

First 20 Scenes for Romance Novels

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Note: R1, R2, etc. reference the 12 key romance scenes listed at the end of this document.

#1 (also R1):- Setup. Introduce protagonist (HEROINE) in her world. Establish her core need. Set the stage, begin building the world.

#11 – R1:- Introduction of HERO. This is the match to the first essential scene.

#2 - Turning Point #1 (10%): inciting incident. This incident moves the heroine into position for the meet.

#12 – R2: The Meet.

#3 - Pinch Point #1 (33% roughly). Give a glimpse of the opposition's power, need, and goal as well as the stakes. This is the full setup of your subplot, against which your lovers face conflict, opposition, and obstacles.

#13 – R4: Wise Friend Counsels. Both the hero and heroine can have a mentor/ally/wise friend character who gives them advice regarding their love life.

#4 – Twist #1. Something new happens: a new ally, a friend becomes a foe. New info reveals a serious complication to reaching the goal.

#14 – R5: Acknowledge Interest. A key scene that throws the lovers together so they start getting to really know each other.

#5 – The Midpoint (50%): No turning back. Important event that propels the story forward and solidifies the protagonist's determination to reach her goal.

#15 – R6: The First Quarrel. Things start coming to a head and creating high tension with the lovers.

#6 – Pinch Point #2 (62% roughly). The opposition comes full force. Time to buckle down and fight through it.

#16 – R7: The Dance of Attraction. The two are again thrown together, and now they are perilously close to falling madly in love. But . . . there are still obstacles (subplot unresolved).

#7 – Twist 2. An unexpected surprise giving (false?) hope. The goal now looks within reach. A mentor gives encouragement, a secret weapon, an important clue. Events occur to make this romance look possible, giving hope. Which causes . . .

#17 – R8: The Black Moment. Then something happens to kill the possibility of a true romance. A misdirection, lie, reversal, misunderstanding.

#8 – Turning Point #4 (75%): Major setback. All is lost and hopeless. Time for final push.

#18 – R9: The Lovers Reunite. Somehow they find a way to get together despite the huge obstacles. It may be brief, but this is the scene where they admit/realize they both are fated to love each other and profess that love.

#19 – R10: Complications Push Them Apart. There is one last big obstacle in their way. Which sends them reeling into the high action and tension of . . .

#9 – (also #20 – R11 – Together at Last). Turning Point #5 (76-99%). The climax in which the goal is either reached or not; the two MDQs are answered.

#10 – The Aftermath (90-99%). The wrap-up at the end. Denouement, resolution, tie it all in a pretty knot.

#20 – R12: The HEA. A final, parting shot of the happy result of the wrap-up.

The 12 Key Scenes in the Lover's Journey

Adapted from Michael Hauge

1. **Ordinary World:** We see the heroine's normal world before she meets the hero.
2. **The Meet:** The lovers meet.
3. **Rebuffed:** Heroine has a negative response to the hero that shows they're incompatible (or you can reverse all this and make this the hero's reaction to the heroine).
4. **Wise Friend Counsels:** Heroine's friend/mentor points out why the hero is right for her.
5. **Acknowledge Interest:** Heroine is forced to acknowledge her attraction to the hero.
6. **First Quarrel:** Lovers have an argument or disagreement that pushes them apart.
7. **The Dance:** Opposites attract and repel. Development of the relationship but with tension!
8. **The Black Moment:** Romance is dead, impossible due to something that's happened.
9. **The Lovers Reunite:** They finally openly admit/accept they are fated/meant for each other but things stand in the way.
10. **Complications Push Them Apart:** Tension precluding the big climax, usually due the complications of the subplot.
11. **Together At Last:** Working together, thrown together, at the climax to overcome the last big obstacle (emotionally and actually), they are finally together or joined in love and purpose.
12. **HEA:** or happily ever after. The reward for the hard journey.