



wild
WISCONSIN

· WINTER WEB CONFERENCE · JANUARY 22-23, 2025 ·



NEVER TOO MUCH

Romance inside and out of the library
Robin Bradford * Wild Wisconsin* January 22, 2025

The Meaning of Romance

Romantic period of music:

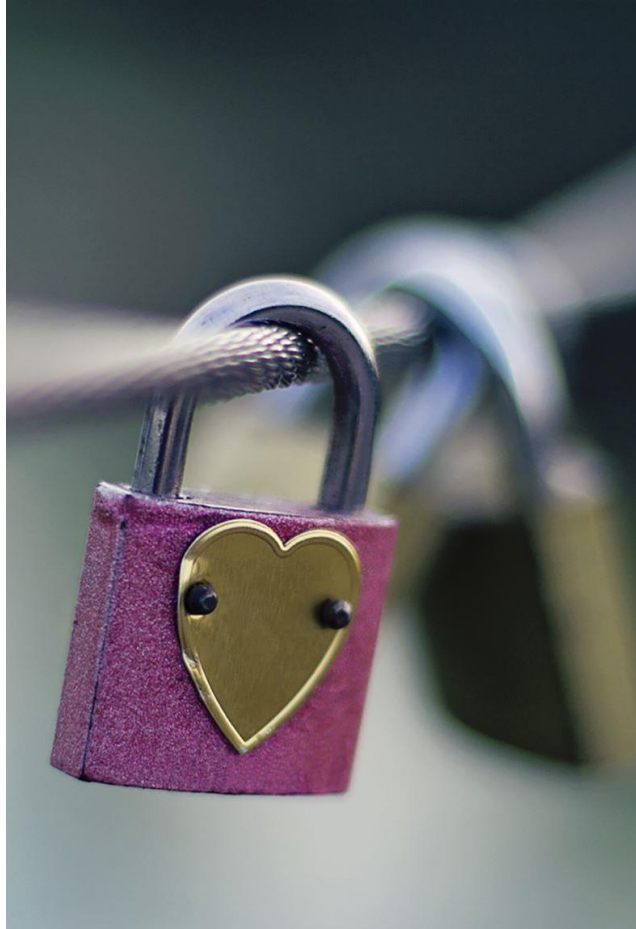
- 1830-1900
- “Expressive and Inventive”
- “Intense energy and passion”
- Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Mahler
 - Classic FM.com

Romantic period of literature

- 1798-1837
- Reaction against the spread of industrialism
- Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron
- Gothic Fiction
- Eastern Connecticut State Univ.

Romantic period of art

- 1770-1850
- Freedom of expression
- Passion and emotion
- Friedrich, Constable, Turner (my fave!)
 - Wikipedia

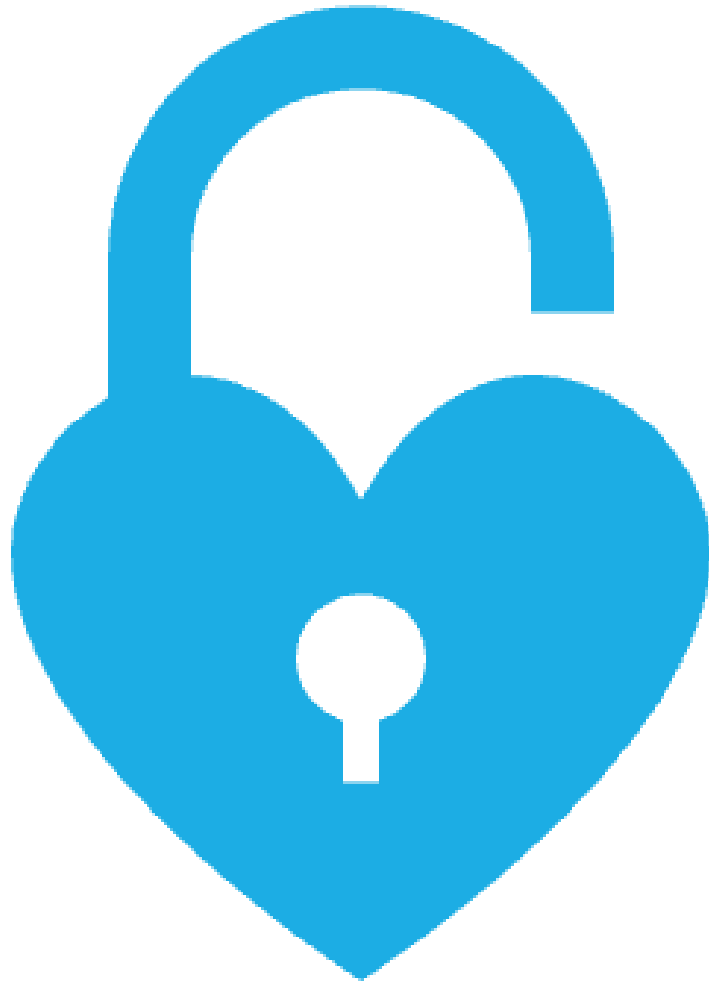


So, what *is* a Romance?

According to the Romance Writers of America a romance consists of:

A Central Love Story: The main plot centers around individuals falling in love and struggling to make the relationship work. A writer can include as many subplots as he/she wants as long as the love story is the main focus of the novel.

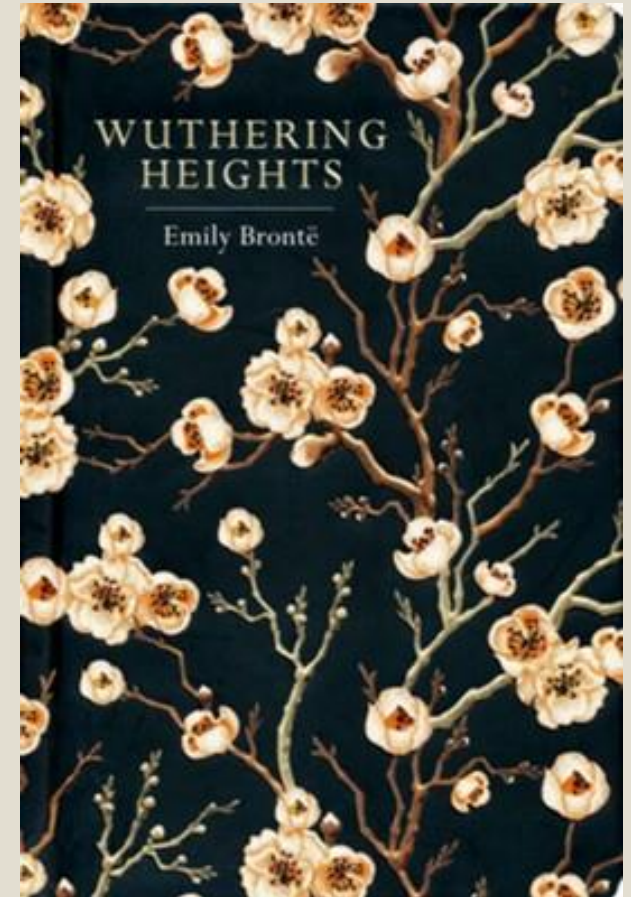
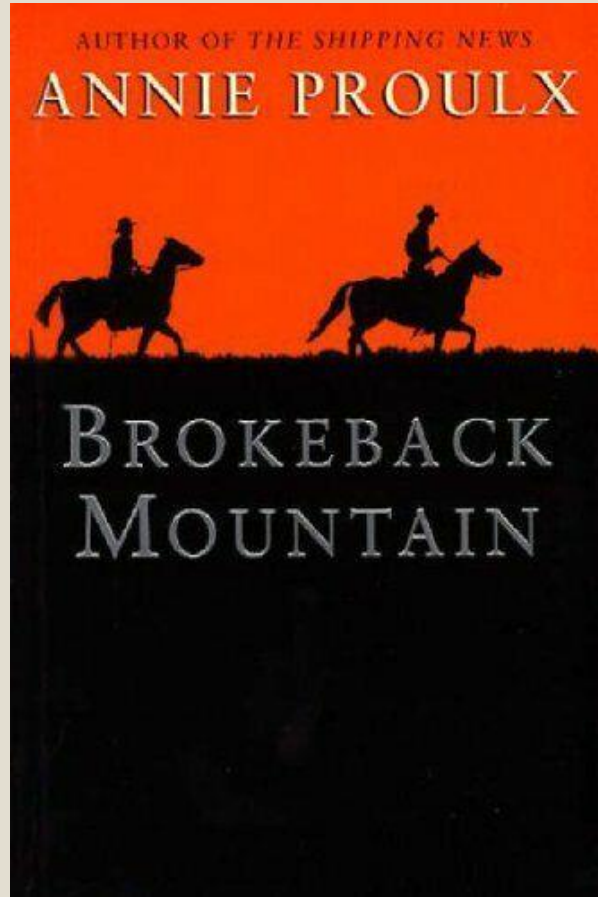
An Emotionally Satisfying and Optimistic Ending: In a romance, the lovers who risk and struggle for each other and their relationship are rewarded with emotional justice and unconditional love.

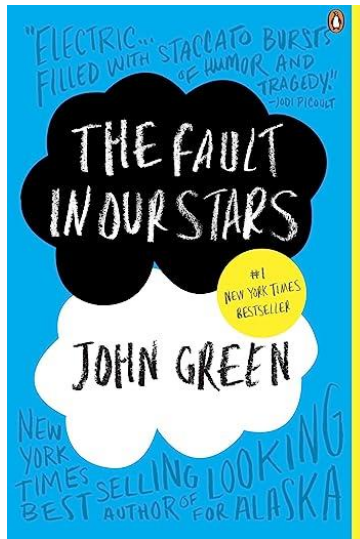
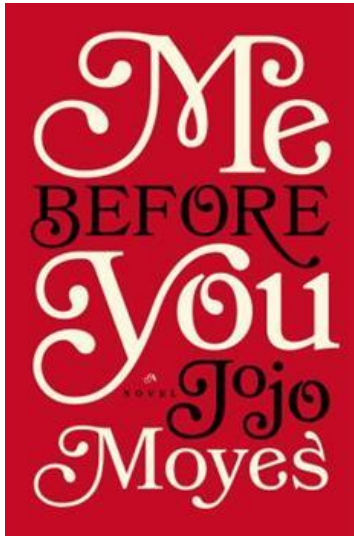


Why does it matter?

- Reader expectations
 - Romance readers are looking for a **specific** experience.
 - The packaging can look any number of ways, but in the end they're looking for
 - A Central Love Story
 - An emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending

Which is why
some books
are...
romantic but
not romances.

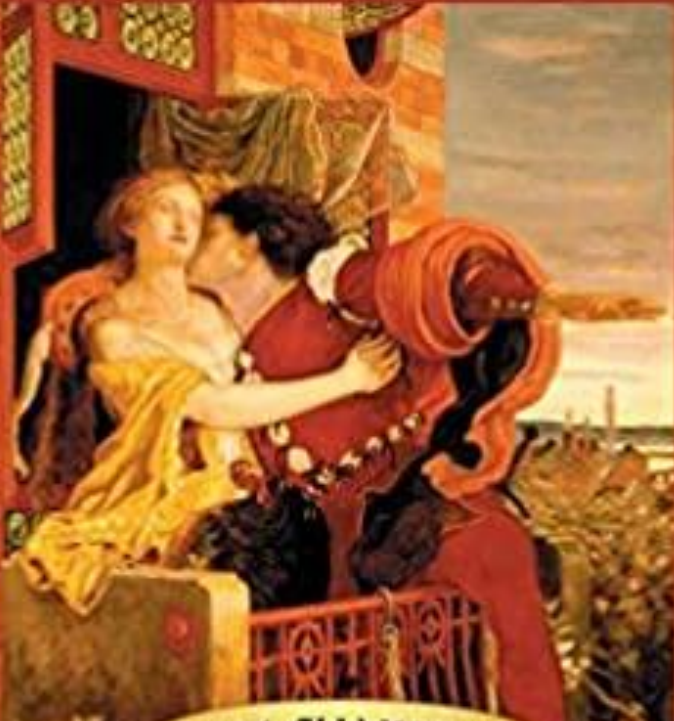




Not all “Love Stories”
are “Romances”

THE TRAGEDIE OF ROMEO AND JULIET

A Frankly Annotated
FIRST FOLIO EDITION



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Annotated and with an Introduction by
DEMITRA PAPADINIS

So, if it isn't a Romance...

- General fiction exists! Not everything has to belong to a genre.
- Love stories are great. Tragic love stories are great.
- All romances are love stories. Not all love stories are (genre) romances.



“HERE LIES A
BOOK THAT
DIDN'T MEET
GENRE
EXPECTATIONS”



CD Reiss



@CDReisswriter



If you put a picture of beans on a can of mushrooms people will be mad.

9:49 AM · Jul 25, 2023 · **2,317** Views

2 Retweets **2** Quotes **42** Likes

Romance Subgenres

Historical

Contemporary

Romantic Suspense

Paranormal

Fantasy

Dark

Erotic

Historical

Currently up through 1950.
Does this need to be updated?

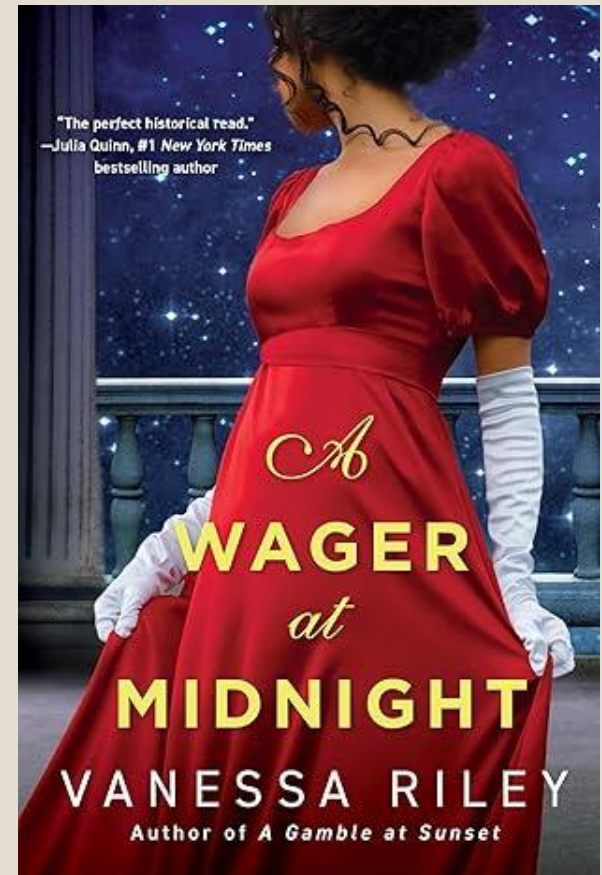
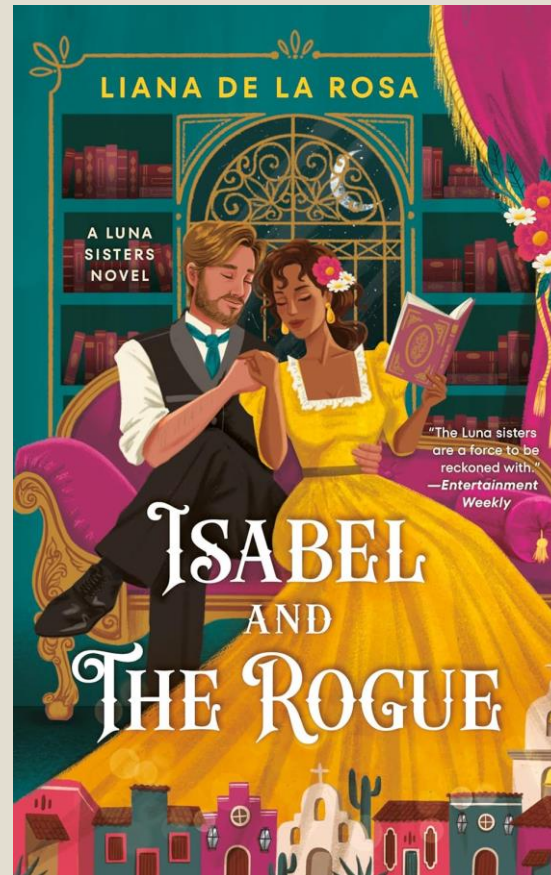
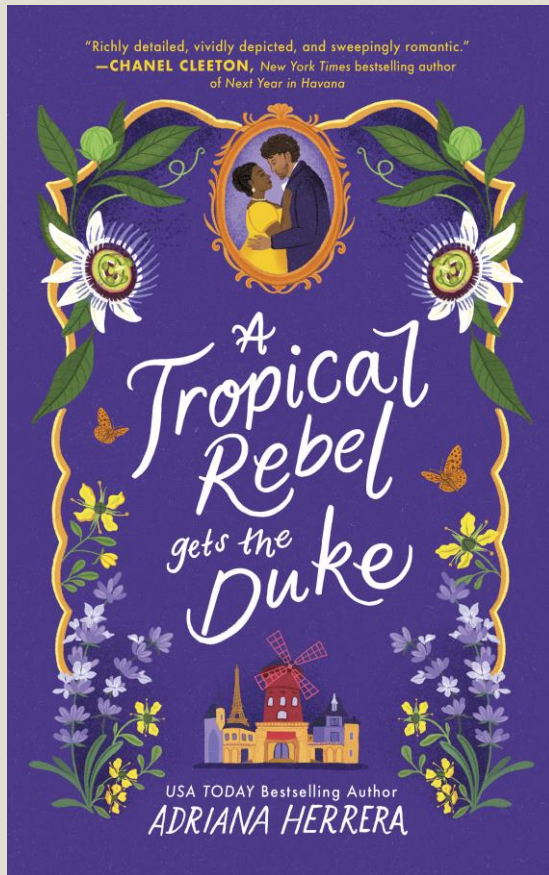
Mostly known for “regency
period” romances

Mostly known for British,
specifically England, romances.

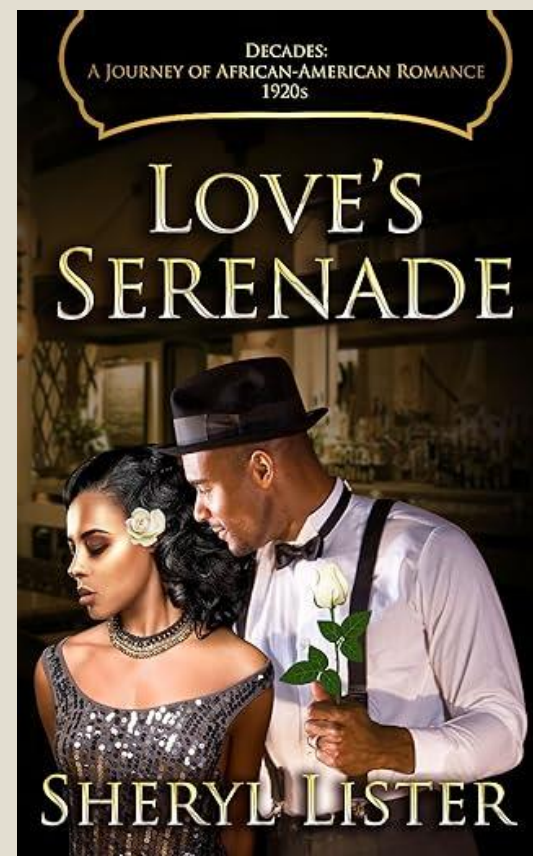
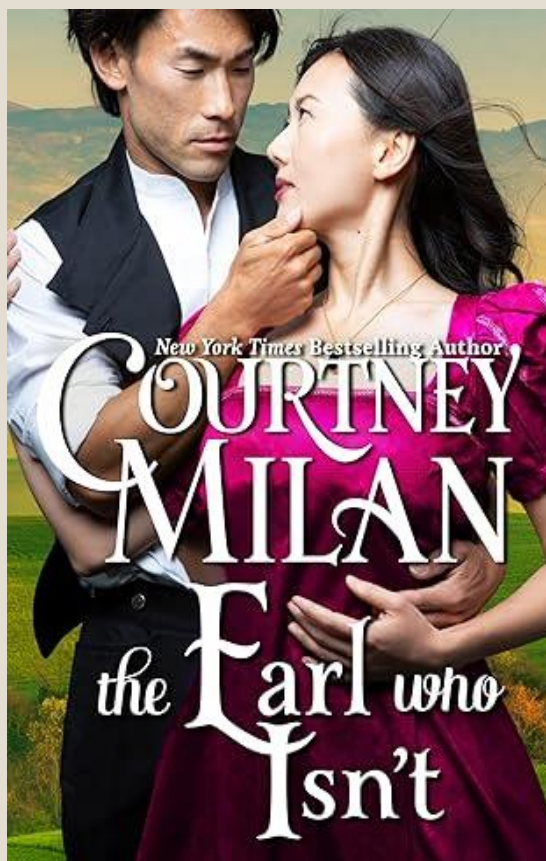
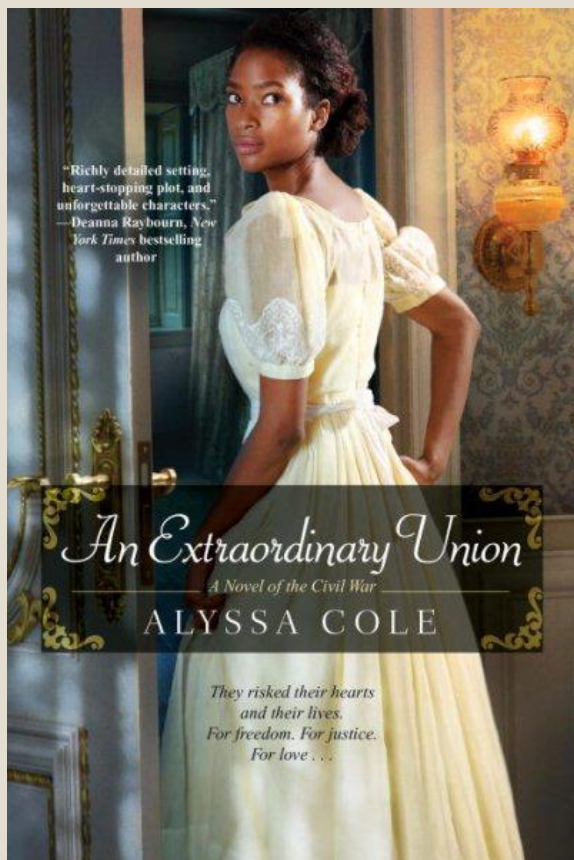
But also Highlanders, Vikings,
Pirates...

And also Americans during
various time periods.

Historicals



Historicals



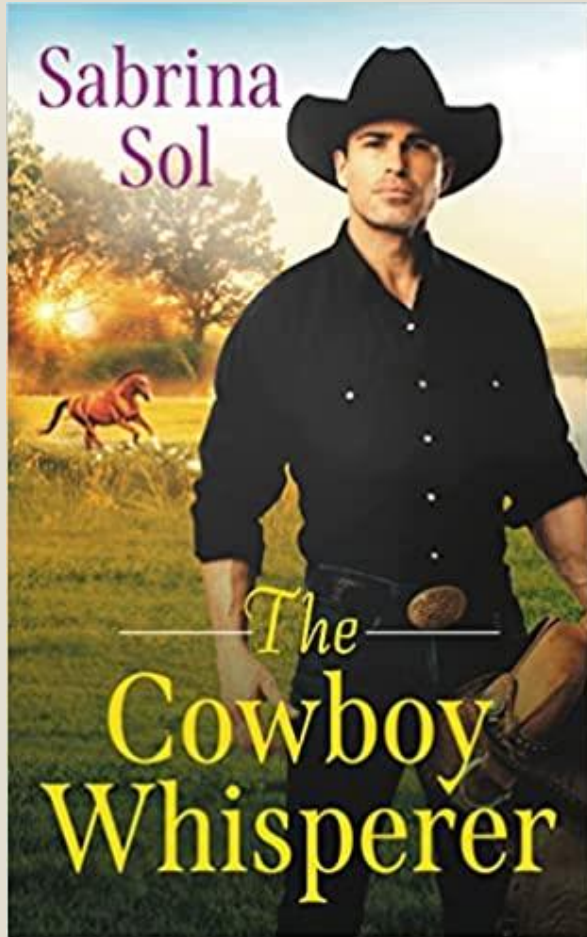
Currently 1950-present
day

The “catch-all” category
for current romances.

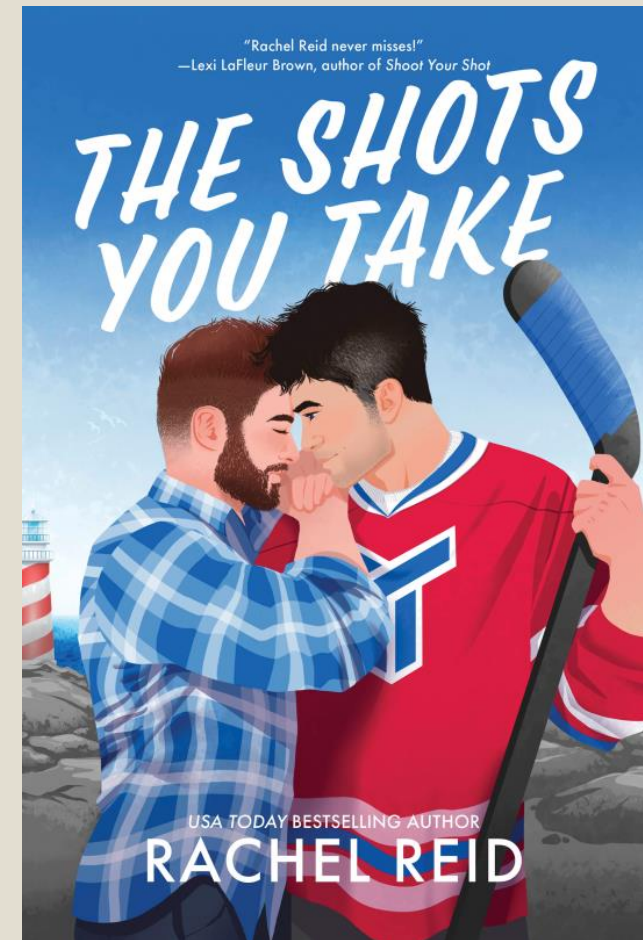
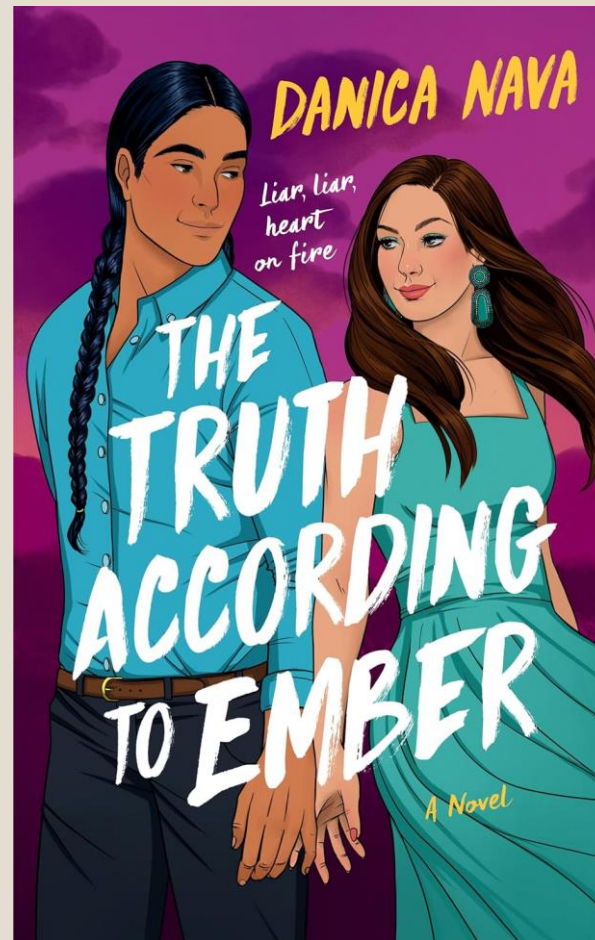
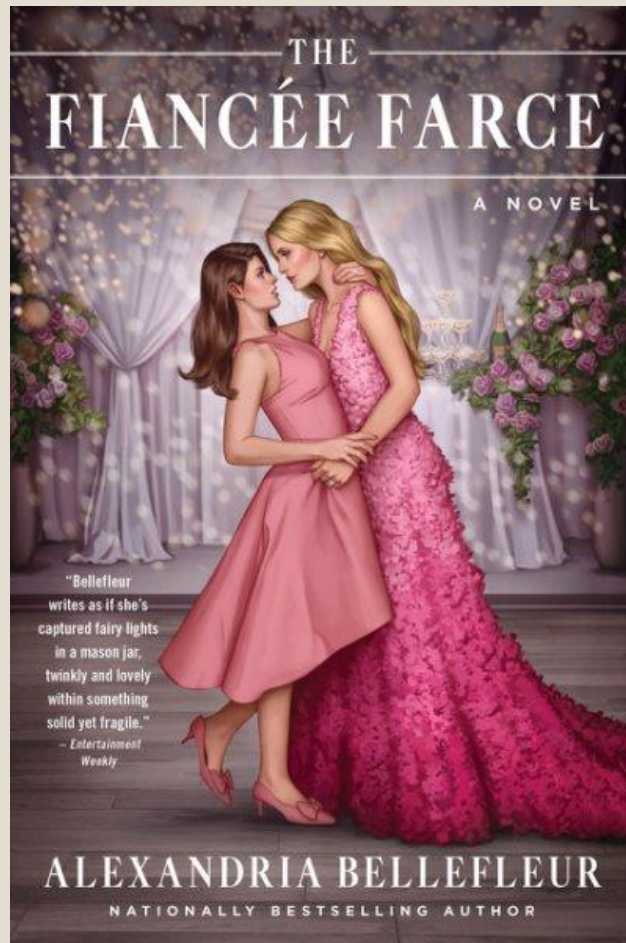
A very wide category

Contemporary

Contemporary



Contemporary



Romance plus action-adventure and/or peril

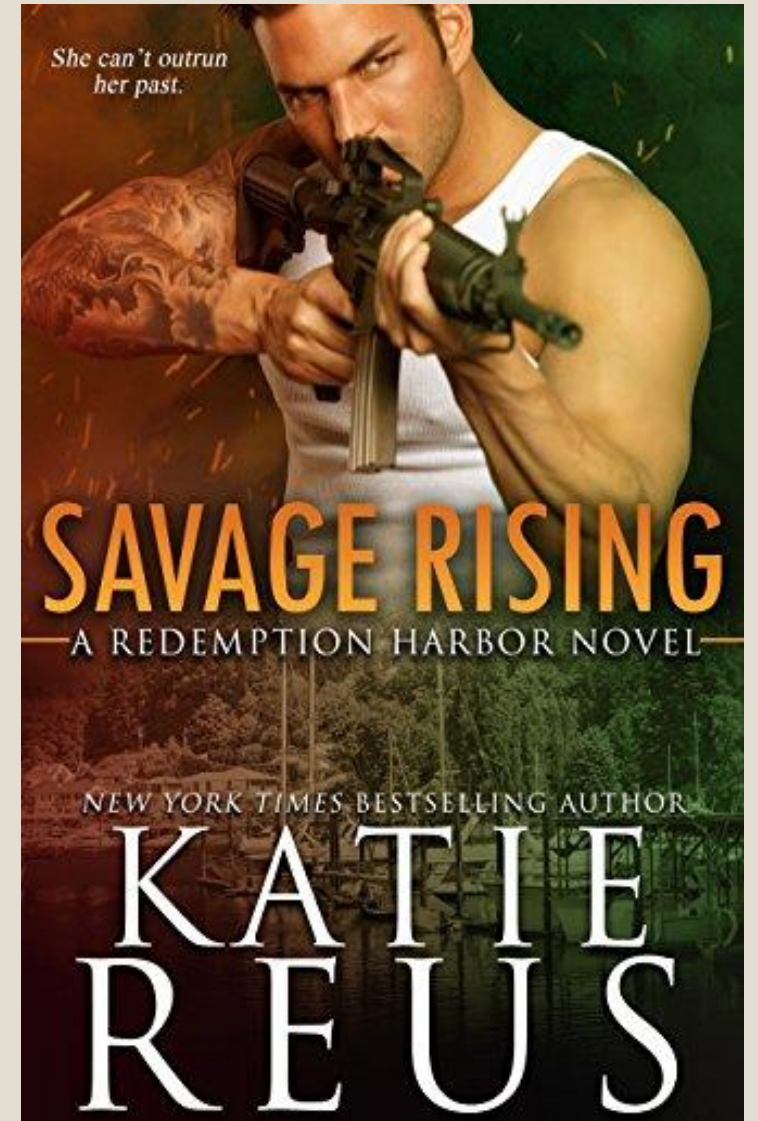
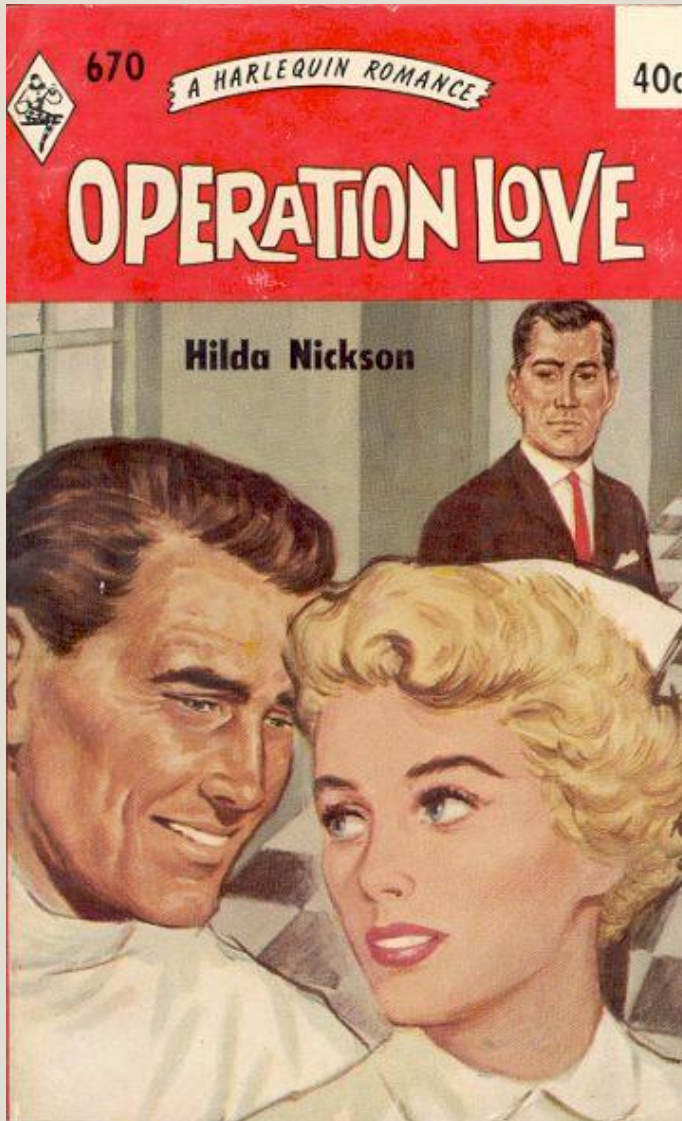
Can be contemporary or historical

The suspense part can range from barely there to “are you sure this is a romance?”

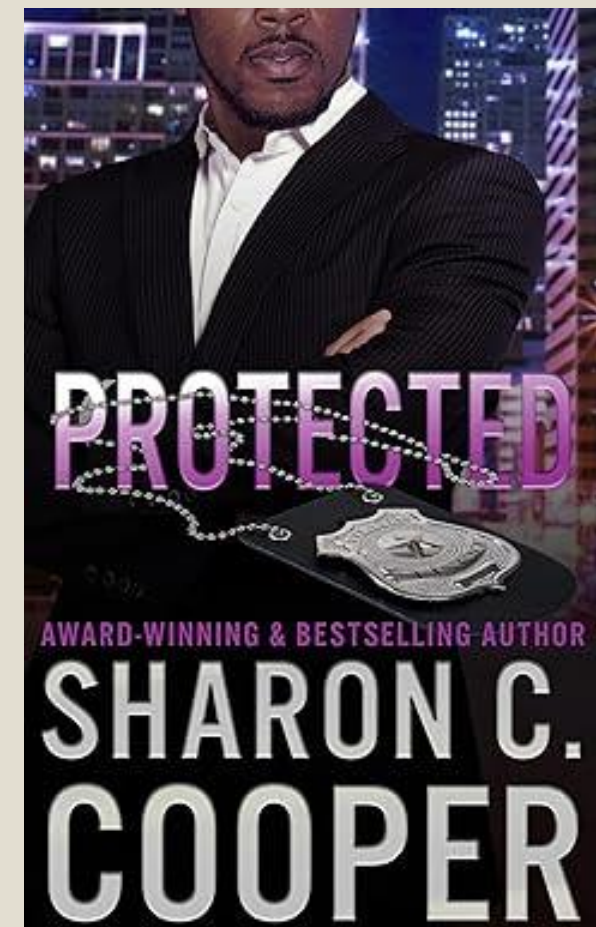
The main romance rules still apply.

Romantic Suspense

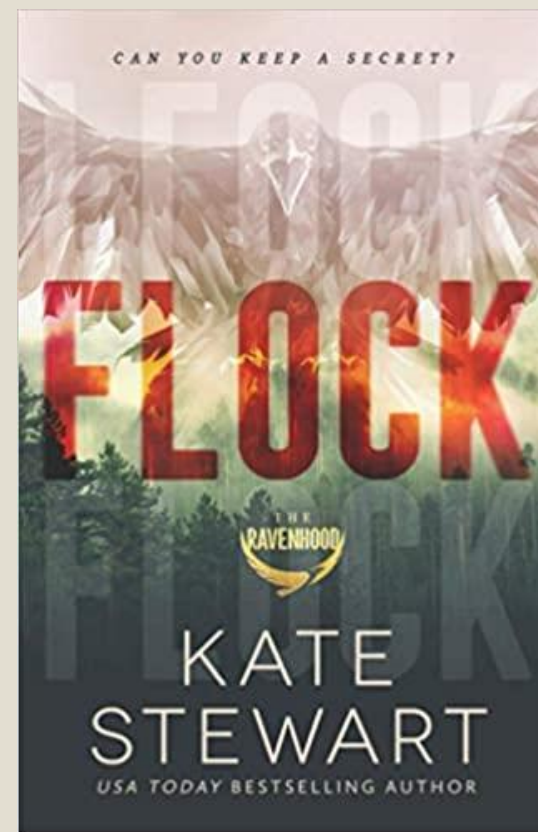
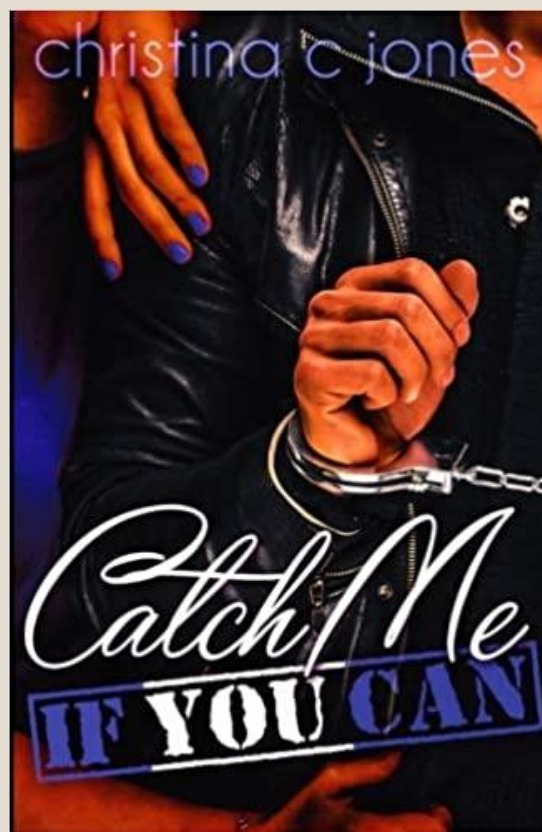
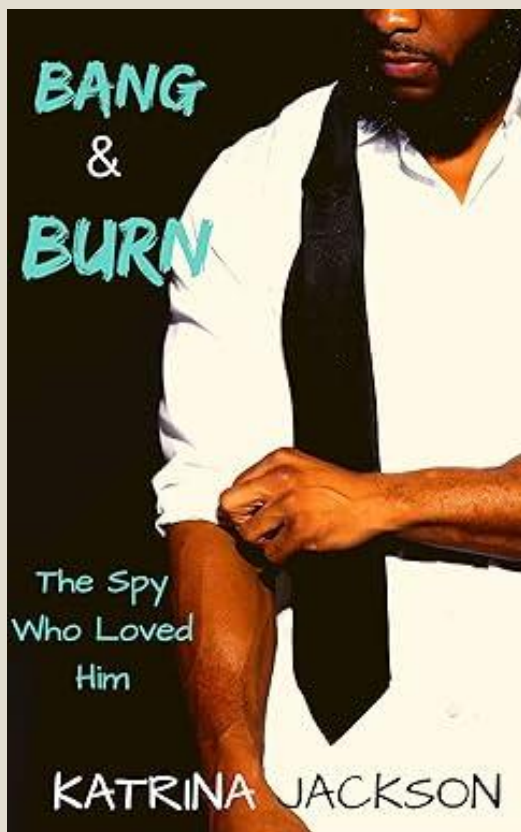
That
escalated
quickly!



Romantic Suspense



Romantic Suspense

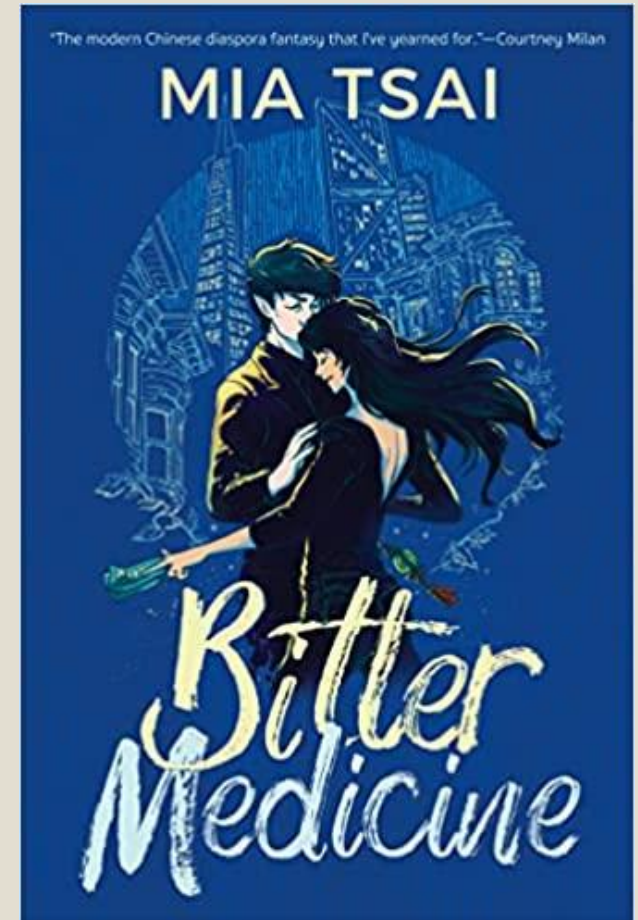
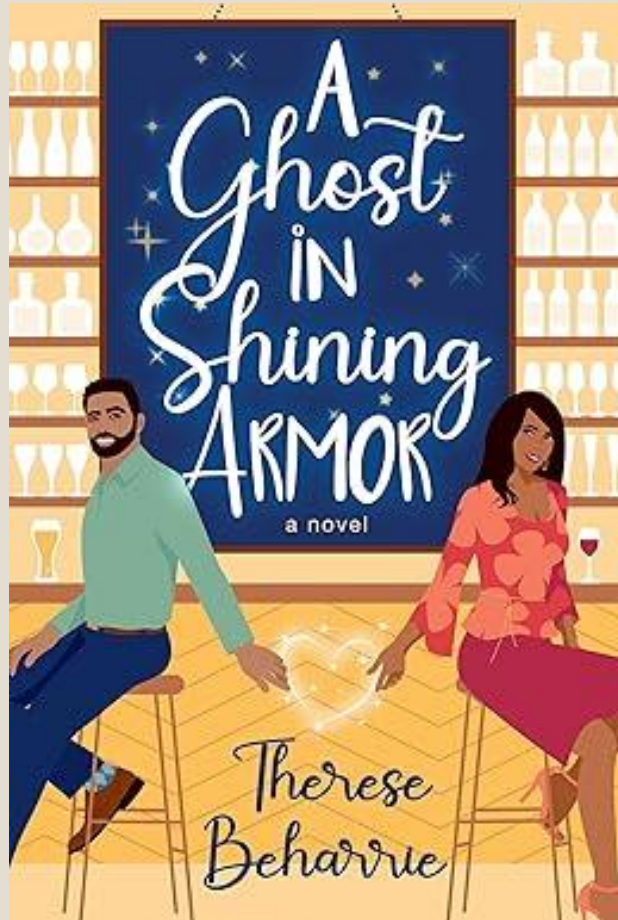


Recognizable world, but
with addition of magic,
and/or vampires,
witches, werewolves, etc.

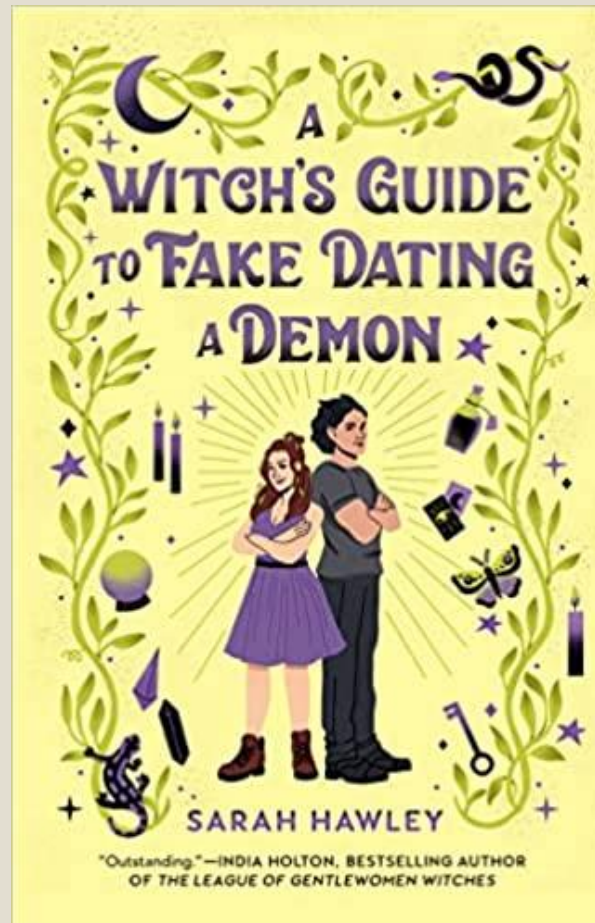
Could be contemporary
or historical

Paranormal

Paranormal



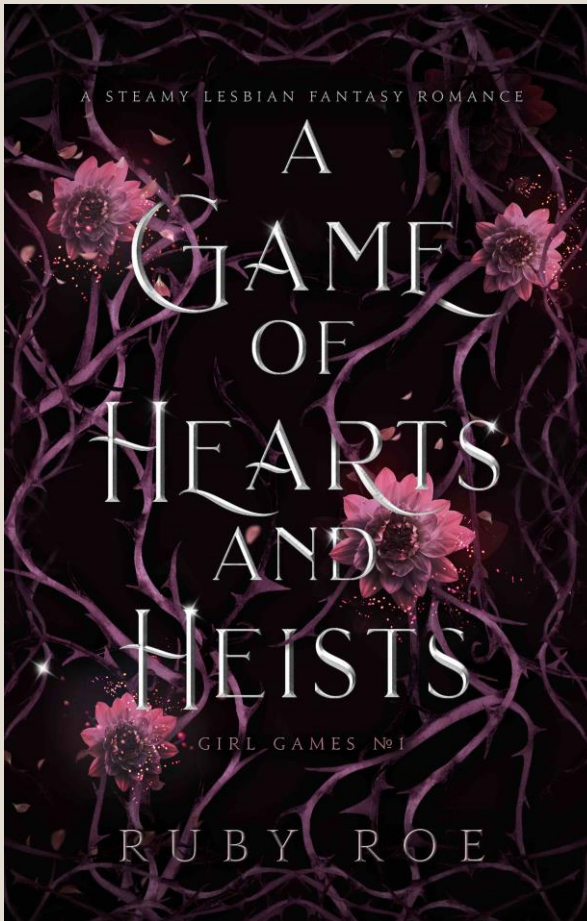
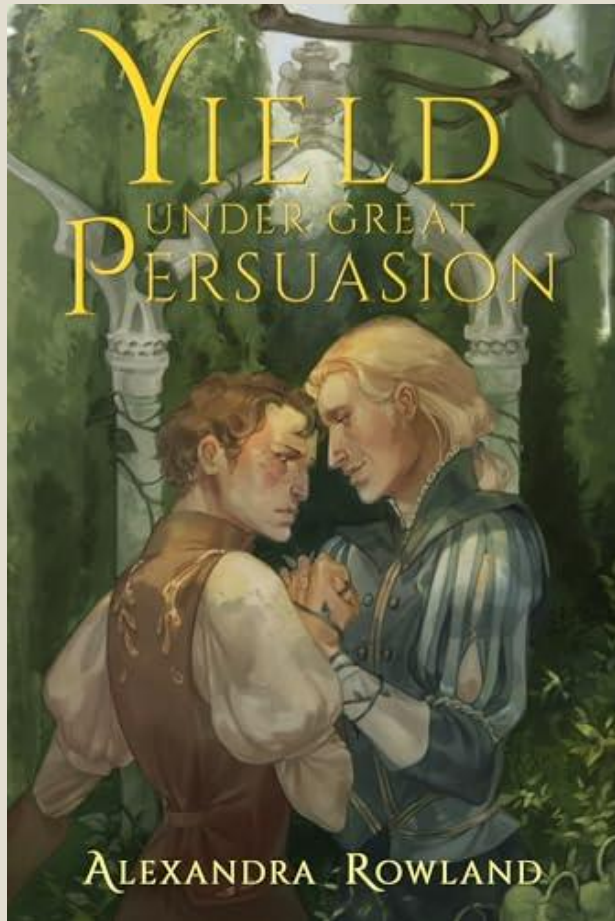
Paranormal



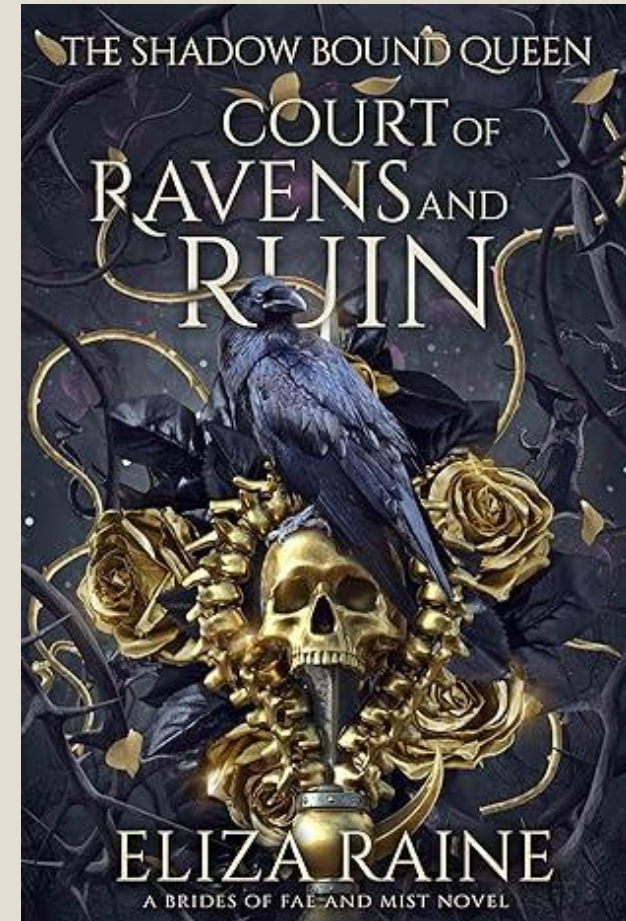
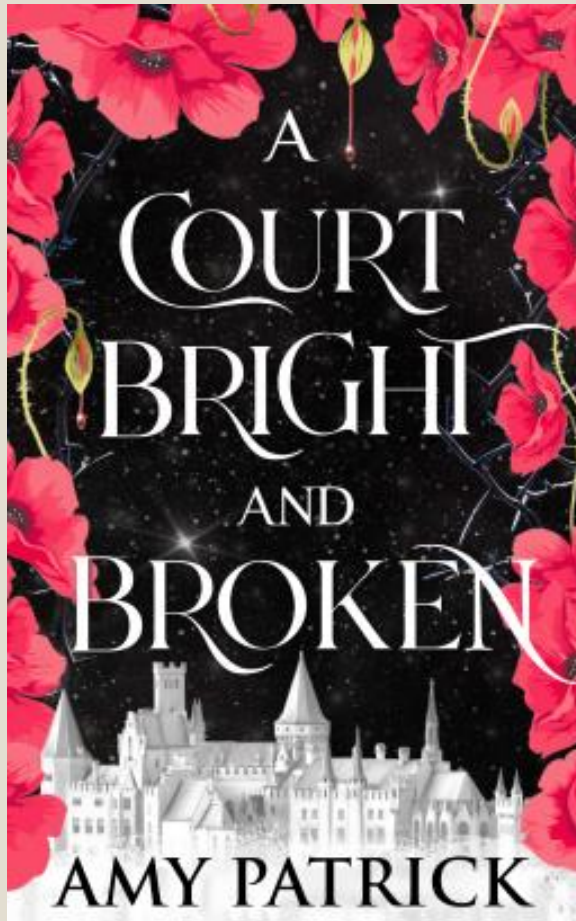
Fantasy Romance

- its paranormal romance but set in a world very different than our own; much like fantasy novels
- Still evolving – is it a subgenre of Romance, of Fantasy, or its own distinct new thing?
- I submit it could be either of the three, depending on the book.
 - When in doubt, go back to your definition of Romance. Does it meet that?

Fantasy Romance



Fantasy Romance

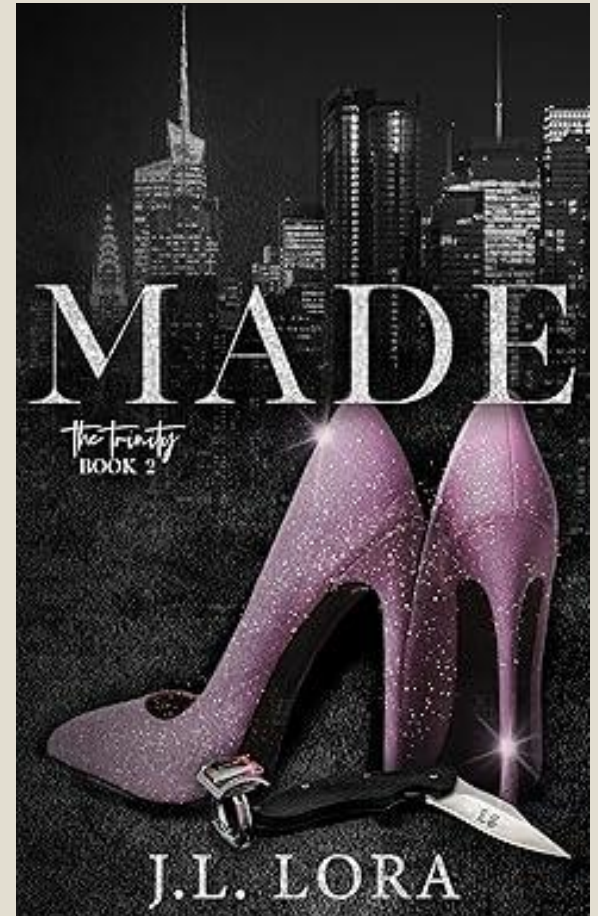




Dark Romance

- Main characters that often skate on the wrong side of society for various reasons.
 - Often working in illegal occupations
 - Mafia, assassins, motorcycle clubs, etc.
- CAN include situations of dubious consent (dub con)
- Very much the “wild” side.
- These are the characters you wouldn't ordinarily want to win.
- Dark romance is still a **romance** and has the main romance characteristics.
- **NOT. FOR. EVERYONE.**

Dark Romance





Story points



Books can focus on one or contain multiple

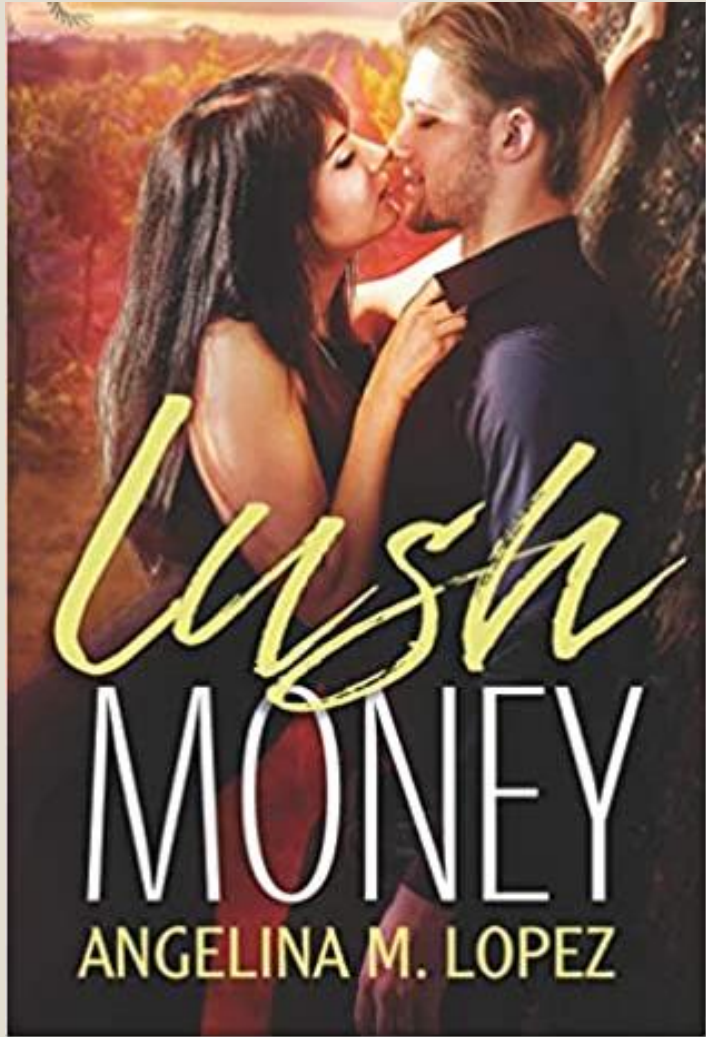


Selling points to patrons, and also things to stay away from.

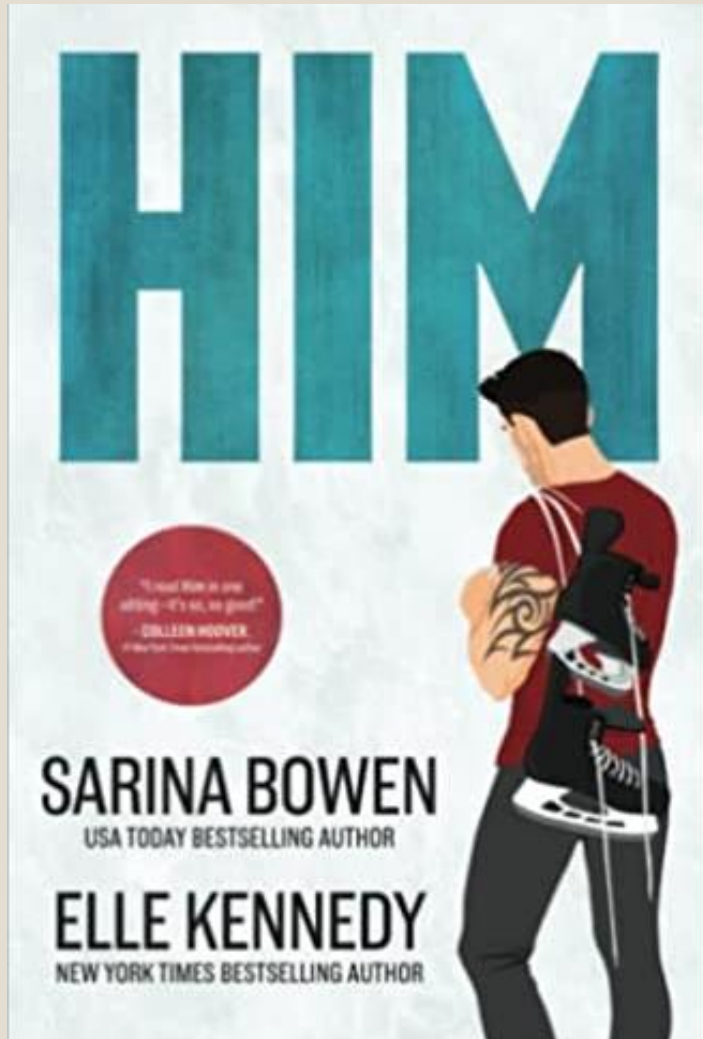


Romance readers love tropes, so embrace them wholeheartedly.

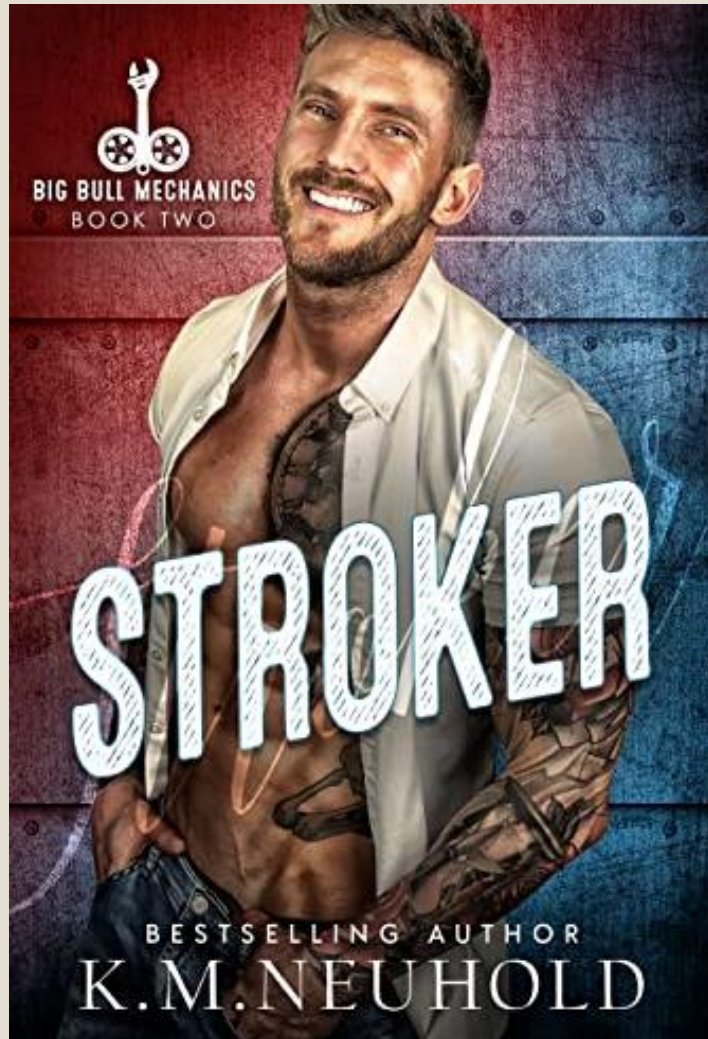
Tropes



Marriage of Convenience



Friends to Lovers



Enemies to Lovers



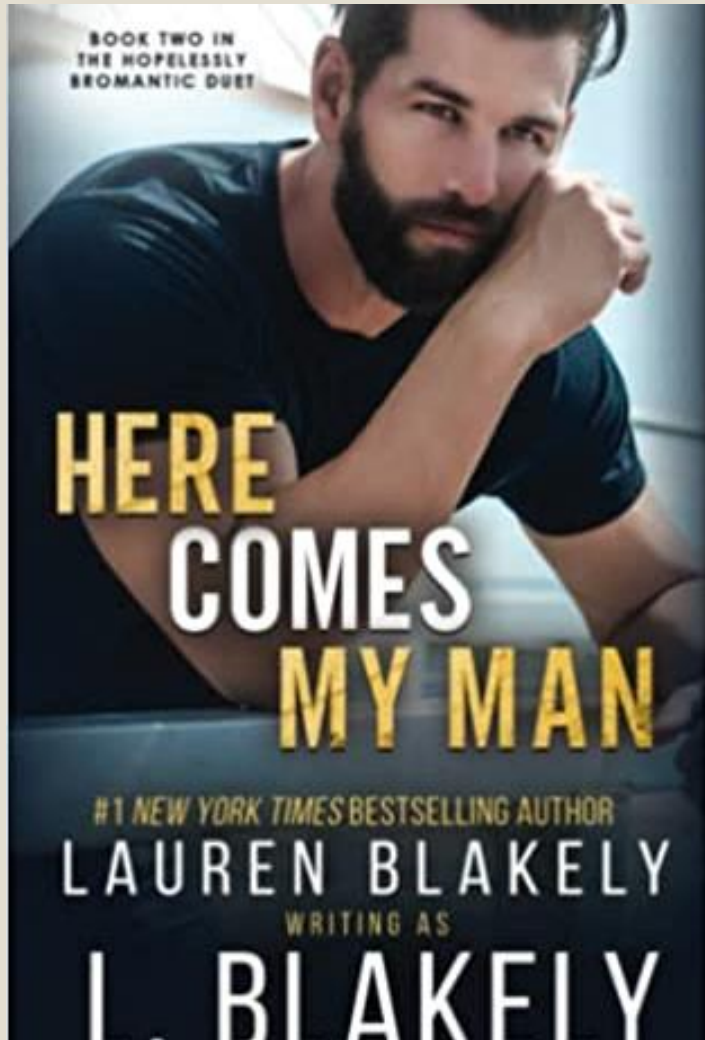
Second Chance



Secret Baby



Forced Proximity



Fake dating

So many
other tropes

Fake Relationship

Secret Babies

Best Friend's Sibling

Reunited Lovers

Boss/Assistant

Fated Mates

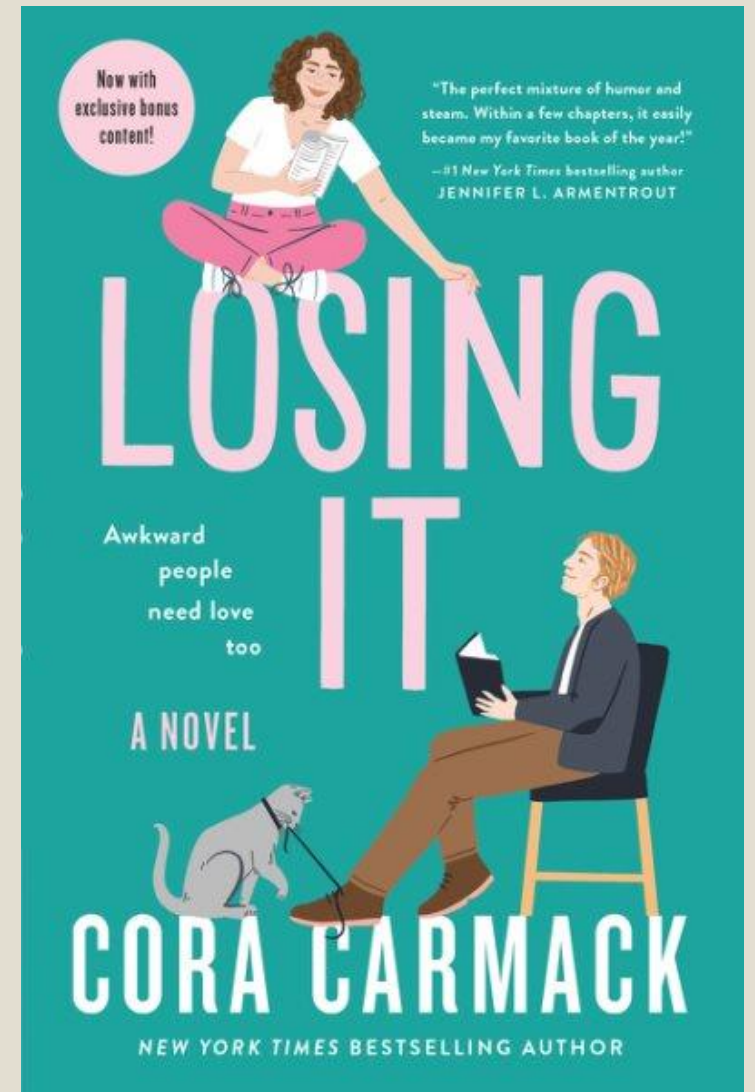
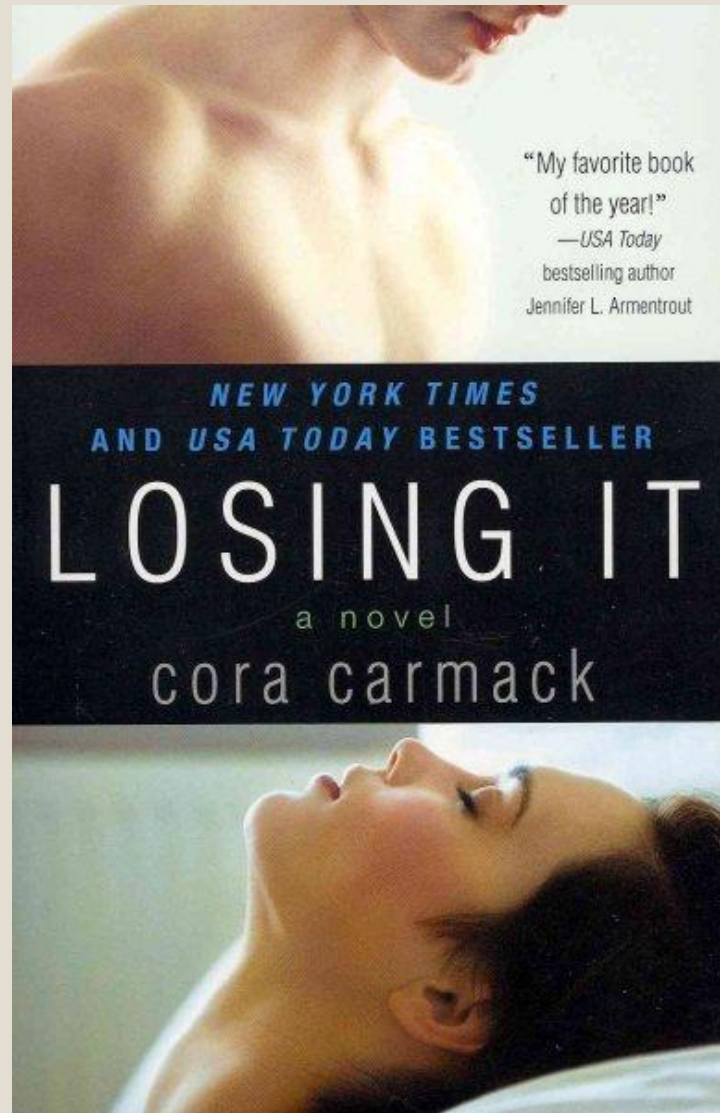
Fling to a thing

May/December

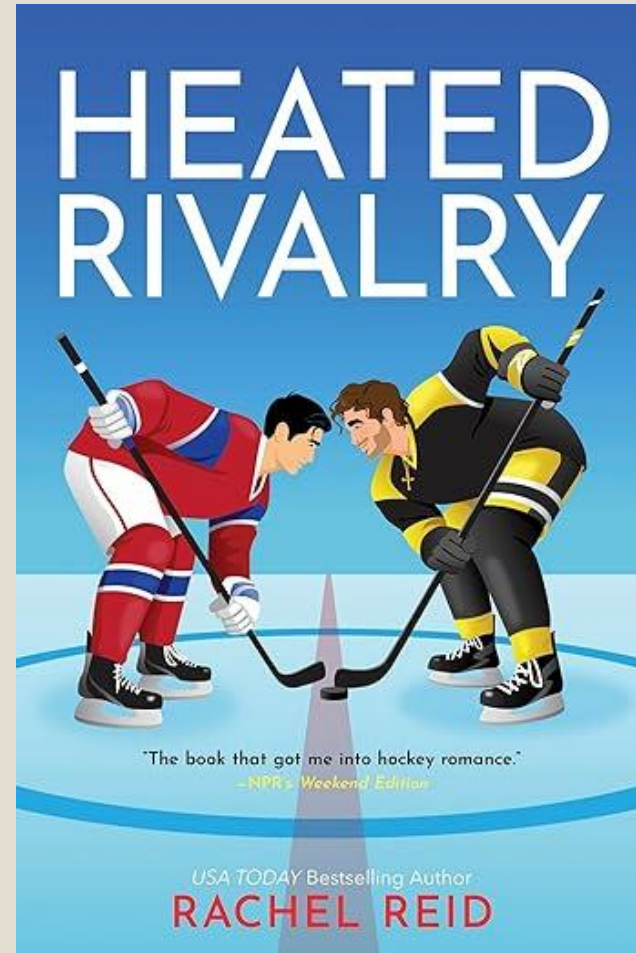
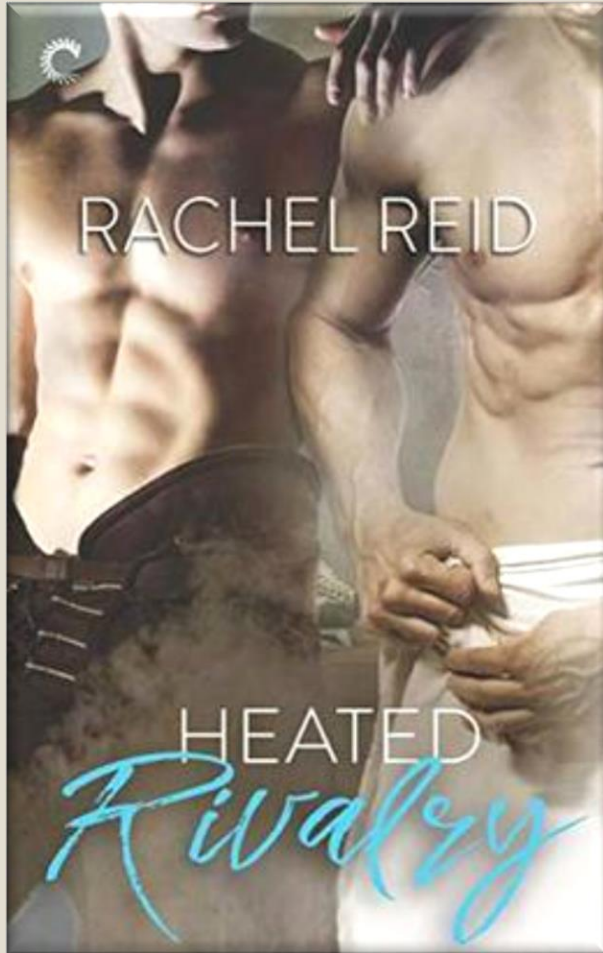
Roommates

You can also mix
and match all of
the above in a
million different
combos.

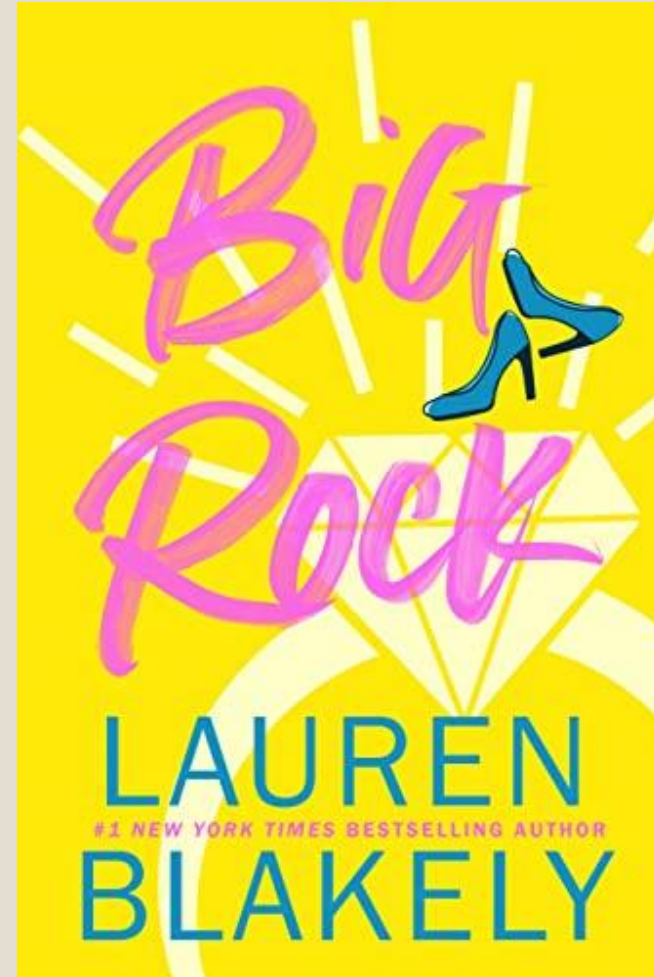
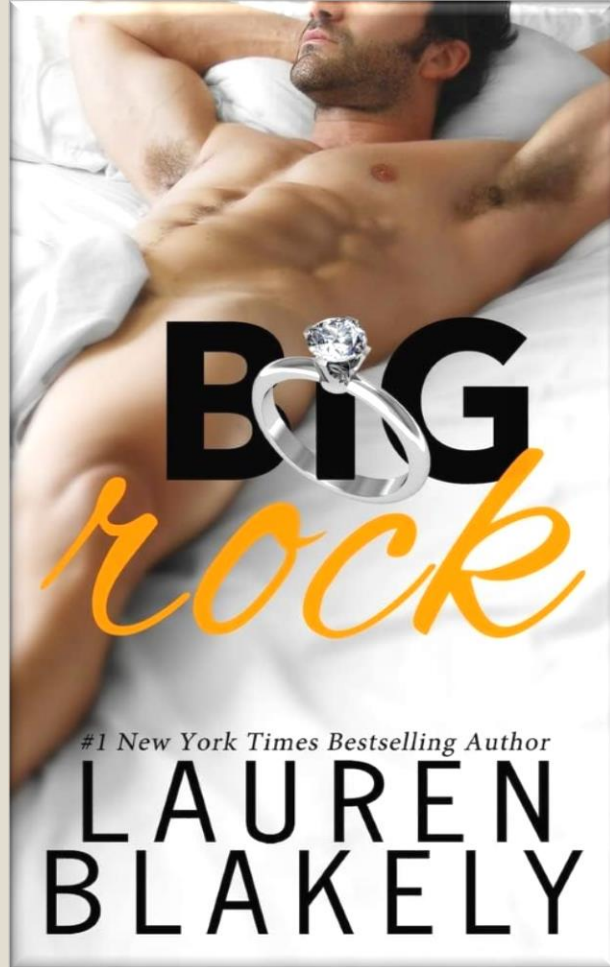
Right now, it's trendy to make everything look like a rom-com.



About those cover changes...



About those Cover Changes...



Questions and Thank You!

- If you think of a question/comment later, feel free to email me at Robin.Bradford@gmail.com
- Or you can reach out on Bluesky @Tuphlos.bsky.social
- Thanks so much!