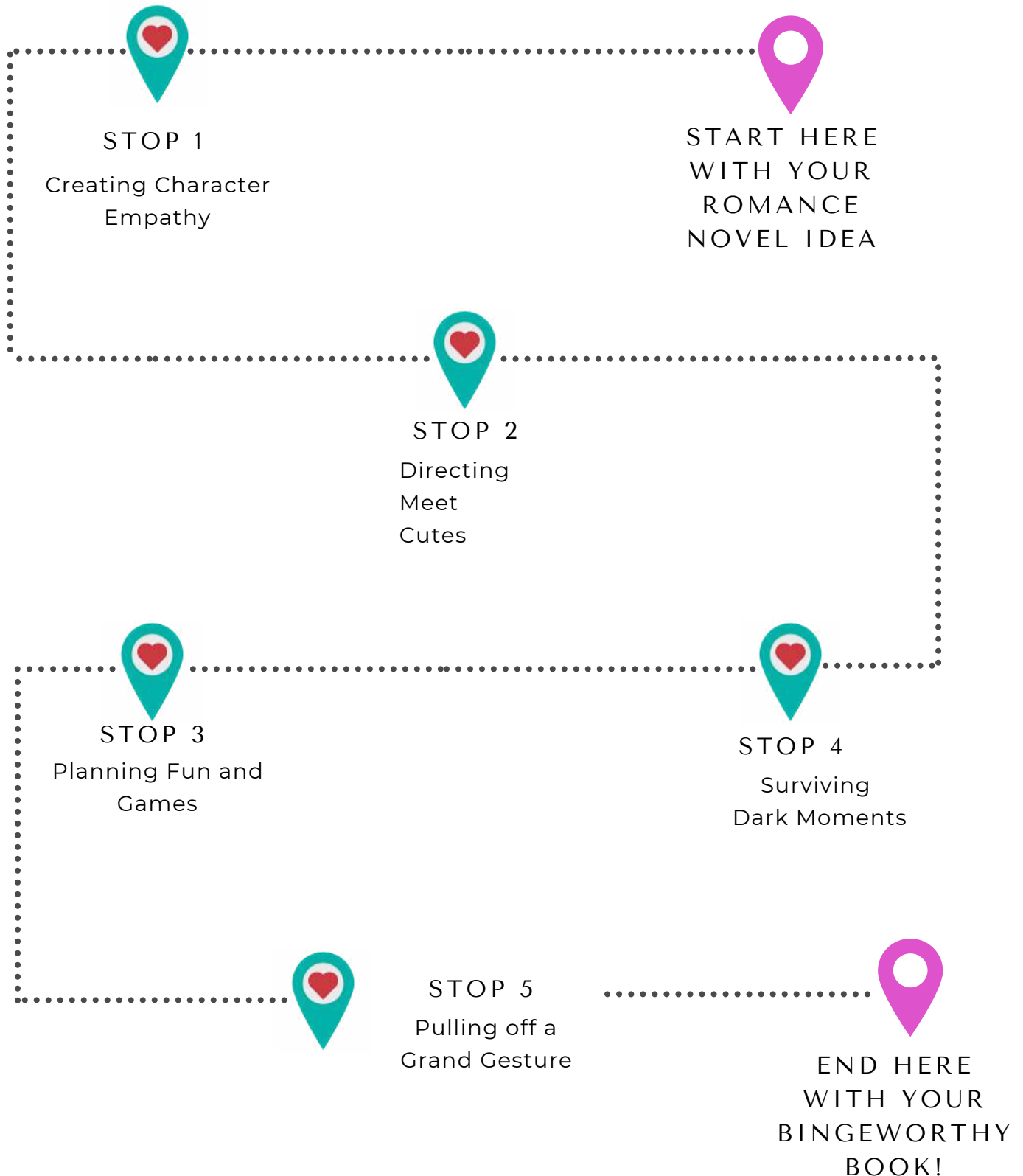
Novelists, are you ready to learn the five heart-pounding scenes that will ensure your romance novel makes readers swoon?

In this workbook, you'll set your love story up for success when you map out your characters' journey to a happily ever after by stopping at each of these points on the road to love!

- 1. CREATING CHARACTER EMPATHY**
- 2. DIRECTING THE MEET CUTE**
- 3. PLANNING FUN AND GAMES**
- 4. SURVIVING THE DARK MOMENT**
- 5. PULLING OFF A GRAND GESTURE**

THE ROMANCE NOVEL SUCCESS MAP

*The Five Scenes Every Romance Novel Must Have
and How to Craft Them*





Creating Character Empathy

Story beginnings can happen in many different ways, but there's one thing that is constant. And that's **EMPATHY**. Your first job in a romance novel should be to get the reader to care about your main characters.

There are three ways to establish empathy and make readers instantly get the feels for characters. You only need one... unless you're an overachiever 😊

1. One way is to showcase the character's **EXTRAORDINARY QUALITIES**. Are they super smart like Sherlock Holmes? Or super techy like Maguyver?
2. Another way is to display the character's ordinariness in an **EXTRAORDINARY WORLD**. For example, are they the sole normie in a family of superheroes?
3. Finally, you can have them **SAVE THE CAT**. Metaphorically, speaking. Show them being of service or rescuing another person, like saving a cat after it climbs up into a tree.

Extraordinary Qualities

Extraordinary World

Save the Cat

YOUR FIRST JOB IS TO CREATE *Empathy*



Directing Meet Cutes

The **Meet Cute** is the classic scene in a romantic movie or novel where two (or more) strangers cross paths for the first time on the page or screen. What makes this crucial scene memorable is where an author chooses to set the meeting, the tropes that bring the lovers together, and whether the characters feel a mutual attraction, aversion, or something in between when they come center stage... or rather center page.

SETTING
PLACE
TIME PERIOD
TONE

The **PLACE** and the **TIME PERIOD** your romance novel takes occurs affects the **TONE** of the story. Each of the love stories below has the same structure, but the place and time period affect the tone of each story differently.

- *Pride and Prejudice* -Victorian Era. Small town England. Contemporary Romance with social commentary tone.
- *Twilight* -20th century. Small Town USA. Paranormal Romance with Suspense tone
- *Fifty Shades of Grey* -20th century. Big City USA. Coming of age sexual awakening, Erotic Romance tone.

A **TROPE** is a recurring theme or pattern in storytelling that helps create familiarity, convey expectations, and evoke emotions. In a romance novel, the trope is typically the reason the lovers are thrust together for the duration of the story. For example:

- Enemies to Lovers
- Marriage of Convenience
- Fake Dating

What trope is at work in your love story? For more on romance tropes visit ineswrites.com/tropes

TROPE



Directing Meet Cutes

ATTRACTION

There are four types of connections or **ATTRACTION** in romance.

- **Pull / Pull:** the characters are instantly and mutually attracted to each other like in *Romeo and Juliet*.
- **Push / Push:** the characters are instantly and mutually disinterested in each other like in *When Harry Meet Sally*.
- **Push / Pull:** one character is instantly attracted but the other character is disinterested like in *The Notebook*.
- **Neutral / Nervous:** one character awkwardly tries to hide their attraction while the other character is oblivious to the situation like in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*.

Which attraction do your characters initially feel?

There are four main **SITUATIONS** in which the meet cute can take place. Which one suites your lovers best?

•**HEROIC:** where one lover rescues the other from danger or a questionable situation. Think a superhero or military romance.

•**EMBARRASSING:** where one or both (or more) of the lovers find themselves in an uncomfortably cringeworthy situation. Think of just about any romcom.

•**INSTALOVE:** where one or both (or more) of the lovers see forever when they spot the other. Think paranormal romance with wolf shifters or vampires.

•**ADVERSARIAL:** where they're at each others throats either immediately or for something that happened in their past.

SITUATION

MAKE THE *Meet Cute* MEMORABLE



Planning Fun and Games

The **FUN AND GAMES** stage in a romance centers around the hero and heroine spending time with each other, getting to know one another, and developing feelings for one another. This "dating" section is often accompanied by lighthearted moments, flirting, and romantic displays of affection. It's an essential part of the story arc because it allows readers to observe the two falling in love and having a good time before the tests of the Dark Moment darken their day. Plan three dates for your lovers!

FIRST DATE

SECOND DATE

THIRD DATE



Surviving the Dark Moment

The **DARK MOMENT** is a crucial scene in a romance novel where the hero and/or heroine face a major obstacle or challenge that threatens to tear or keep them apart. This moment typically occurs towards the end of the story, and creates a sense of tension and conflict that the hero and/or heroine must overcome in order to achieve their happy ending.

REVELATION of a deep secret or betrayal

MISUNDERSTANDING or miscommunication that creates a rift between the hero and heroine

LIFE CHANGING EVENT that shakes up their world.

INTERNAL ISSUE like their own insecurities making them doubt themselves or the other person

EXTERNAL FORCE, like an antagonist, physical obstruction, or mystic force, pushing them apart

Which of these DARK MOMENTS will your lovers face?

TRUE LOVE MUST STAND THE TEST OF THE *Dark Moment*



Pulling off a Grand Gesture

A **GRAND GESTURE** in a romance is a dramatic action taken by one character to express their love or commitment to the other. It's not only a heartfelt declaration of love, it's often a sacrifice for the other person, or an act of bravery or forgiveness. It's intended to show how deeply they feel for their beloved and is often a call back to an earlier scene, likely in the Fun and Games.

PRIVATE DECLARATION

The gesture could be a simple declaration of love, especially if the hero isn't good at showing feelings. The I-Love-Yous should come from a genuine place of love and commitment, rather than being motivated by external factors or social pressure.

PUBLIC DECLARATION

The grand gesture is often a public act, meant to declare the hero or heroine's love to the world and show their commitment to their partner.

RESCUE

If one lover is in peril, then the other needs to rescue them at great danger to their own person.

PERSONALIZATION

The grand gesture should be tailored to the specific needs and desires of the hero or heroine, and reflect their unique relationship dynamic.

SACRIFICE

Similar to a rescue where the hero's life is in danger due to the action, they could willingly offer themselves in exchange for the heroine.



Pulling off a Grand Gesture

First decide who will perform the gesture.

Then determine how they'll go about it based on the five categories of actions.

- ♥ Private Declaration
- ♥ Public Declaration
 - ♥ Rescue
- ♥ Personalization
 - ♥ Sacrifice



BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE...

You've crafted the five major cornerstones of a romance novel.
But what about the category, subgenre and heat level?

Are you writing a Contemporary, Paranormal, Historical,
RomCom or maybe a Romantic Suspense?

Do you know the tropes you must hit in each
individual subgenre of romance novel?

What about the 12 Stages of Intimacy that
determine which HEAT LEVEL your writing at?

If you're writing a Hallmark-style romance with only sweet kisses or closed
doors, try out my course Writing Sweet.

If Mr. Grey will see you now in his sex dungeon, you'll want to try out my
Writing Dirty Course.

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HI! I'M INES JOHNSON.

I'M A MULTI-SIX FIGURE,
FULL TIME AUTHOR.
(THAT'S ALL FROM INDIE BOOK ROYALTIES)

BUT I DIDN'T START OUT THAT WAY...

Hey guys, what's up? My name's Ines.
I'm a television producer/writer turned
romance novelist. My path to becoming a full
time author wasn't a smooth one.

After pulling in an annual income of three and
four figure royalties for years, and suffering
through low or no reviews, as well as
lackluster sell-through from book to book, I
finally figured out what readers wanted.

Now I teach fiction authors how to write more
bingeworthy books using pacing techniques
from episodic television structure. Unlike
other plotting courses, the Page Turner
Pacing course helps writers craft their own
plotting system that's tailored to their
subgenre, so that they can increase sales by
giving their specific readers the compelling,
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YOU LEVEL UP YOUR *Craft* AND YOUR
WRITING *Consistency* .

