

Romance Plot Structures

Cinderella Structure

- Heroine falls in love with the hero first and is left at his mercy
- Heroine's actions are centered on the hero she loves and whether he will love her back
- Some focus on the hero and how he feels

Act 1

- Meet the hero
 - Learn about his unhappiness or cynical look at life
- Meet the heroine
 - Learn about her desperate life
- Hero and heroine meet
 - Heroine falls in love with hero

Act 2

- A task or situation forces the hero and heroine together
- Hero is unsure of their relationship
 - Hero may try to send heroine away
- Hero realizes he loves heroine
 - Obstacles and uncertainty keep them apart

Act 3

- Hero finally goes out and gets heroine
 - Hero saves heroine with his love
- Hero teaches heroine about love and life
- Happily ever after

Beauty and the Beast Structure

- Hero falls in love with the heroine first and is left at her mercy
- Focus is on how the heroine feels
- Hero is usually a powerful man in every area of his life except where heroine is concerned
 - Usually hero's life depends on heroine's decision to love him back and save him

Act 1

- Meet the heroine
 - Learn about the stability of heroines' life
- Meet the hero
 - An obstacle or chance meeting brings heroine in contact with the hero
 - Hero seems rough and is often a loner
- Hero immediately falls in love with heroine

Act 2

- A task or situation forces the heroine and hero together
- Heroine is hesitant about their relationship
- Hero does something wonderful, thoughtful, or protective
 - Heroine starts to fall in love with hero
- Obstacles keep heroine and hero from expressing their love

Act 3

- Hero is in trouble

- Heroine saves hero with her love
- Live happily ever after

Sleeping Beauty Structure

- Heroine and hero fall in love at the same time
- Heroine and hero save each other through their mutual love

Act 1

- Heroine is a victim of fate
- Heroine either feels lost and alone, or doesn't know there is a problem yet, but feels sad
- Others try to help heroine
- Hero feels like something is missing but goes about his life

Act 2

- Something catches the hero's eye
 - Hero goes after it, taking a big risk
- Hero finds the heroine and they both feel true happiness
- Both of their lives are completely changed
- Obstacles keep hero and heroine apart

Act 3

- Hero and heroine fall deeper in love
 - They make plans, regardless of what others think
- Live happily ever after

Common Romantic Premises

- Two people from different worlds, cultures, classes, ethnic groups, economic strata, religions, or nationalities find themselves attracted to one another
- Two childhood sweethearts rediscover each other and those old feelings
- Two people, each jilted by former lovers, are drawn to one another
- An employee falls in love with his or her employer
- An employer falls in love with his or her employee
- A jealous person asks a trusted friend, associate, or hired person to watch his/her fiancé/fiancée. The spy falls in love with the person being watched.
- A couple who never considered themselves more than good friends discover their feelings run much deeper
- A divorced or separated couple discovers how much they really care for one another
- Lovers are kept apart by a family feud, rival gangs, etc
- Lovers are forced apart by a misunderstanding
- Lovers are separated because of another person's deceit
- A young person falls in love with an older person
- An older person falls in love with a younger person
- A brief encounter occurs between two people who know their love can never be
- Lovers are separated by war or disaster
- Lovers are separated by misfortune
- Lovers find themselves competitors
- Lovers try to avoid commitment