

Romance Fiction Genre Study
Historical Romance: Session 2
Lisle Public Library
October 4, 2018

Assignment:

Read at least **two historical romance books**, each featuring a different character type or a theme of your choice.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of protagonist types/themes you are likely to encounter in historical romances: duke/duchess, lord/lady, marquis/marchioness, rake/scoundrel/rouge, cowboy, governess, orphan, Highlander/Scot, Viking, pirate, royalty, scandal, runaway bride, strong-willed heroine, heiress, spinster, bluestocking, marriage of convenience, arranged marriage, enemies to lovers, fairytale retellings, class differences, illegitimate daughter/son, love on the road, heroine disguised as man, and more.

Use the following resources to help you pick your historical romances, but feel free to refer to other resources or romance lists of your choice:

[Eye on Romance](#)

[Heroes and Heartbreakers](#)

[All About Romance](#)

[Jennifer Hallock-Fabricated Historical Chronotopes in Romance Genre Fiction](#)

[Historical Romances Books](#)

[Avon Romance](#)

[Scandalicious](#)

[Happy Ever After](#)

[Romantic Historical Reviews](#)

[RT Book Review](#) (inactive but worth checking out)

Tropes

Debbie provided a list of 145 romance tropes. From that list, these are the tropes we found in the titles we read. Damaged lead finds happily ever after, different worlds, and marriage of convenience were the most prolific.

- Abduction to love (1)
- Accidental Pregnancy (2)
- Afraid to commit (3)
- Anti-hero romance (2)
- Arranged marriage (4)
- Beauty and the Beast (4)
- Best Friend's Lover (1)
- Friends first (2)
- Blackmail (2)
- Can't Live With Them, Can't Live Without Them (2)
- Childhood enemies fall in love (2)
- Childhood friends (2)
- Cinderella story (1)
- Classes clash (4)
- Damaged lead finds happily ever after (12)
- Dark secret keeps them apart (3)
- Different worlds (10)
- Disguise (3)
- Enemies to Lovers (6)
- Fairytale (3)
- Fake Engagement (1)
- Fish out of water (1)
- Forbidden Love/Romeo and Juliet (1)
- Friends with Benefits (1)
- Girl wants bad boy (1)
- Impotent love (1)
- Innocent cohabitation (2)
- Love at first sight (1)
- Love triangle (1)
- Love/Hate (1)
- Mad love (1)
- Marriage of convenience (10)
- Men in uniform (1)
- Mistaken Identity (1)
- Nobody thinks it will work (1)
- Not good enough for him/her (4)
- Oblivious to Love (1)
- Oops! Fall in love with the wrong person (2)
- Opposites attract (3)
- Orphans (3)
- Parent/Childcare worker (1)
- Partners in Crime (4)
- Passionate Lovers (1)
- Plain Jane gets the hottie (2)
- Playboy (1)
- Pretending to be married or engaged (3)
- Protector (1)
- Redemption (1)
- Rejected as Unworthy/Turns Life Around (4)
- Rescue romance (3)
- Return to Hometown (1)
- Revenge (2)
- Rich man/poor woman, Rich Woman/poor man (7)
- Rivals/protagonist vs antagonist (2)
- Road trip romance (1)
- Royalty (2)
- Runaway bride/groom (1)
- Scars from the past (7)
- Secret Baby (1)
- Secret that can end everything (5)
- Tortured Hero(ine) (6)
- Ugly Duckling (6)
- Unwanted harem (1)
- Virginal/innocent (5)
- Wallflower noticed by the rake (2)
- Woman/Man in peril (3)
- Quest (1)
- Found Family (2)
- Governess (2)

Questions

–What resources did you use to find your historical books?

- Most of us chose books either from recommendations or reviews, some used Novelist or Goodreads to find titles.

–What did you like/dislike about the resources you used?

–Why did you choose a book featuring a particular character type or a theme?

- Most of us did not choose books for a particular theme. Most chose based on the author or because it was recommended.

–What was your response to the romances you picked? Did you like/dislike them and why?

–Think about the historical era, tone, plot, language, characters, and the heat level of the romances you’ve read.

–Would you read another romance book by this author, set in this time period, or featuring this particular character type/theme?

- Some of the more well-liked authors include: Sarah MacLean, Cat Sebastian, Eloisa James, Alyssa Cole, Beverly Jenkins, Tessa Dare, Lisa Kleypas; many readers indicated they would read these authors again
- Some of the romances that featured strong-willed, independent women seemed like they were not historically accurate for that time period (“modern” historicals), however some were frustrated with the romances that featured subservient heroines

–What differences do we see between contemporary and historical romances?

- Less “miscommunication” tropes with historical romances
- Historical romance feels more escapist because it doesn’t feature modern issues that are too real for readers
- Contemporary feels more real; if the setting is specific and doesn’t feel accurate, that can be distracting.
- Contemporary shows more consent
- Contemporary can become dated quickly.

Books We Read

Alexander, Victoria *The Lady Traveler's Guide to Scoundrels and Other Gentlemen*

Bennett, Anna *First Earl I see Tonight*

-tropes: class differences, woman with money goes after an impoverished titled man; boring, characters not well developed, steamy

Bennett, Anna *Brown-Eyed Earl*

-Regency

Bowen, Kelly *A Good Rogue is Hard to Find*

-tropes: Cinderella, class differences; Regency

Byrne, Kerrigan *The Highwayman*

-tropes: anti-hero, damaged hero, independent heroine, marriage of convenience; Victorian London, moody, brooding, gritty, raw, steamy (read alike for Elizabeth Hoyt)

Cole, Alyssa *An Extraordinary Union*

-tropes: spies, outspoken, smart heroine; Civil War, strong historical detail, suspense, chose based on buzz

Dare, Tessa *Romancing the Duke*

-tropes: damaged hero (blind), class differences, ugly duckling; brooding and steamy

Dare, Tessa *The Governess Game*

-tropes: governess, notorious rake, damaged hero, created family, intelligent female; steamy

Donaldson, Julianne *Blackmoore*

-tropes: lords and ladies; chose from a recommendation, less graphic sex (Shadow Mountain Publishing known for low/no sexual content), for fans of the Brontes or Austen

Enoch, Suzanne *The Devil Wears Kilts*

Gist, Deeanne *Tiffany Girl*

-tropes: enemies to lovers; set in Gilded Age NYC, more historical than romance, gentle, not steamy

Howard, Linda *Angel Creek*

-tropes: independent woman, cowboys; post Civil War, light on steam

James, Eloisa *The Ugly Duchess*

-tropes: ugly duckling, pirates, lords and ladies; Regency, found on Hoopla, spicy

James, Eloisa *Wilde in Love*

James, Eloisa *When Beauty Tamed the Beast*

-tropes: marriage of convenience, fairy tale retelling; over the top with tropes, tongue-in-cheek; if Dr. House was in an historical romance

Jenkins, Beverly *Forbidden*

-tropes: ambitious heroine/rescuer; set in 1870s American West, African American man passing as white, slow simmering romance, selected from Novelist

Jenkins, Beverly *Destiny's Captive*

-tropes: pirates (female), enemies to lovers, blackmail, hero seeks heroine for stealing his boat; Cuba 1870s, revolution, adventure, strong cultural and historical details

Jordan, Sophie *The Duke Buys a Bride*

-tropes: love on the road, class differences, rogue British lord, virgin; set in Scottish lowlands, chose from a review

Kleypas, Lisa *Devil in Spring*

-tropes: bluestocking, duke/rake, wallflower, forced marriage; chose from GoodReads awards

Kleypas, Lisa *Seduce Me By Sunrise*

-tropes: childhood friends to lovers, class differences, virgin, dark hero, alpha hero/passive heroine; set in Victorian England, steamy

Kleypas, Lisa *Suddenly You*

-tropes: spinster, bluestocking writer wants to hire an escort, matchmaker, misunderstandings, comedy of errors, self-made man

Krahn, Betina *A Good Day to Marry a Duke*

-tropes: enemies to lovers, American woman with scandalous past travels to England to find a man with a title; chose based on reviews, very plot focused, less steam

London, Julia *Wild Wicked Scot*

-tropes: highlander/English lady, arranged marriage; early 1700s, lighter on steam
MacLean, Sarah *Wicked and the Wallflower*

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-tropes: enemies to lovers, ugly duckling, different worlds, scars from the past, wallflower noticed by the rake; Regency London, chose for the author, enjoyed and will read again

Putney, Mary Jo *Once a Scoundrel*

-tropes: kidnapped/rescuer, pirates, virgin, strong-willed, independent heroine

Quick, Amanda *With This Ring*

-tropes: alpha male, adventure/quest, Victorian gothic-like, heroine has to partner with hero on a quest, witty banter, not steamy

Romain, Theresa *Fortune Favors the Wicked*

-tropes: fallen woman, illegitimate child, damaged hero (blind), treasure; Regency, witty banter, romance occurs early so not a lot of romantic tension, charming hero

Sands, Lynsay *The Hellion and the Highlander*

-tropes: alpha hero, female with low self-esteem, return to ancestral homeland; time period is unclear (perhaps 17th century), strong setting, tension doesn't come from romance, subservience of female was frustrating.

Sands, Lynsay *An English Bride in Scotland*

-naive heroine who almost became a nun, gruff hero, endearing, silly, weak character development, time period uncertain (Medieval?)

Sebastian, Cat *A Gentleman Never Keeps Score*

-LGBTQ, tropes: different worlds, tortured hero, scars from the past, redemption, damaged hero saved by love; Regency London, chose for the author, enjoyed and will read again

Sebastian, Cat *The Lawrence Browne Affair*

-tropes: mistaken identity; mental disability, con artist, Regency, very steamy

Thorland, Donna *The Turncoat*

-tropes: spies; heavy on historical details, not very romantic

Next Meeting: December 6, Glenview Public Library

Topic: LGBTQ Romance

Assignment:

Read at least two romance books with prominent LGBTQ+ themes, each featuring a different character type, setting, or LGBTQ+ representation. We encourage you to consider writers of color in making your selections.

Here are a few authors to choose from but, due to the richness of the LGBTQ+ literary community, we hope you check out additional resources for more reading options. Finally, some of the authors listed below don't exclusively write LGBTQ+ romances, so make sure to select a title that fits our discussion.

Authors to consider: K. J. Charles, Cat Sebastian, Rebekah Weatherspoon, Radclyffe, Vanessa North, Melissa Brayden, Alexis Hall, Gail Carriger, Xen Sanders, Courtney Milan, Santino Hassell, Sarina Bowen, Karelia Stetz-Waters, C. S. Pacat, Mackenzi Lee, Claire Kann, Lorelie Brown, Shamim Sarif.

When reading, note the following elements:

–main LGBTQ+ representations (M/M, F/F, F/M, M/M/F, F/M/M, F/NB, M/NB (Nonbinary), Bisexual(F), Bisexual (M), Trans (T), Asexual (A), P (Pansexual), and more.

–sub-genres/tropes/themes/secondary plots/sensuality levels

–settings (historical, contemporary, geographic, etc.).

Next time, we'll also discuss the current state of the LGBTQ+ romance community, LGBTQ+ terms and abbreviations used to denote character/relationship representations, benefits and drawbacks of discussing LGBTQ+ romances as a separate category, #ownvoices writers vs. others, and more.

Additional lists and resources to consider:

[LGBTQ Reads](#)

[Lesbrary](#)

[The Romantic Reader Blog](#)

[Book Riot-LGBTQ+ Lists](#)

[Big Gay Fiction Podcast](#)

[Smart Bitches Trashy Books](#)

[WOC in Romance](#)

[All About Romance-31 Awesome Queer Romance You Should Read](#)

[Some GoodReads Lists](#)

[Amazon LGBTQ+ romance list](#)