

## The “Meet Cute”



*“[The character] is conveniently importuned by this attractive young fellow she happens to run into—to ‘meet cute,’ as they say—on a Fifth Avenue bus.”*

[Bosley Crowther](#), in his February 1964 review of *Sunday in New York*

A “**meet-cute**” is a scene in film, television, etc. in which a future romantic couple meets for the first time in a way that is considered adorable, entertaining, or amusing.

This type of scene is a staple of [romantic comedies](#), commonly involving contrived, unusual, or comic circumstances. The technique creates an artificial situation to bring together characters in a theoretically entertaining manner. Frequently, the meet-cute leads to a humorous clash of personalities or beliefs, embarrassing situations, or comical misunderstandings that further drive the plot.

### Use of "meet cute" situation

The term is widely used by screenwriters. [Billy Wilder](#) uses it in reference to his 1938 [screwball comedy film \*Bluebeard's Eighth Wife\*](#), adding that the concept was "a staple of romantic comedies back then".

Well-known film critics like Roger Ebert popularized the term in their reviews. In Ebert's commentary of [Beyond the Valley of the Dolls](#), he describes the scene where law student Emerson Thorne bumps into the female character Petronella Danforth. Ebert admits that he, as the screenwriter, wrote into the script a "classic Hollywood meet cute." He explains the meet cute as a scene "in which somebody runs into somebody else, and then something falls, and the two people began to talk, and their eyes meet and they realize that they are attracted to one another."

In the 2006 American romantic comedy [The Holiday](#), one of the characters, Arthur, an elderly script writer (played by [Eli Wallach](#)), explains a meet cute with an example: "It's how two characters meet in a movie. Say a man and a woman both need something to sleep in, and they both go to the same men's pajama department. And the man says to the salesman: 'I just need bottoms'. The woman says: 'I just need a top'. They look at each other, and that's the meet cute."

## **Romantic Comedy**

(a.k.a. "Romcom")

*Boy meets girl—boy and girl fall in love—boy loses girl—boy gets girl back*

Many rom-coms use a set of certain tropes. Many feature two more or less equal protagonists with one slightly more equal than the other. The story may start with one character being dumped/divorced/widowed. His/her friends and family urge him/her to find someone. The protagonist may agree to go on several blind dates. At some point, they meet our second protagonist. Usually, the second character isn't an obvious match for the first; maybe she's 'wild and crazy' and he's an uptight accountant. Or he's rich and she's poor. A romantic comedy usually provides a victory of love against all odds.

Every story needs a conflict, and since rom-coms are driven by the quest for love, the conflict derives from the obstacles to the quest. This could be the apparent incompatibility of the leads: mutual "love at first sight" is rare. The two characters will spend a good part of the movie fighting their obvious attraction. Eventually, they'll realize they're perfect for each other. Or, something will pop up; some kind of misunderstanding, or a revelation about one of them lying. One of the two characters will storm off in a huff. Or the couple is already married for some reason, and the conflict comes partially from different expectations and misunderstandings.

The climax of a rom-com requires the satisfactory recognition of love: the other chases after the love interest and does something really romantic to win them back. The reconciliation scene ends with the two characters reunited in a romantic embrace. Often ends in a wedding. Here is a break-down of the major plot points of a romantic comedy:

- The Meeting (The "meet cute")
- Hints of Attraction
- Comedic Friction (Conflict)
- The Break-Up
- The Grand Gesture
- Reuniting

### **Other conventions/cliches:**

- Setting: New York or a city (but only the romantic parts—like Central Park or Rockefeller Center in Winter)
- Mr./Mrs. Right was there the whole time!
- Couple hates each other at first
- Grand romantic gesture to win love back
- The "Race to the Airport"
- Opposites attract—she's uptight and high-maintenance, or too busy for love; he's a lazy slacker or slob that sleeps with many women
- Quirky best friends
- Montages—The Lonely Montage; The Makeover; The Shopping Montage; The Falling in Love (Dating) Montage
- End happily ever after (even if they separate or don't get married)

50 best rom coms

<https://www.theringer.com/movies/2022/4/18/23026994/rom-com-movies-ranking>

