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Adding a Romantic Thread

 0 Comments



A book doesn't have to fall into the romance category to contain a romantic thread. For example, you might have a white-knuckle suspense, one that keeps the reader on the edge of her seat. As your ratcheting up the tension, why not throw in romantic

tension, as well?

Here are some tips for adding a romantic thread:

1. Allow your hero and your heroine to both appear as POV characters. We need to hear from him. . .and her.
2. Your hero and heroine should meet in an interesting and memorable way.
3. Romantic tension should begin as quickly as possible and continue throughout.
4. In a romance, internal conflict is more important than external. Your editor is interested in moving the plot along, of course, but he/she is more interested in the conflict going on inside the characters.
5. Your hero and heroine should not come across as a likely pair. Up the ante by making them an "impossible" duo.
6. The reader really wants to connect to your heroine, so give her ample opportunity to do that.
7. The reader doesn't like weak heroines. Craft a heroine who *could* live without Mr. Right, but ends up with him, anyway.
8. Heroes should be strong and compelling, but flawed.
9. Even though your characters are flawed, they should be redeemable.
10. When it comes to physical descriptions, make sure your characters aren't "too pretty" or "too handsome." Readers want heroes and heroines that they can relate to and perfection is unrealistic. Sure, "handsome" and "pretty" will play a role (because the hero will see the heroine as lovely, etc.) but don't take this too far.

11. Romantic tension is key, but so is emotional tension. Take the reader on a roller-coaster ride of emotions.
12. In a romance novel, POV is determined by who has the most at risk. Before you write a scene, ask yourself: "Who has more to lose in this scene—the hero or the heroine?" Then write the scene from the POV of the one who has the most to lose.
13. Make sure your plot is believable. Lead the characters from a seemingly-impossible relationship to a true happily ever after ending.
14. If you're hoping to add a romantic thread, know your reader. There are dozens and dozens of sub-genres under the broad category of "romance." Make sure you're targeting the right one. For a comprehensive list, visit sites like harlequin.com or rwa.com.
15. Pacing is everything. Highs and lows are important to keep the romance reader guessing. Will the hero and heroine ever get together? If you pace the story correctly, the reader will spend a lot of time wondering.
16. Dialogue and narrative must be appropriate to the market. Romance readers have come to expect certain descriptions and styles of dialogue. Stick with what they know/expect.
17. Don't spend too much time on secondary characters. Stories with strong romantic threads usually focus on the hero/heroine.
18. Your hero needs to come out looking like a true hero in the end, no matter how flawed he's been throughout.

19. The love story stays at the forefront. True romance readers don't like to be pulled away from the heart of the hero or heroine for long.

20. Make sure you understand the romance formula, but also remember that your story can't be a cookie-cutter. Get creative with your settings/occupations, etc. Think outside the box.

There you have it, novelists! Twenty ways to add romance to your novel.

By JThompson
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