



Romance remains one of the highest selling genres over time. Even if your story is not in the Romance genre, it may have a romantic subplot.

Many romance novels rely on stereotypical characters that perpetuate a specific script for what constitutes true love, like flowers and candy, and romantic walks along the beach. But what if your character is allergic to flowers, can't eat candy, and is afraid of water?

What people consider romantic is highly individual, based on their Temperament, conditioning, culture, and past experiences.

Keep in mind that each character could be male, female, transgender, androgynous, or alien life forms. When it comes to temperament, it really doesn't matter. For the purposes of your fiction, you can play them any way you like. I gave my mannequins androgynous names and refer to them as he or she depending on whether there are more males than females in that temperament category.

1. WYNN

Wynn is all about making her partner happy and being appreciated for it. She needs cards, flowers, and romantic words. A distant, critical partner would annihilate her heart in under thirty seconds. She puts her partner first and looks for a permanent bond.

Wynn is emotionally intense, but guards her heart. She is happy with the traditional role assigned to her. She puts the comfort of her partner at the top of her to-do list. She is caring, empathetic, and willing to gloss over minor indiscretions. Her habit of keeping things to herself to avoid conflict leads to inappropriate scatter blasts of anger and resentment during a confrontation. She often says things she can't take back. She becomes rigid when anxious. Those tactics won't have the effect she desperately needs. She has difficulty leaving an abusive relationship and accepting that a relationship has ended. She blames herself and obsesses over what she could have done differently, especially if she feels she has been faithful and kept up her side of the bargain. She might remain faithful to the memory of a deceased partner.

Wynn's selflessness puts her at risk of being taken advantage of or steamrolled. She hides her distress and keeps her resentment and anger under wraps until something comes



along to uncork them. If she feels unappreciated, she leaves mentally or physically. It takes a lot of provocation to push her there.

Wynn views sex as a way of strengthening the emotional bond. It is her duty to make sure her partner is happy. She is affectionate. She may not utter loving affirmations, but needs to hear them. She shows her love through gifts and small actions. She might go along with a kinky partner at first in an attempt to make him happy, but the situation will tear her down emotionally and the exit door is only one step away.

2. FRANCIS

Francis is more interested in being right than being happy. He hates challenges to his authority and viewpoints. All is well as long as his partner accedes to his point of view and decisions. He might dominate but would react viciously to anyone who tried to dominate him. Francis is true blue and committed. He wants a permanent relationship. He takes the “until death do us part” vow literally.

Francis goes through the tradition of dating and wooing because it is expected, not because he prefers it. He struggles with huggy-touchy stuff. He is supportive and cares for his partner. If his partner points out he isn't meeting her emotional needs, he does his best to meet them. He feels love passionately but struggles to express himself. He is faithful and loyal. He wants his home and family to run smoothly. He struggles with chaos and family members who don't behave as they should. He imposes restrictions on his partner. He meets what he considers his obligations, which may not be the priorities, his partner values.

If his partner berates him, he listens to the part that addresses functional points such as, “You need to take the trash out on Thursdays.” He ignores the emotional context, “You work too hard and are never home when I need you.” If he marries one of the feeling types, he could wreck her self-esteem.

Being right is very important to Francis. His partner may walk away if her point of view is never considered. He isn't threatened by constructive criticism and can handle conflict without taking it personally as long as he isn't called wrong. Leaving Francis requires a really good lawyer, or a shotgun.



Francis views sex as a physical release and his duty more so than an expression of emotion. He expects intimacy to occur on a scheduled basis. He brings home flowers and chocolates if he has been told it is expected, not out of inspiration or because he felt like it. He thinks his actions should speak for themselves. Working hard every day should count. He gives positive affirmations if his partner asks for them, even though he doesn't need them. He deflects his partner's attempts to praise him. The female version of Francis goes along with whatever her partner wants, though she is uncomfortable with anything out of the ordinary.

3. NEVADA

Nevada's currency is appreciation. He craves loving affirmations for working hard and providing for his partner.

Nevada takes commitment seriously and believes in living up to his obligations. He would not be a natural candidate for either submission or dominance.

Nevada avoids confrontation at all costs. He considers criticism, and the need to discuss a problem, as a personal attack. He is prone to depression and low self-esteem, so he could become submissive if warped by life. He is overly concerned with appearances and expects his partner to maintain them, so he would hide whatever he was up to.

He is good around the house. He takes care of things that need attention. He is cautious with money, because he thrives on security. He works hard to make life secure. He needs to belong: to institutions, teams, and his family. This makes him very social. He throws parties and attends events at work, social club functions, and community events. He expects his partner to participate. Pairing him with an introvert who hates parties is problematic.

Nevada needs a lot of positive reinforcement from his partner and resents it if he doesn't get it. He is passive-aggressive in response and often does the wrong thing to elicit the adoration he craves. He won't quit easily.

Nevada is warm and loving. He invests a lot of time and energy in making his partner happy. He views sex as an opportunity to express affection and considers withholding a deliberate insult. He is highly traditional, but eager to please his partner, so he is open to



suggestion. He resists anything too out of the ordinary for fear that someone might find out.

4. ARDEN

Arden's currency is gratitude and appreciation for his integrity. As long as his partner feels grateful and appreciates his hard work, things go smoothly. Arden fulfills what he sees as his commitment to the full extent of his capacity. When he chooses a partner, he plans to be with her forever.

Arden likes to be in charge and is controlling. He could become dominant, but it would not be his natural affinity. He works hard to provide financial security with a focus on the material things that signify success. He provides a secure home life, but makes room for fun and leisure. He schedules vacations. He expects his partner to do the right thing and be a good example in the community. He would be horrified to do something "unseemly."

He sees himself as a guardian. He freely gives positive feedback when he is impressed by his partner's behavior or accomplishments. He is open and honest with his thoughts and opinions. He expects his wife to take part in the social requirements of his job and the community. Don't pair him with an introvert who hates going out or there is war. A feeling character is hurt by his perceived criticism and overwhelming expectations. If his partner firmly, factually, and preferably unemotionally, expresses her unmet needs, he does his best to accommodate them. He wants to do what he is supposed to and takes care of details.

Arden would not consider divorce lightly. Problems arise if he doesn't feel appreciated. His job is to shield and protect. He can carry that too far and infringe on his partner's autonomy. His partner might not appreciate his instructions or guiding hand. Arden is a lively lover. He tends to be traditional and may be regimental in his expectations. He sees sex as a physical demonstration of affection rather than a spiritual communion. He may not remember to use sweet words. He expresses love through hard work and dedication.



5. BLAIR

Blair's currency is affection and admiration. If she isn't praised for being wonderful, she deflates. She would be deeply wounded if anyone demeaned her. At the first sign of disapproval in any form, she's gone in a flash of lightening. Blair places her relationship on top of the list. She wants a long-term commitment. She struggles to choose, but sticks with her choice forever if possible.

Blair loves deeply but is slow to warm up. Her partner may not understand just how much she cares. Few people know her extremely well. She is secretly intense while appearing outwardly light-hearted. She is vulnerable and easily hurt, though she won't tell her partner. She expects him to "see" he has hurt her. She is disappointed when he doesn't. When hurt, she withdraws. She hates conflict and goes to great lengths to avoid it. She is an easy going partner. She doesn't ask for, or expect, a lot. She is traditional and organized and takes care of what needs to be done. She wants to be adored for it.

Blair feels attacked when an argument gets heated. She releases all the negative impressions and feelings she has repressed. She isn't likely to leave, even if her partner is dissatisfied. She stays and works it out if at all possible. If she found herself with a partner who revealed his secret life, she'd try to deal with it, but eventually the negativity would chase her off.

Blair is serious about sex. It is a sacred act that should be given the time and attention it deserves. She is sensual and enjoys the physical expression of love. She shows her love through this communion. She needs positive affirmations to feel good about herself but doesn't offer them. The SMBD subculture is the opposite of her core need.

6. DALLAS

Dallas wants to be adored for being Dallas. She wants her partner to appreciate her sense of fun and adventure. Everything is fun until the party is over. She likes exploring all the options. Once she commits, she intends to stay. She might not if the situation grows tense. She always wonders if there are better bachelors behind other doors. Dallas might take up SMBD as a sport as long as it doesn't get too heavy or intense. The minute things turn dark, she's off to chase the sunshine.



Dallas is passionate and fun-loving. She cares about her partner's happiness. She is flexible and open to suggestion. She takes her partner's emotional temperature frequently, which irks some mannequins. The problems set in when she encounters conflict and confrontation. She takes criticism, even objective statements, as a personal attack. Her partner would have to be very, very careful of what he said. Conflict stresses her. She represses her initial response for the sake of smoothing things over, but continues to fester. She gives in to avoid a protracted disagreement. She ignores a problem until she can't. This just delays the inevitable.

Dallas is loyal and views it as her responsibility to fix things that aren't working. She isn't one to give up easily. If things get too intense, restrictive, or boring, she moves on. She finds it hard to do so and blames herself for the failure.

Dallas is playful and creative. She has a rich fantasy world which she applies to sex. She sees sex as a natural expression of her love. She needs positive affirmations. She may fish for reassurance and compliments. If she doesn't get them, she lavishes them on her partner in the hopes of sparking them.

7. HADLEY

Hadley wants to be adored for breathing. Since she is adorable, her partner usually complies. If the adoration fades, trouble sets in. She would be deeply offended if anyone criticized her, much less spanked her. The relationship would die off instantly.

Hadley isn't overly interested in being tied down (or tied up). She places a relationship on the back burner. She struggles with long-term commitment and likes to explore all the bachelors. Hadley loves to be in love and struggles when the initial adrenaline rush tapers. She may overcome her desire to flit and settle down, as long as the relationship isn't too restrictive or her partner too critical.

Hadley loves to date and encourages her partner to enjoy life as much as she does. She is weak at planning and follow-through. She takes every day as it comes and wants to grab the gusto. If that means changing plans, she changes plans. She doesn't ask for much. She wants to be happy and wants her partner to be happy. She schedules a busy social life. She changes things to keep them from becoming dull, whether it's rearranging the furniture or



their lives. She hates to miss out on anything she considers fun. She doesn't like vague promises or "we'll see" as an answer. If you stated it, you promised. She is bored by analyzing the past and worrying about the future. Tomorrow will take care of itself. She ends a necessary conversation. She would not deal well with someone who likes to debate for fun.

Hadley isn't good with conflict and lashes out angrily in the moment with words she can't take back. She retreats when criticized or restricted. A controlling partner sends Hadley off to find someone more fun to play with.

Hadley energetically embraces romantic love. She seeks out and enjoys intimate contact. She is tactile and sensual. She is generous, warm, and highly motivated to make her partner happy. She is lavish with loving affirmations. She isn't big on gifts, but can provide them when requested. She might go along with her partner's suggestions as long as they remain playful. The moment the tone shifts, she's gone.

8. SHELBY

Shelby wants to be honored and respected. As long as her partner makes her feel respected, things are fine.

She is loyal and committed. If she isn't in a permanent relationship, she continually searches for one. Once committed, she places her relationship at the top of her list. On a subconscious level, she feels vaguely dissatisfied with all of her relationships because they are never truly "ideal."

Shelby seeks a harmonious, loving relationship and works hard to make it a success. She may need reminders to do the bill-paying and housekeeping. She often pushes routine tasks to the bottom of the priority pile. That annoys a partner who expects her to be on top of things. Once committed, she may romanticize a bad relationship in her own mind as a form of protection.

She may attribute virtues to her partner that he lacks and place him on a pedestal. She struggles to reconcile the idealistic romance novel relationship with the demands of a real one. She overlooks imperfections for the sake of connection. She avoids conflict and confrontation. So if her partner decided he wanted to play a few games, she'd be offended.



If she ends up with a partner that is all action, no talk, she grows resentful. She values personal space and the freedom to do her own thing. If her partner respects and supports her, she thrives. She is not the possessive or jealous type. She understands her partner's need to indulge in his own pursuits. She respects his privacy and independence. She rejects hints that something is going on and firmly defends her partner while secretly worrying that she has done something wrong to drive him away. She might not join in, but could turn a blind eye to her partner's afterhours hobby.

Shelby resents a controlling spouse, so the minute a partner tried to dominate her, she'd start figuring out a way to escape. Her need to avoid conflict and criticism is a problem. No matter how a comment is presented, she takes it personally. She responds with irrational emotion. Her distress, and immediate assumption that she is somehow at fault, make her lash out. She manipulates her partner through guilt to obtain the positive feedback she craves. It is a very unhealthy dynamic. She would not leave easily, but will if things become unsatisfactory enough.

Shelby is slow in letting someone close. Once trust has been established, she embraces the opportunity to express her intense love and affection. She is affirming and affectionate. She values the romantic aspect over the physical aspect. She places her partner's pleasure above her own.

9. JOSS

Joss wants recognition for his intelligence and skill. He usually gets it, in the short-term. His derring-do draws them in, but eventually drives them off. He might enjoy experimentation. He places a permanent relationship at the bottom of his list. He struggles with routine and commitment. He thrives on new experiences and new partners.

Joss is exciting and intense for short bursts. He is the ultimate hard-to-get partner. He is the man or woman of action and few words. He resists routine and strict schedules. He hates being controlled by other people, particularly his partner. He spends a lot of time exploring his interests without his partner.

He is happy to provide basic needs and the kind of dating behavior that keeps a relationship humming along. He isn't free with his opinion, but open to someone else's. He is in information gathering mode and may evade answering questions by asking more



questions. This frustrates his partner when she needs a direct answer. He doesn't feel he owes anyone an explanation and never asks for permission.

He is protective of his emotions and avoids deeper feelings. His level of intensity can vary from day to day and that can leave his partner feeling unbalanced. He has problems with the traditional expectations of behavior.

All is fine until Joss becomes bored or the other person becomes too demanding or clingy. He moves on and won't stay to fix it. He remains in a life-long relationship by taking it one day at a time. His partner is never entirely certain he'll stay. His air of aloofness may draw his partner in, but could drive her away.

Joss views sex as recreation. He is sensual and enjoys experimentation. He is spontaneous, creative, and enthusiastic for as long as it lasts. He sets the mood and makes it fun. He loses interest if it becomes routine. He breaks up and makes up for the novelty it provides.

10. KELLY

Kelly wants to be admired for being the life of the party. He usually is — at first. He might participate in anything once. He isn't looking for a permanent relationship. He has trouble honoring a commitment once he makes it. His relationship is on the bottom of his priority pile.

Kelly is enthusiastic. Life with him would be quite a ride, full of ups and downs, and lots of spinning. He is extremely charming and superficial. He offers his partner the world and she attributes him with a big heart. He loves life. He makes those in his orbit love life too. The problems start when his partner realizes he can't make a plan and stick with it.

Kelly has a problem with commitment and behaves in ways that are detrimental to the relationship. He is shocked when his partner objects. As soon as he is restricted or bored, he finds someone else to play with. Kelly considers sex as a physical carnival ride. He makes things exciting. He is a sensual lover. He goes for the big moments, once in a while. He is oblivious to the emotional content. If his partner needs emotional closeness to feel loved, she probably won't get it. She may tell him and he may try, but he can't sustain it. He isn't good with positive affirmations. He won't grasp the neediness of a feeling partner. He is master of the grand gesture, but grand gestures aren't always enough.



11. GREER

Greer wants recognition for his competence. Since he is usually competent, he receives it. When he forgets to take care of things around the house, his competence might be questioned. He isn't looking for a permanent love connection. He honors a commitment once made, but may not remain emotionally present.

Greer takes his relationship seriously and analyzes it much like he analyzes everything. He is low-demand and easy to get along with. His problems stem from the lack of emotional engagement and low need for social interaction. He would not be natively drawn to BDSM. He isn't big on traditional trappings. He can't relate to high-needs people. He is straightforward and honest. He won't play games or manipulate his partner. It is hard for him to open his heart and he retracts at the first sign of danger. He feels passionately, he just can't verbalize it. Of all the types, he is the hardest to have a relationship with. It's a good thing he is a rare bird.

He usually runs at the first sign of messy complications. He avoids conflict and deals with it in an analytical way, ignoring the emotional component. He defends his commitment by saying, "Of course I love you. I'm here aren't I?" If his partner reads him as distant and disengaged, she might move on.

Greer is imaginative and loving, but not overly demanding. He is quick to sublimate his needs or loses track of them when focused at work or on his hobbies. His intense passion may not be apparent to his partner. He isn't in tune with his partner's emotional life. He misses the hints and emotional cues she exhibits. His displays of affection may be out of sync with his partner's desire for them. He isn't good with the positive affirmations and praise some types need.

12. TAYLOR

Taylor wants to be appreciated for her goodness and service. She usually is, unless her efforts become toxic. She might go along with BDSM for a while. Taylor considers a permanent relationship a high priority. She is warm and committed. She wants her partner to be happy, so she sacrifices her wants and needs to make sure he is. She blames herself when things go wrong and criticism chips away at her self-esteem. If the relationship fails, she walks away thinking she was defective. She bounces back and tries



again. She works hard to keep a relationship together. She is sensitive to her partner's emotional needs. She is very social and works to make her home a great place to entertain.

Taylor won't walk away unless a serious core violation occurs. She could walk away over it, but tends to stick with unhealthy relationships where she does all the giving. She hates conflict and ignores her partner's slings and arrows to avoid it. She gives in rather than extend the fight. Ignoring problems turns them in to bigger problems that eventually become explosive.

Taylor is enthusiastic and creative. She is warm and fun. She sees sex as a direct expression of her love. She works hard to make her partner happy and doing so makes her happy. She pencils it in as often as she needs to. She won't express her own needs. She needs loving affirmations, but won't ask for them. She is hurt when the sweet words aren't forthcoming.

13. CAM

Cam wants to be admired for his intelligence and competence. His partner usually admires that about him, until he forgets he has a partner. Anyone who tried to control or demean him would be shown the door immediately. Cam isn't looking for a permanent relationship, but honors his commitment once he is in one.

Cam is more focused on his inner world than the external one. He comes across as aloof. He is emotionally intense but guarded. His partner is shocked by how deeply he experiences emotion. His quiet confidence and reliability are appealing. He possesses keen insight into what makes people tick. He applies that information to his relationships. He thinks more than acts. He has a hard time reconciling the way things should be with the way they are. His distraction sometimes limits his awareness of his partner's feelings, particularly if she doesn't express them. He becomes overly structured or paralyzed when anxious. He may get so involved in his projects that he forgets his partner for a while. He avoids interpersonal conflict but loves to debate.

Cam does not need companionship enough to put up with abusive or unsatisfying relationships. He finds it easy to cut his losses and move on, having learned a valuable lesson.

He may not express his distress. He represses negative emotions until they reach a



breaking point. He enjoys thinking about intimacy and ways to make it better. He is creative and intense. In a negative relationship, he thinks about sex more often than having it. He tends to show how he feels rather than talk about it. He offers loving affirmations and gifts if his partner desires them.

14. MORGAN

Morgan wants to be admired for his intelligence and competence. That usually happens, at least until his behavior makes those traits questionable. He considers a relationship a low priority. He prefers variety to permanence. Only external compression forces him into a long-term commitment. His relationships are tenuous.

Morgan is easily bored. He needs a partner that constantly engages and challenges him. He might experiment with BDSM as long as he finds it fun. He treats his relationship like any other experiment by asking what works and what could be improved. His partner might not appreciate being “managed” in that way. He eagerly adopts new activities and plans, but drops them as quickly. He means well, but his love of debate grows tiring. He carelessly throws out comments about what he might do. His partner might take him seriously. His risk-taking could create trouble for both of them. While invested, he is attentive, eager to explore, and enthusiastic. He neglects the relationship when a project takes over, whether it is an assignment at work or his decision to renovate the house. He isn’t in touch with his feelings and may be oblivious to his partner’s. If his partner states a need, he creatively attempts to fill it. He is prone to forgetting.

Morgan walks away if bored or restricted. His partner grows tired of his need to play devil’s advocate instead of just focusing on what needs to be done. He is spontaneous and resists routine. He is open to trying new things. Sex is a physical release not an emotional bonding experience. He offers a grand gesture, but can’t keep it up long term.

15. LEE

Lee wants recognition for her competence. She usually earns it. Things are fine until she steamrolls once too often. Lee considers a relationship a low priority. She takes a commitment seriously once she has made it but often loses touch with her partner. Lee is dominating by nature. She would never consider being submissive.

Lee is emotionally aloof. She takes the lead and feels responsible for making things work.



She has a lot to offer. She is dedicated, dependable, and hardworking. She holds herself accountable. She is creative and pushes her partner to explore his own dreams. If she decides something isn't working, she unilaterally changes the terms of the relationship. It puzzles and alarms her partner. She is steady financially and values a nice home and creature comforts. She may never be home long enough to enjoy them. If her partner tells her flat out that she isn't meeting expectations, she may try. Operating against her nature would not be easy. If there is conflict, she views it as a chance to learn and improve. She is confrontational by nature. If paired with a partner that avoids conflict and sees criticism as a personal assault, the relationship won't survive. She may learn to temper her approach with her partner in the interest of making it work. She finds it hard to share power. A relationship would have to be based on mutual respect. She has to view her partner as competent. She expects him to be independent and to develop his own interests.

If she finds a relationship unsatisfying or her partner boring, she ends it and abruptly moves on literally or emotionally. She could become an abusive bully to a weaker partner. She doesn't admire weak people enough to partner with them long term. She is creative and adventurous. She expects sex on a regular basis. She is self-confident. She has little patience with someone who is emotionally needy. She shows her love through her actions. Loving affirmations don't mean anything to her. She isn't interested in giving or receiving compliments or flattery. If partnered with a feeling type, it won't go well.

16. RIVER

River wants to be admired for her wisdom and desire for harmony. She usually is admired, unless her desire to be worshipped becomes obsessive. She would find BDSM sordid and ugly. She seeks a permanent and perfect communion of souls. Her intensity drives some types away. She goes from relationship to relationship in search of the ideal. She is vaguely dissatisfied with every partner.

River feels intensely. She needs constant feedback and affirmation. She wants a perfect relationship and her excessive probing to find out what is wrong is wearying. She works hard to keep the relationship alive. She bonds permanently and deeply. She is good with loving affirmations. She is generous. She is drawn to deep and complex partners. She comes up with creative solutions to conflict and is highly aware of her partner's emotional state. She is protective and withdraws when she meets resistance. Her overly emotional approach irritates a thinking partner.



She becomes highly critical of her partner if he acts out or can't be trusted. She blames him when things aren't working. She represses her emotions and becomes vicious when she bursts. She stays in a relationship until she is sure it can't be repaired. She moves on easily when it is truly over.

River views sex as a spiritual communion. She is in search of a soul mate. She selflessly gives to her partner. She is tactile and sensual. She struggles to state her case in person and may resort to an emotional letter.

For more about how to craft characters, pick up a copy of *Story Building Blocks II: Crafting Believable Conflict*, available in [paperback](#) and [E-book](#) and *Story Building Blocks: Build A Cast Workbook*, available in [paperback](#) and [E-book](#).