

Master List of Tropes

Characters:

These tropes are based on character attributes or personality.

Protagonist:

(The main character of the story. Example: Percy Jackson in the Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series by Rick Riordan)

- **Afraid to Commit:** the protagonist is unwilling to commit to a romantic relationship. Typically a part of the romance genre.
- **Antihero:** a protagonist that lacks conventional heroic qualities such as courage or morality and are often morally-grey characters. Their motivations are often for their own agenda rather than the good of the world.
- **Chosen One:** the protagonist is the only one that can save the world, often due to a prophecy, special powers, or other circumstances. Typically a part of the fantasy genre.
- **Emotional Scars:** the protagonist has a traumatic backstory that has left them with PTSD.
- **Heroic Seductress:** the protagonist uses their sexiness or sex itself as a tool to achieve their goal, often as a bargaining chip, a distraction, part of espionage, or as encouragement to bring a bad guy to the side of good.
- **Orphan:** the protagonist's parents have died or left them.
- **Rejected as Unworthy:** the protagonist is rejected by their family, friends, or lovers.
- **Reluctant Hero:** the protagonist does not want to be the protagonist but is unable to avoid becoming ensnared in the conflict.
- **Royal:** the protagonist is a royal.
- **Sworn Off a Relationship:** the protagonist has decided for one reason or another that they never want to be in a relationship.
- **Ugly Duckling:** the love interest or protagonist believe that they are unattractive but turn out to be beautiful.

- Wallflower: the protagonist is an outsider or someone who would not normally be the center of attention.
- Widow: the protagonist had a previous partner they were married to who died.

Antagonist:

(The villain of the story. Example: Amarantha in A Court of Thorns and Roses, book 1 of the A Court of Thorns and Roses Series by Sarah J. Maas)

- Dark Lord: (also called the Evil Overlord trope) the antagonist is a villain that controls dark powers that no one else can overcome often paired with the Chosen One and Good vs. Evil tropes.
- Femme Fatale: a villainous woman who seduces the protagonist and then betrays them. Generally, the protagonist knows that they're dangerous from the start but doesn't care.
- If I Can't Have You, Nobody Will: the antagonist is a jealous ex-lover or someone who claims to have been in love with the protagonist and is seeking vengeance for being rejected.
- Literal Man Eater: a femme fatale that eats the targets of her manipulations, usually men.
- Put Them All Out of My Misery: the antagonist is miserable and blames it on everyone else and wants to destroy their community or world.
- The Waiting Evil: an evil force was defeated long ago and locked away but has now been released.
- Vamp: unlike femme fatales who can sometimes be swayed to be good the vamp is completely evil, often making up a traumatic backstory to gain the protagonist's sympathy.
- Woman Scorned: a woman that's been wronged and *might* be a little crazy.

Love Interest:

(The romantic interest of the protagonist. Example: Hawke from From Blood and Ash, the first book in the From Blood and Ash Series by Jennifer L. Armentrout)

- Age Gap: the protagonist and love interest have a significant age difference that causes conflict.

- All Grown Up: the protagonist encounters someone from their childhood who is now a love interest as an adult. Typically a part of the romance genre.
- Barbarian: the love interest is a barbarian or in some way primitive to the protagonist. Often involved with Time Travel and Interspecies Romances.
- Best Friend's Ex: the love interest starts off in a romantic relationship with the best friend and then after they break up begins a romantic relationship with the protagonist. Typically a part of the romance genre.
- Best Friend's Lover: the love interest starts off in a romantic relationship with the best friend.
- Best Friend's Sibling: the love interest starts as the best friend's sibling.
- Beauty and the Beast: the love interest is not conventionally beautiful or attractive but the protagonist falls for them, usually a monster of some kind.
- Billionaire: the love interest is insanely wealthy, which can either be known or a secret revealed later to the protagonist.
- Bodyguard/Protector: the love interest starts off as responsible for protecting the protagonist.
- Bully Turned Nice Guy: the love interest starts off as a bully in the backstory but is reintroduced as a nice guy.
- Enemies-to-Lovers: the love interest starts off as enemies with the protagonist, and is generally not the real antagonist of the story.
- Fling: the love interest is introduced during a one-night stand or a fling.
- Forbidden Love: the love interest and the protagonist are not supposed to get together.
- Friends-to-Lovers: the love interest starts as a friend to the protagonist and their relationship becomes romantic over time.
- In Love with the Best Man: the protagonist is in love with someone in the wedding party rather than the bride or groom.
- Interspecies Romance: the love interest is from another species.
- Love Interest Reminds of Estranged Family Member: the love interest reminds the protagonist of a family member they no longer speak to.
- Love Interest Has Profession Protagonist Hates: the love interest works in a usually dangerous job that the protagonist hates.

- Love/Hate Relationship: the love interest and the protagonist both annoy each other and care for one another.
- Loveable Rogue: the love interest is someone who breaks the law but is charming.
- Lovers in Denial: the love interest and protagonist are unwilling to admit that they are attracted to one another.
- Mafia: the love interest is a part of the mafia.
- Marriage Before Romance: the love interest and protagonist get married and then fall in love later.
- Marriage of Convenience: the love interest and protagonist get married for a mutually beneficial reason often involving social standing, money, citizenship, politics, or to be a “beard” for a gay person during a time or in a place where being gay is not socially acceptable or safe.
- Matchmaker Gone Wrong: the love interest starts off as the matchmaker of the protagonist. Typically a part of the romance genre.
- Men in Uniform: the love interest has a job that involves a uniform such as a fire fighter, police officer, or member of the military.
- Oblivious to Love: the love interest or the protagonist is oblivious to the attraction of the other.
- Office Romance: the love interest is someone the protagonist works with.
- Old Enemies: the love interest and protagonists were enemies in the backstory
- Opposites Attract: the love interest and protagonist are very different. Examples of this can be Sunny vs. Grumpy or Beauty and the Beast.
- Parent with Child’s Caregiver: the love interest is the child’s caregiver if the protagonist is the parent or vice versa if the roles are reversed.
- Parent with New Love: the love interest falls in love with the protagonist who is a parent.
- Pen Pals to Lovers: the love interest starts off as pen pals with the protagonist. Typically a part of the romance genre.
- Physically Different: the love interest and protagonist are physically very different.
- Playboy: the love interest is a playboy.
- Politician: the love interest is a politician.

- Priest: the love interest is a priest.
- Reunion Romance: the love interest and the protagonist knew each other in the past and now that they've met each other again they fall in love.
- Rich vs. Poor: the love interest and protagonist are from different wealth classes.
- Rivals: the love interest or foil starts off as rivals with the protagonist
- Royal: the love interest is a royal.
- Second Chance Romance: the love interest and the protagonist dated in the past and have come back together.
- Secret Admirer: the love interest is a secret admirer.
- Sibling's Ex: the love interest is a sibling's ex.
- Siblings-to-Lovers: the love interest is the protagonist's sibling, usually as a surprise to both of them after they've fallen in love.
- Sleeps with Everyone But You: the love interest is a playboy and makes the protagonist feel inferior.
- Socially Inferior: the love interest is socially inferior to the protagonist or vice versa.
- Soulmate: the love interest is the protagonist's soulmate.
- Sporty Love Interest: the love interest is participates in sports.
- Star-Crossed Lovers: the love interest and the protagonist are unable to come together.
- Step Siblings: the love interest is step siblings with the protagonist.
- Strangers-to-Lovers: the love interest is a complete stranger to the protagonist.
- Sunny vs. Grumpy: the love interest and protagonist have very opposite personalities.
- The One That Got Away: a great love of the protagonist's life was lost to them a long time ago.
- Ugly Duckling: the love interest or protagonist believe that they are unattractive but turn out to be beautiful.
- Unattainable Love Interest: the love interest or protagonist is someone who is of a vastly different social standing of the other.
- Undercover Lover: the love interest or protagonist is hiding their identity from the other.

- Unrequited Love: the love interest or the protagonist loves the other but the feelings are not returned.
- Virgin/Surprise Virgin: the love interest or the protagonist are a virgin or don't know that the other is a virgin.

Confidant:

(The best friend or sidekick of the protagonist. An example of this is Macy from the Crave Series by Tracy Wolff who is the cousin of the protagonist Grace and becomes her best friend at her new school.)

- Found Family:

Deuteragonists:

(A character who is close to the main character, but the main plot does not correspond with their character arc. Confidants are always also Deuteragonists but Deuteragonists are not always Confidants. An example of this is Samwise Gamgee from the Lord of the Rings Trilogy by J. R. R. Tolkein is a Deuteragonist but not a Confidant.)

- The Mentor:

Tertiary Characters:

(These characters populate the world of the story but have no meaningful influence over the plot or characters.)

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Foil:

(A character that exists to contrast the protagonist. An example of this is Draco Malfoy in the Harry

Potter Series by J. K. Rowling because the true antagonist is always Voldemort but Draco is such an opposite to Harry Potter that it is easier to see his character traits.)

- Rivals: the love interest or foil starts off as rivals with the protagonist

Setting:

These tropes are based on where and when the story takes place.

- Aliens Built Earth: the world is built on the premise of aliens having built major examples of human ingenuity like the pyramids. Typically part of the science fiction genre.
- Alone in a Dark House: the story takes place in a spooky or haunted house, usually with the protagonist being either by themselves or with a small group of deuteragonists.
- Ancient Settings: the story takes place in ancient times, usually medieval Europe.
- Pseudo Medieval Europe Setting: like Ancient Settings except specific to Medieval Europe.
- Taverns:

Plot:

These tropes are based on common plot twists employed to cause conflict or to move the plot forward.

- Alien Pregnancy: the protagonist or a deuteragonist is impregnated by an alien species. Typically part of the science fiction genre.
- All Powerful Artifacts: an unusual and extremely strong magical artifact leverages the plot, usually by requiring the protagonist to go on a quest to retrieve the magical artifact. Typically a part of the fantasy genre.
- Altar Diplomacy: an arranged marriage used to seal a political alliance is planned.

- Amnesia: the protagonist or love interest suffer from amnesia and must remember or relearn why they were in love.
- An Inheritance: the protagonist turns out to not be ordinary when they discover the truth through either an heirloom, learning who their real parents are, or an accidental discovery of magical powers.
- Ancient Secrets: a conspiracy to keep a long existing secret such as a prophecy from becoming known is uncovered by the protagonist.
- Arranged Marriage: the protagonist is supposed to marry someone chosen for them by someone else.
- Belated Love Epiphany: the protagonist realizes that they were in love with another character, either the love interest or a deuteragonist after their chance to be with them is over.
- Bet: the protagonist starts a romantic relationship based on a bet.
- Blackmail: the protagonist is forced into a romantic relationship because the love interest is blackmailing them.
- Blind Date: the protagonist meets their love interest on a blind date.
- Break Up to Save Them: the protagonist or love interest leaves the other because they think it will save them from pain or save their life.
- Can't Spit it Out: the protagonist or love interest can't admit that they love the other.
- Changing Sexual Preference: the protagonist's sexual orientation changes through self-discovery within the story which often leads to conflict.
- Conjuring Evil: a demon or evil spirit is somehow summoned, usually through the use of a Ouija Board or witchcraft and leading to possession or a haunting.
- Countdown to Destruction: something bad will happen if the protagonist fails to resolve the conflict by a specific time.
- Damsel (Person) in Distress:
- Dances with Aliens
- Dark Secret:
- Dead Cell Phones:
- Disguise:

- Double-in-law Marriage:
- Dragons:
- Everyone Can See It:
- Fairytale Retelling:
- Fake Relationship: the protagonist and love interest agree to pretend to be in a relationship. Typically a part of the romance genre.
- Fall in Love with the Wrong Person:
- Faster than Light:
- First Contact: humans encounter aliens for the first time. Typically part of the science fiction genre.
- Fish Out of Water: the protagonist is placed in a situation that is completely unfamiliar to them.
- Food Replicators:
- Forced Marriage:
- Found Footage:
- Fridging:
- Good People Have Good Sex:
- Good vs. Evil: the protagonist must fight against a great and powerful evil. Typically a part of the fantasy genre.
- Gone Horribly Right: when the plan goes right but has unforeseen consequences.
- Hidden Treasure:
- Hidden Truth:
- Honorable Marriage:
- Injury:
- Innocent Cohabitation: the protagonist and love interest are forced to live together though they intend to do so platonically.
- Jilted Bride: often part of a revenge plot or good-for-her plots, a woman is wronged by her love interest and comes after them. The Jilted Bride can be either the protagonist of a good-for-her

plot or the antagonist of a romance plot and are often also a Woman Scorned.

- Kidnapped:
- Last to Know:
- Long Distance Relationship:
- Love at First Sight:
- Love Potion:
- Love Triangle:
- Luck Novice:
- Magic:
- Magic School:
- Marriage Pact: the protagonist and love interest agree to get married if some circumstance occurs. Typically a part of the romance genre.
- Mistaken Declaration of Love: the protagonist accidentally declares love to the wrong person leading to conflict.
- Mistaken Identity:
- Nightmare on Halloween:
- Nobody Thinks It Will Work: the protagonist and love interest or other deuteragonists don't think a relationship between the protagonist and love interest will work, causing conflict.
- Not Good Enough for Them:
- Oppressed Robots:
- Overqualified Party:
- Parallel Worlds:
- Powerful Artifact:
- Racial Homogenization:
- Rags to Riches: one of the characters, usually the protagonist, gains a large amount of wealth
- Redemption:

- Revenge: a relationship is formed for revenge.
- Road Trip:
- Runaway Bride:
- Sci-Fi Western:
- Secret Baby:
- Secret/Lost Heir:
- Sorry, I'm Taken:
- Sound in Space:
- Soylent Green is People:
- Splitting Up the Party:
- Spontaneous Marriage:
- Stranded:
- Surprise Pregnancy:
- Technobabble:
- Teenager Saves the Universe:
- The "Here Comes the Cavalry" Twist:
- The Bad Guy Won't Die:
- The Heroes Quest:
- There's Only One Bed:
- Time Travel:
- Too Dumb to Live:
- Training Sequence:
- Trapped in an Elevator:
- Want Different Things:
- Working with the Ex:

- You've Changed: