

# Romance

## Definition of Romance

Etymologically, romance comes from Anglo-Norman and Old French *romanz*, which means a story of chivalry and love. The word “romance” also refers to romantic love. As far as literature is concerned, the term has an entirely different concept. It means romantic stories with chivalrous feats of heroes and knights. Romance describes chivalry and courtly love, comprising stories and legends of duty, courage, boldness, battles, and rescues of damsels in distress.

## Romance and Romanticism

Romance, as pointed out, is a type of [fiction](#), comprising idealized love, chivalry, obsessive association with somebody or some idea, and mysterious adventures. However, Romanticism is a specific movement and period in English literature during which poems, stories, and novels related to Romantic ideas were created. William Wordsworth, P. B. Shelly, Lord Byron, and John Keats are some of the most famous poets and writers of the Romantic period. However, Romances have been written since classical English period.

## Examples of Romance in Literature

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### Example #1: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Author Unknown)

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This 14th century romance, whose writer is still unknown, revolves around the bravery of Sir Gawain, a knight of King Arthur, who accepts the challenge from the Green Knight. Sir Gawain beheads the knight, but the knight goes away reminding him that he would appear again. In this struggle, Sir Gawain shows his true nature of bravery, chivalry, and courage when tested by a lady, as he stays in the castle of that very knight.

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### Example #2: *Pride and Prejudice* (By Jane Austen)

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One of Jane Austen's most famous novels is *Pride and Prejudice*, which is a remarkable example of romance in English literature. This novel narrates the story of the Bennet family. Mrs. Bennett has five daughters, and she is desperate to get them married. She is seen trying to achieve her ambition throughout the novel.

Elizabeth, the second of the five, possesses a sharp mind and independent nature, and she feels embarrassed at her mother's attempts to marry her off. Elizabeth meets Mr. Darcy, who is a wealthy landowner. She dislikes him in their first meeting, due to his arrogant [attitude](#). However, as the story moves along, several other couples emerge on the scene. Although it is not a perfect example of a medieval romance, it is considered a good example of a romantic novel.

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### Example #3: *The Count of Monte Cristo* (By Alexander Dumas)

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One more example of romance is *The Count of Monte Cristo*, written by French author Alexander Dumas, in 1844. The story of the novel takes place in France, Italy, and on some Mediterranean islands. The primary themes of the story comprise justice, bravery, courage, mercy, hope, and forgiveness.

The [narrative](#) revolves round a man who is sent to prison wrongly. He manages to escape and acquires a fortune just by a stroke of luck. He ultimately starts avenging those who were responsible for his incarceration. His plans, however, have devastating effects on the innocent and the guilty alike. Characters reveal their true natures and inner selves through betrayal, acts of courage, selfishness, and timidity. The novel is a good example of a romance fiction.

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### Example #4: *Fifty Shades of Grey* (By E. L. James)

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This is an example of modern erotic romance, which has won accolades in literary circles. In the story, the writer narrates the relationship between two college fellows – Anastasia Steele – and her young business lover

Christian Grey. The story then depicts scenes of their erotic love, comprising elements of discipline, dominance, submission, masochism, and sadism. Despite ups and downs in their relations, they finally part, reviewing incompatibility in their love, but depicting several elements of modern love and modern chivalry.

## **Function of Romance**

Romance serves the function of chivalry and adventure in literature. It is considered to be the only [genre](#) of literature capable of representing complex and cumulative themes. It is through romance, literature can highlight the cross-referenced as well as integrative nature of the written words.

During the middle ages, romance was synonymous with aristocratic literature. It was because romance used to teach morals through the combination of stories of adventure, courtly love, and dedication. It was chivalric literature, which aimed at teaching the aristocracy the rules of behavior, bravery, courage, gentlemanliness, and life in general. In addition, the principle function of romance was to maintain order in society by presenting sources for entertainment.