

SAN FRANCISCO WRITERS CONFERENCE 2019

Session:

The Romance Factor

Panelist:

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Topic:

Romantic Elements: What's really driving the story—the romance or the protagonist's inner journey?

Take Home Points:

Romance Novel

A novel with a central love story that drives the plot and the romantic relationship has an emotionally satisfying ending.

- The romance is the focal point.
- The romance must have a happy-ever-after (aka, satisfying ending) or it's not a romance.

Women's Fiction

A novel with a layered story where the plot is driven by the protagonist's emotional (inner) journey.

- The protagonist's internal growth and change is the focal point.
- Romantic elements can be present in the story, but if the romantic relationship can be removed, or replaced with a different type of relationship (i.e., a best friend) without damaging the storyline, then it's women's fiction and not a romance, or a novel with romantic elements.

Novel with Romantic Elements

A novel that features a romantic relationship that is integral to the story and the character's growth.

- The protagonist's growth and change is the primary story arc, not the romantic relationship.
- Removing the romantic relationship would damage the storyline.

Romantic Women's Fiction

A marriage of romance and women's fiction. A story of a heroine's journey through life challenges, and along the way, a romantic relationship develops with the hero.

- By the story's conclusion, the heroine's issues have resolved, and the romance has a happy conclusion.