

Romance Fiction Genre Study

Romantic Suspense

Glenview Public Library

August 1, 2019

Assignment: Paranormal Romance

--Read two books that feature different paranormal abilities/creatures or have strong differences in world-building backstory of the paranormal element.

Authors to consider:

Kresley Cole

Nalini Singh

Gail Carriger

J. R. Ward

Laurell K. Hamilton

Sherrilyn Kenyon

Larissa Ione

Nora Roberts: *Sign of Seven Trilogy*,
Cousins O'Dwyer Trilogy, *Circle Trilogy*

Lora Leigh

Jayne Castle

Kathy Lyons

Sandra Hill's *Deadly Angels*

Lynsay Sands

Gena Showalter

See Also:

[WOCIR under paranormal](#)

[Goodreads](#), with a grain of salt

[Fated Mates Podcast](#), especially for Kresley Cole readers

The "Interstitial" episodes are non-Cole and excellent

[Gateways to Romance](#) episode tackles RA issues

Defining Paranormal Romance:

Romance + Speculative fiction = Paranormal Romance

Vampires, elves, fairies, any other-worldly creatures; often overlaps with urban fantasy; most romance conventions apply, but the HEA may be stretched out over several books.

History of Paranormal Romance:

-Fairy tales, myths, legends-danger and suspense, other worldly w/powers beyond reality

-Damsel in distress-->Fierce female, modernized morality tale, power imbalance (not solely gender based)

-Paranormal romance has become more mainstream with shows like Outlander, Discovery of Witches, Twilight, Buffy, Trueblood, Shape of Water, etc.--> if you take out the romance, would people still love it?

*least diverse as far as authors; mostly white authors, very little LGBTQ

Appeal of Paranormal Romance:

- worldbuilding/frame (crossover w/historical)
- danger/conflict drives plot (crossover w/romantic suspense)
- tone: dark, dangerous, angst, obsession
- explicit sex and graphic violence (compared to contemporary/historical romance)
- character centered and plot driven w/lush frames
- thought provoking, often exploring social or moral issues

Obstacles:

- where crazy plots go to live
- soap opera plots
- last bastion of Alpha acceptability?

What we read:

- Where did you find your book/Why did you pick it?
 - Most chose their titles from the suggested authors list, some searched their catalogs or Google, some received recommendations
- How does it balance romance and worldbuilding
 - Many titles felt heavier on the worldbuilding than on the romance, many series have the HEA prolonged over several books
- Conflict: internal/external/both

- Level of violence
 - Somewhat high level of violence (for romance), often darker tones/themes
- Heat level
- HEA in one story or stretched out over series?
 - Many series stretch out the HEA

Ilona Andrews: characters/relationship carries over multiple books

Jenn Bennett

Bitter Spirits: historical, San Francisco 1920s, fun

RJ Blain

Playing With Fire: magical romantic comedy, has everything--all supernatural creatures have a presence, humorous, off-the-wall, crazy, ridiculous, not a lot of sex, for fans of Jasper Fforde's humor.

Kristen Callihan

Firelight: seemed more steampunk than paranormal, marriage of convenience, characters hiding true identity (creatures), not much world building (historical London), conflict is internal, HEA, easy transition into paranormal (light)

Jayne Castle (Krentz): paranormal light

Kresley Cole

A Hunger Like No Other: much older male character, power/age imbalance occurs in many paranormals

Sweet Ruin

Jennifer Estep

Crown of Shards series: very good world building, romance doesn't occur until the 2nd book

Laurel K. Hamilton

Anita Blake series: first half of series is more romance, second half of series gets more erotic w/multiple partners (very erotic), similar to Dresden Files

Sherrilyn Kenyon: each in the series has its own HEA.

Shelly Laurenston

Hot and Badgered: already an existing universe, a lot of characters, animal shifters, fighting between clans, contemporary, dark humor, graphic violence, good world building, slow/little romance, no progression of relationship or conflict in relationship, the heroine is strong, competent-no damsel in distress, snarky banter, very long, confusing cast of characters, many references to previous titles

Maxym Martineau

Kingdom of Exiles: more fantasy than romance, strong female character

Karen Marie Moning

Fever Series: more urban fantasy, a few in the series are romance, read for characters and world building

Lynsay Sands

Quick Bite: humorous aspect, not very violent or gruesome, focus is not the paranormal aspect, not very steamy, HEA is lukewarm

Single White Vampire: humorous

Tall Dark and Hungry: humorous, set in NY, not a lot of worldbuilding, original covers look like chick lit, newer covers are dark, for fans of Sookie Stackhouse

Twice Bitten: good dialogue and characters, world building is not very heavy, easy to follow

Nalini Singh

Slave to Sensation: Psy/changeling series, romance, fantasy, mystery, animalistic behaviors, aspects of sexuality and psychology

JR Ward

Dark Lover: high drama, high suspension of disbelief, good world building, violence, consent is an issue, not all in the series have an HEA, good crossover for urban fantasy, romantic suspense, military suspense

Covet (Fallen Angels): angels and demons, dark tone, growing suspense, plot driven, not a lot of worldbuilding, sex comes later in the story, better gateway to paranormal than her other series

Next Meeting:

Romance: Programming & Merchandising

October 3, 2019, 2-4 PM

Lisle District Library

Assignment:

- Read at least one romance book of your choice. Be ready to discuss why your book would or would not be a good candidate for a book discussion.
- Come prepared to discuss some of the following subjects:
 - Have you personally lead a discussion of a novel with a romance thread that had a HEA? Have you participated in a book discussion that featured a romance? How did it go?
 - How are you displaying and promoting romance at your library (displays, signs, the location of the collection, shelving, signage, labels, etc.)? What works well? What are your challenges? What would you like to change?
 - Does your library provide any romance-specific programming? If so, are they effective? What are your challenges? What new, romance-specific programming would you like to test at your library?
 - What romance-specific RA tools and services do you offer patrons? What romance-specific RA training do you offer staff? What works well? What could be improved?
 - Let's discuss various aspects of romance-specific collection development at your library (selection, tools, vendors, publishers, formats, pricing, cataloging, statistics, weeding, etc.)? What works well? What are your challenges?

- Do you interact with the romance community in your area? Do you engage with the online community of romance writers and readers? If so, describe how.
- Note some of your favorite romance-related resources you've used during our genre study (blogs, podcasts, publications, events, libraries, bookstores, etc.). By the end of the romance genre study, we'll compile a list of the most used/best loved romance resources, tools, communities for your future use.
- Don't forget your [bingo cards](#). Get a bingo by our December meet and win a sweet prize.