

Key Takeaways to Remember When Writing Romance Novels

This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:
[What Our Top 4 Editors Advise Romance Writers To Do](#)

1. Top Feedback for Writing in the Romance Genre

Marla Daniels:

- *Tension and conflict make the happy-ever-after a bigger payoff.*

Megan McKeever:

- *Authors know they need to add conflict so they insert it where they can, but then it can feel like we're being TOLD there's conflict, but not SHOWN it. And that's usually when the conflict just doesn't feel natural or seem to make sense.*
- *Set up the seeds of the conflict – both external and internal – early on and it won't feel like it comes out of left field just when things start to work out for the couple.*

Meaghan Wagner:

- *Cut down on filtering. Readers are coming to your book to immerse themselves in your character. Filtering those experiences with sensory actions like felt or saw, often adds a layer between the reader and the character. He doesn't feel his heart pound in his chest, his heart pounds, and we as readers, feel that pounding.*

Katrina Diaz:

- *Focus on character development.*
- *The more human they are and the more they grow in the romance narrative, the better.*
- *Focus on building clear motivation and emotional dimension of the characters they are writing.*

2. Here's How to Write Romance Well

Marla Daniels:

- *The couples and your characters need to be relatable.*

- *Letting your characters get to know each other lets your reader get to know your characters.*

Megan McKeever:

- *Conflict! What's a romance novel without the push and pull of the hero and heroine?*

Meaghan Wagner:

- *Tension in romance has to really be authentic, and for that to work, the obstacle has to be pitch perfect.*

Katrina Diaz:

- *Pay careful attention to avoiding overused tropes in an oversaturated market and instead, put your own unique twist on the hallmarks of romance. But do make sure you adhere to the tenants of the genre.*

3. Here's How to Set Yourself & Your Story Apart

Marla Daniels:

- *Staying true to this genre means there definitely has to be a happy ending for your couple, but interesting hooks always help set an author apart.*

Megan McKeever:

- *A unique, strong voice can really elevate a story and make it stand apart.*

Meaghan Wagner:

- *If you're telling a story of love and are genuinely pulling from your perspective of what it means to love and be loved, your story will be wholly unique to you.*

Katrina Diaz:

- *Romance readers have a fairly strong idea of what they want and what they are looking for, but it doesn't mean they don't love a few surprises.*
- *Whether you bring to life a hilarious voice like Bridget Jones, create an entire Otherworld like Katie MacAlister, or make us invested in our heroes and heroines the way Julia Quinn always does, there's a multitude of ways to stand out and remain true to the genre.*

4. Best Examples of Quality Romance Novels

Marla Daniels:

- *I love a heroine who knows what she wants and goes after it, and any author who can make me laugh out loud while reading is one I'll continue to pick up.*

Meaghan Wagner:

- *My first love of romance novels will always be Nora Roberts, and her style of extended universe romances will always be comforting to me like a cup of cocoa.*

Katrina Diaz:

- *I tend to focus primarily on historical romance and paranormal romance in my editorial work.*
- *I always recommend the titans Julia Quinn, Eloisa James, Tessa Dare, Suzanne Enoch, Sabrina Jeffries and Sarah Maclean to start. For paranormal romance, there's once again a plethora of incredible authors to read, but some of my personal favorites are Karen Marie Moning, Diana Gabaldon, Katie MacAlister, Deborah Harkness, Sherrilyn Kenyon, Gena Showalter and Christine Feehan.*

5. Trends to Follow in the Romance Genre

Marla Daniels:

- *Watch the romance bestseller categories at retailers—what works in this genre ebbs and flows so authors should be prepared to be flexible.*

Megan McKeever:

- *Young Adult seems to be leading the way with more LGBTQ-centered books, and they are finding an audience.*

Meaghan Wagner:

- *Social justice topics are (and have been) on the rise in romance.*

Katrina Diaz:

- *You should always write what is most natural to you and what you're most interested in.*

6. What the Typical Romance Reader Wants in a Book

Marla Daniels:

- *The happy-ever-after, of course!*

Megan McKeever:

- *Great romance novels allow the real world to fade away as you get caught up in the hero and heroine's quest for love.*

Meaghan Wagner:

- *All romance readers are looking for (I hope) are characters they can connect with, and especially characters whose emotional baggage is compelling.*

Katrina Diaz:

- *It is crucial for a romance novel to feature a love story that is central to the narrative and for the ending of the novel to be emotionally satisfying to the reader.*

7. Here's How Our Editors Begin a Substantive Edit on a Romance Novel

Marla Daniels:

- *I just dive in! I tend to line edit while I do a structure edit.*

Megan McKeever:

- *The first thing I do is sit down and read the manuscript without line editing and writing significant notes – just try to take it all in as a reader would.*

Meaghan Wagner:

- *For me, it's all about having an emotional journey that rings true, so I start by writing out what I know of my main characters. Who are they, what do they want and how do they think they can get it?*

Katrina Diaz:

- *I begin by getting a feel for the author's style, the protagonists' personalities, and whether the obstacles will primarily be internal, external, or a mix of both.*