

How to Use This Template

The following editable PDF template lists several scenes that typically show up in a romance novel (and that your readers will expect to see). Below each scene is a small bulleted list of what readers expect in that scene and then some questions to help you plan what will happen and how it will affect your characters and give them momentum into the next scene.

The "Connecting Scene" sections are for scenes that will come between each of the major plot points. Depending on how long your novel is, you may have more or less connecting scenes than shown in the PDF.

Where you will need to plan out things for individual characters, I have included sections for up to three main characters. Of course, your romance novel can have as many main characters as you'd like.

(If you've read my blog post "Romance Plot Structure," you may be expecting to see a "Darkest Moment" plot point. I have broken down that point into three scenes: Losing Love, Realizing Love, and Fighting for Love.)

A Romance Novel Outline Template

Character Introduction(s)

- Show each point-of-view character in their natural habitat.
- Have them dealing with some type of external problem.
- Convey that they are missing something in their life that the romance will give them.

Main Character 1:

What problem is your character dealing with in this scene?

What interactions does your character have with other characters in this scene?

Where does this scene take place?

What is your character missing in their life that the romance will give them?

Why does/would your character want this thing that they are missing?

How does your character feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Main Character 2:

What is your character missing in their life that the romance will give them?

Why does/would your character want this thing that they are missing?

What problem is your character dealing with in this scene? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

What interactions does your character have with other characters in this scene? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

Where does this scene take place? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

How does your character feel about what happened in this scene? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

Why do they make that/those decision(s)? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

Main Character 3:

(optional)

What is your character missing in their life that the romance will give them?

Why does/would your character want this thing that they are missing?

What problem is your character dealing with in this scene? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

What interactions does your character have with other characters in this scene? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

Where does this scene take place? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

How does your character feel about what happened in this scene? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

Why do they make that/those decision(s)? *(Optional unless writing a separate introduction scene for this character.)*

Meet Cute/Meet Ugly

- Show one of these three things happening:
 - Your main characters meeting for the first time.
 - Your main characters running into each other after significant time apart.
 - Your main characters who already know each other experiencing a change in their relationship dynamic.
- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scene.

What interaction happens between your main characters?

Where does this scene take place?

What is each character's impression of the other(s)?

How does each character feel about what happened in this scene?

What decisions do your characters make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make those decisions?

Connecting Scene *(NOTE: Your story may have any number of connecting scenes.)*

- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What interaction happens between your main characters or between one or more main characters and characters outside the relationship?

Where does this scene take place?

How does/do your character(s) feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Connecting Scene

- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What interaction happens between your main characters or between one or more main characters and characters outside the relationship?

Where does this scene take place?

How does/do your character(s) feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Connecting Scene

- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What interaction happens between your main characters or between one or more main characters and characters outside the relationship?

Where does this scene take place?

How does/do your character(s) feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Point of No Return

- Show your characters having become entangled with each other deeply enough that they couldn't walk away from the relationship without significant emotional consequences.
- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What interaction happens between your main characters?

Where does this scene take place?

How does each character feel about what happened in this scene?

How would each character feel if they never got to see the other character(s) again?

What decisions do your characters make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make those decisions?

Midpoint

- Show a shift in your characters' mindsets where they go from making *reactive* decisions to making *proactive* decisions.
- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What happens between your characters to cause them to fight harder for their relationship?

Where does this scene take place?

How do your characters feel about what happened in this scene?

What decisions do your characters make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make those decisions?

Connecting Scene *(NOTE: Your story may have any number of connecting scenes.)*

- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What interaction happens between your main characters or between one or more main characters and characters outside the relationship?

Where does this scene take place?

How does/do your character(s) feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Connecting Scene

- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What interaction happens between your main characters or between one or more main characters and characters outside the relationship?

Where does this scene take place?

How does/do your character(s) feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Connecting Scene

- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What interaction happens between your main characters or between one or more main characters and characters outside the relationship?

Where does this scene take place?

How does/do your character(s) feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Losing Love

- Show something happening between your characters that results in them being physically and/or emotionally separated.
- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What happens to cause your characters to be separated?

Where does this scene take place?

How do your characters feel about what happened in this scene?

What decisions do your characters make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make those decisions?

Realizing Love

- Show at least one of your main characters experiencing great emotional distress as a result of losing their love and, as a result, realizing that they must fight for their love.
- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

Main Character 1:

What happens to cause your main character to realize that they have no choice but to fight for their love?

Where does this scene take place?

How does/do your character(s) feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Main Character 2:

(optional)

What happens to cause your main character to realize that they have no choice but to fight for their love?

Where does this scene take place?

How does/do your character(s) feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Main Character 3:

(optional)

What happens to cause your main character to realize that they have no choice but to fight for their love?

Where does this scene take place?

How does/do your character(s) feel about what happened in this scene?

What decision(s) does your character make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make that/those decision(s)?

Fighting for Love

- Show at least one of your main characters fighting to get back the love they have lost.
- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What action(s) does/do your character(s) take in order to get their love back?

Where does this scene take place?

How do your characters feel about what happened in this scene?

What decisions do your characters make as a result of this scene?

Why do they make those decisions?

Happily Ever After (HEA) / Happy For Now (HFN)

- Show your main characters making a commitment to each other, either a long-term one (HEA) or a short-term one (HFN).
- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

What commitment do your characters make to each other?

What do they do during this scene to represent this commitment?

Where does this scene take place?

How do your characters feel about what happened in this scene?

What decisions do your characters make as a result of this scene? *(Optional unless writing an epilogue.)*

Why do they make those decisions? *(Optional unless writing an epilogue.)*

Epilogue *(optional)*

- Show your characters in their new life together, being happy and fulfilled as a result of their committed love.
- This scene must occur logically based on your characters' feelings and the decisions they make as a result of the previous scenes.

How much time has passed between the HEA/HFN and this epilogue?

How have your characters' lives changed since their commitment?

What happens in this scene to show how their lives have changed?

Where does this scene take place?