



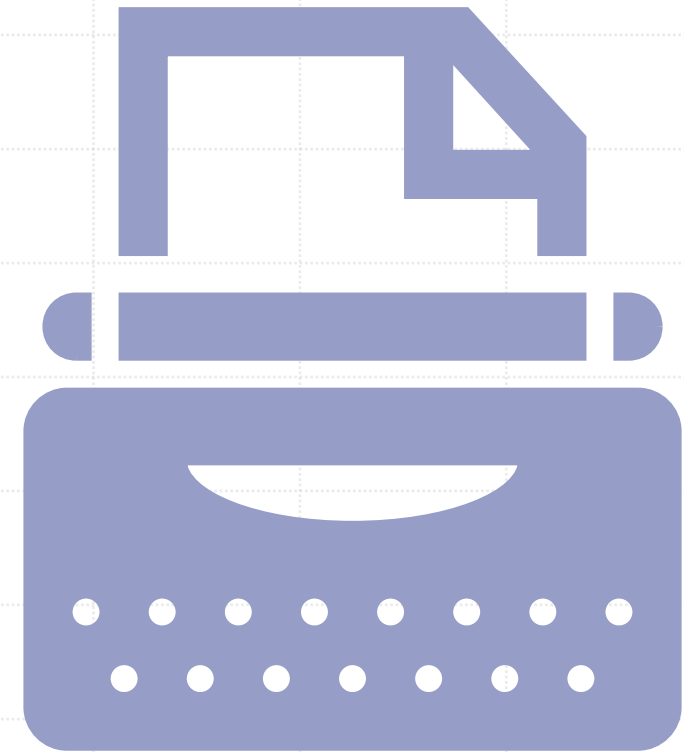
▶ Diverse equitable and inclusive adult fiction collections: romance

What is a romance?

A Central Love Story: The main plot centers around individuals falling in love and struggling to make the relationship work. A writer can include as many subplots as he/she wants as long as the love story is the main focus of the novel.

An Emotionally Satisfying and Optimistic Ending: In a romance, the lovers who risk and struggle for each other and their relationship are rewarded with emotional justice and unconditional love.

RWA website



Diverse vs. Under-represented

Diverse from what?

Under-represented invites an opportunity to bring balance to the collection

What does it mean to be under-represented?

- Whose voice is missing from the repertoire and how do we get it?

Why under-represented voices are needed?



Why does identity matter in my fiction?



Why are you being divisive when I just want to read a good story?



What does it mean to be under-represented?

Whose voice is missing from the repertoire and how do we get it?



Humanizes communities with whom you may not have any regular contact.



Illustrates that we're all seeking (and capable of finding) our own Happily Ever After.



A common question:

- Who is “allowed” to write diverse characters?
- The answer is: everyone is allowed to write whatever and whoever they want.
- Not just window dressing, but a different perspective and voice.



A common question:

- Is a book with underrepresented characters, or authors, only valuable if it teaches me something?
- While romances CAN be textbooks, that isn't their primary purpose!
- What you're learning is to form attachment to, and empathy for, characters whose circumstances may be different than your own.
- Although they aren't obligated to teach, many often DO and we'll talk about this in a minute with historical romances.

What underrepresented romance isn't

01

It isn't just for a segregated group of people

02

It isn't of lower quality

03

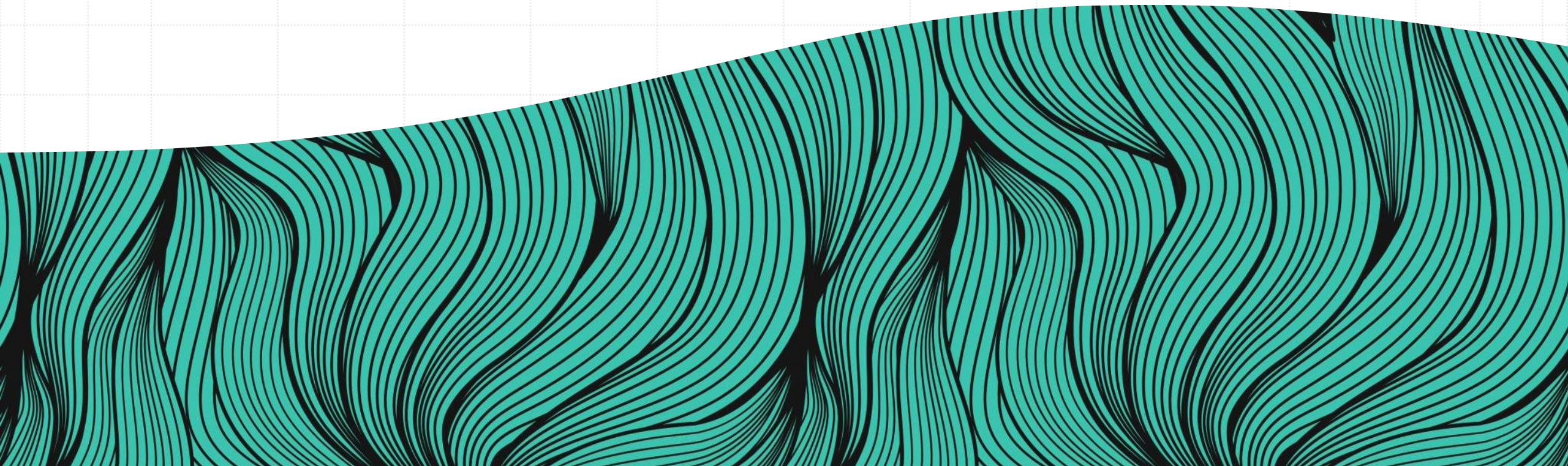
It isn't harder to understand or identify with.

The Big 4 Subgenres





Historical Romance



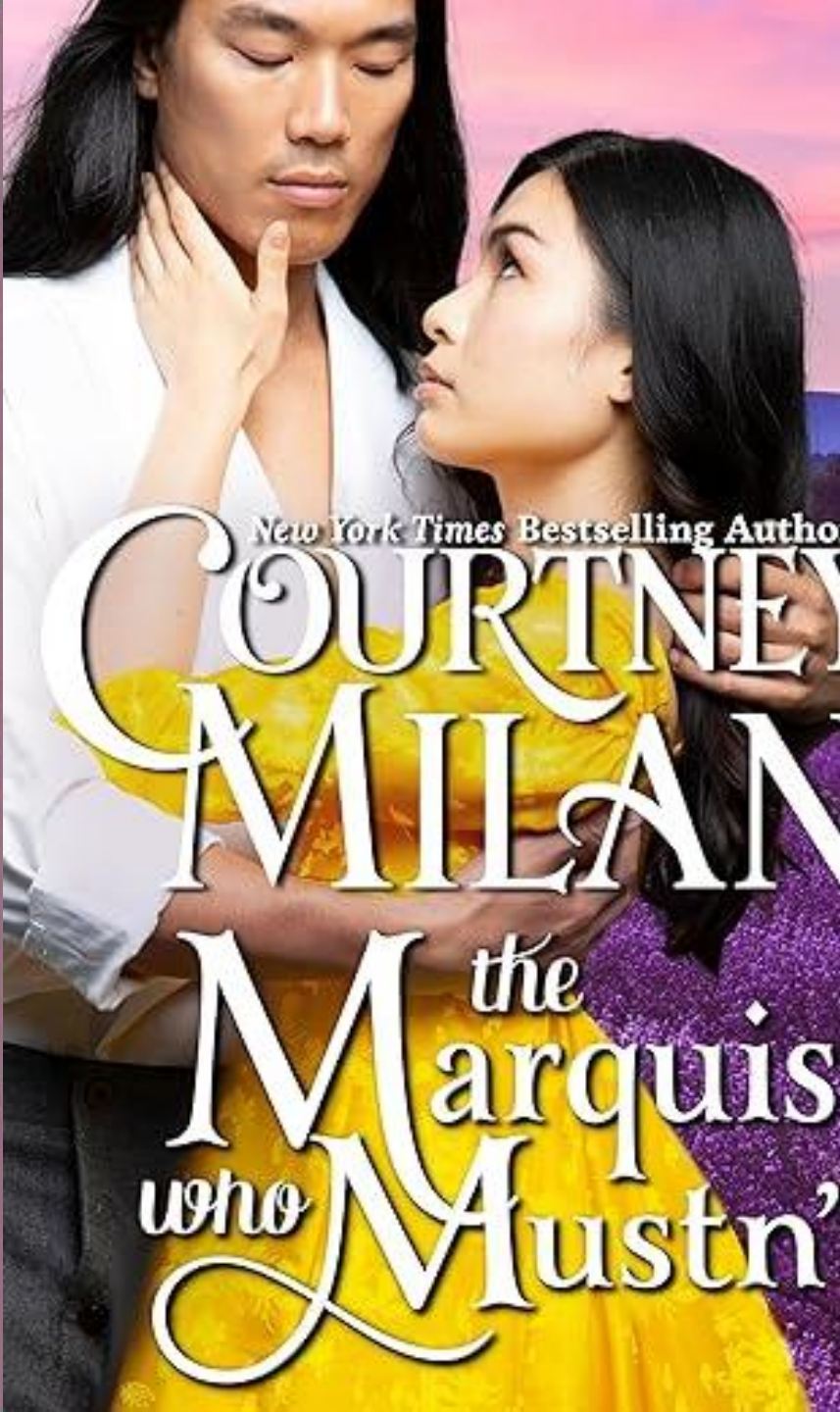
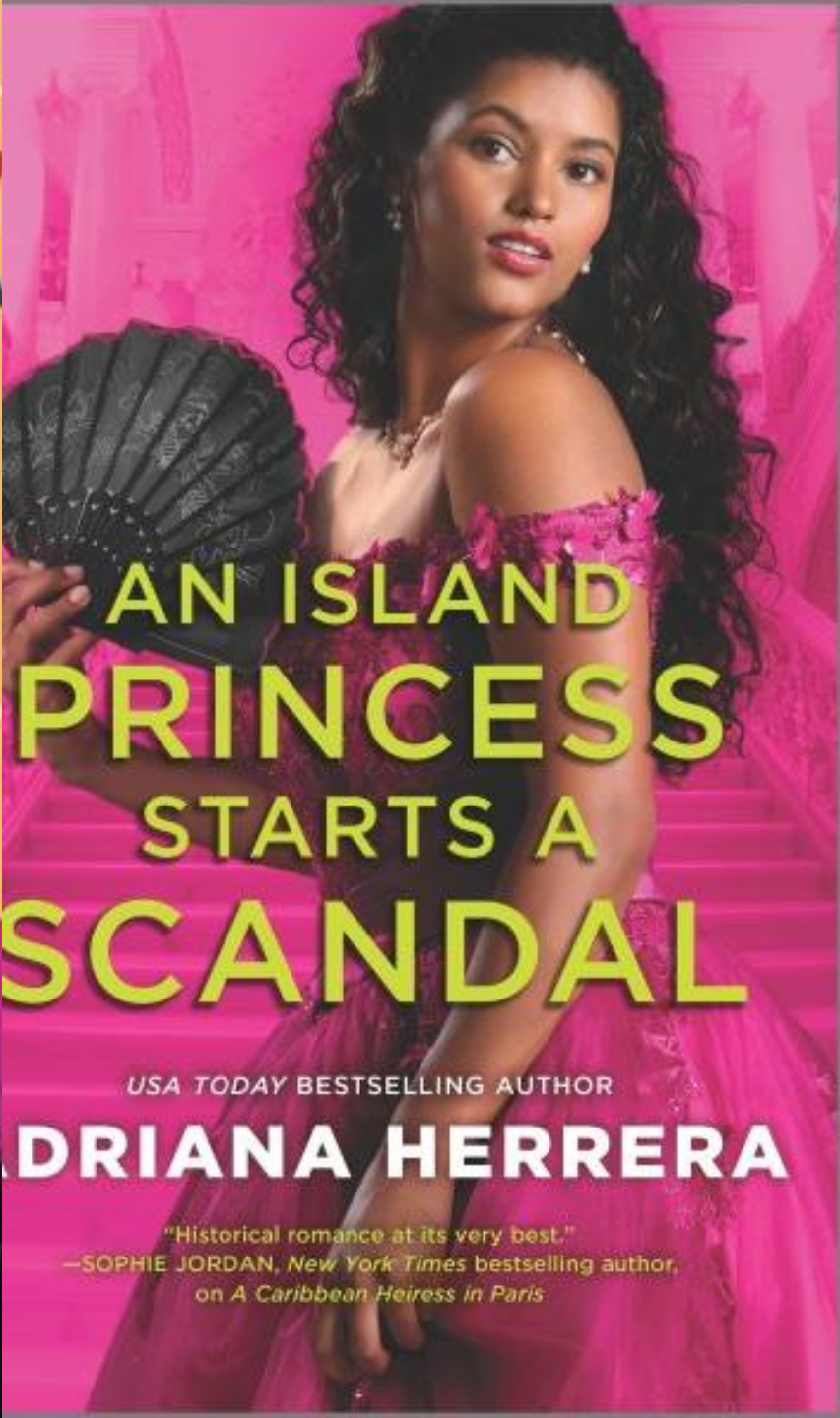
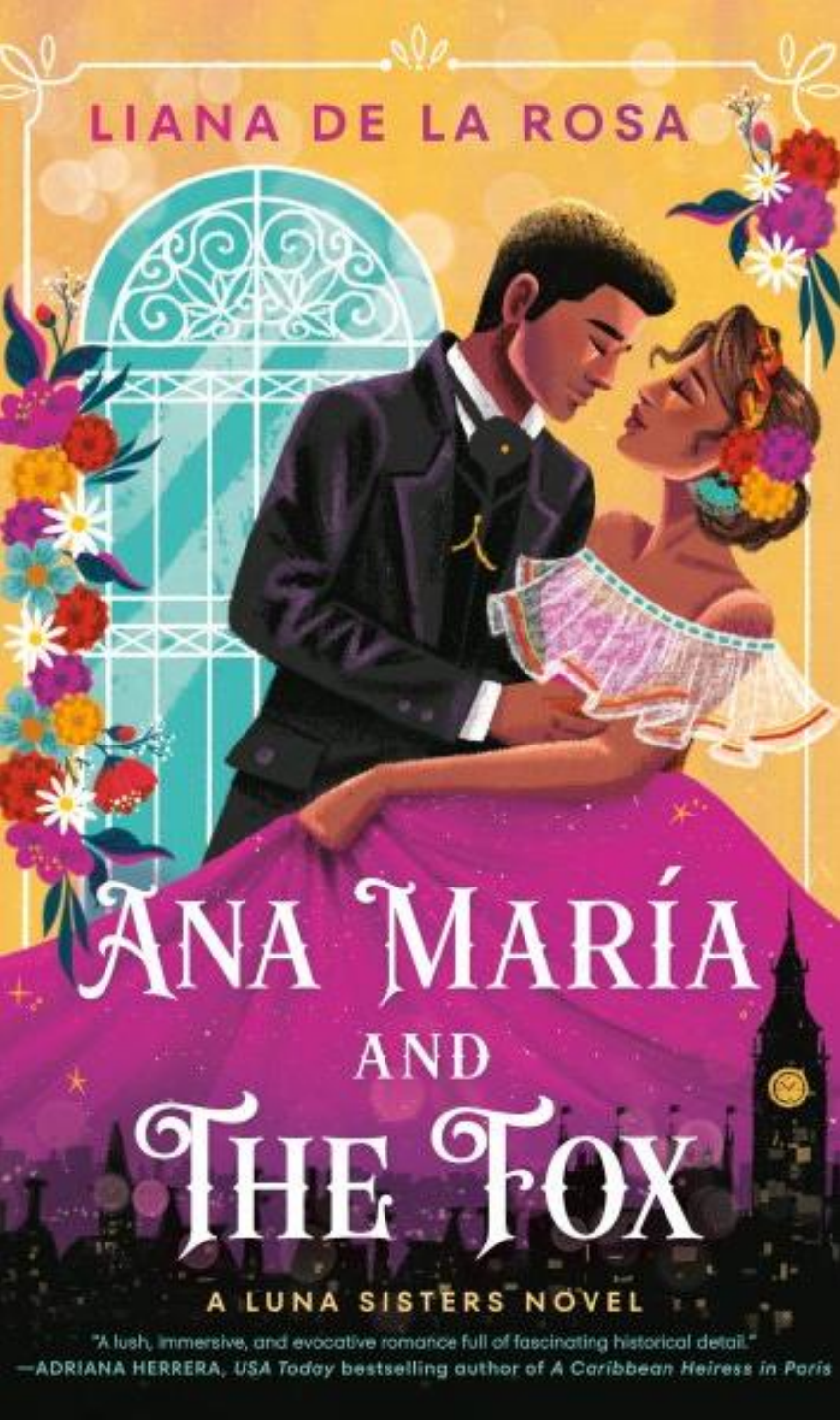
Historical romance

Diversity is not new to history. It isn't reconfiguring history.

Please continue to suspend disbelief as you do for other historical romances

The stories of people previously unseen and places previously unexplored are being written and put back into the narrative.

Not obligated to teach you, but often does.





Courtney Milan

- “I started writing books about white characters because that's what I was reading. And I sort of innately felt like that's what historical romance was. But as time went on ... I started thinking to myself, I'm writing this book that's set in 1870. That is when my great great grandparents first left China,” she says. “Why am I writing about white people when I feel that my heritage contains things that I've learned personally through my family history that no one's writing about and that I think are important and interesting and would make a good story?”



More authors of historical romances

Alyssa Cole

Kianna Alexander

Piper Hughley

Genevieve Turner

Sherry Thomas

K.J. Charles

Heidi Cullinan

Bonnie Dee

K.A. Mitchell

Altonya Washington

Joanna Chambers



Contemporary Romance

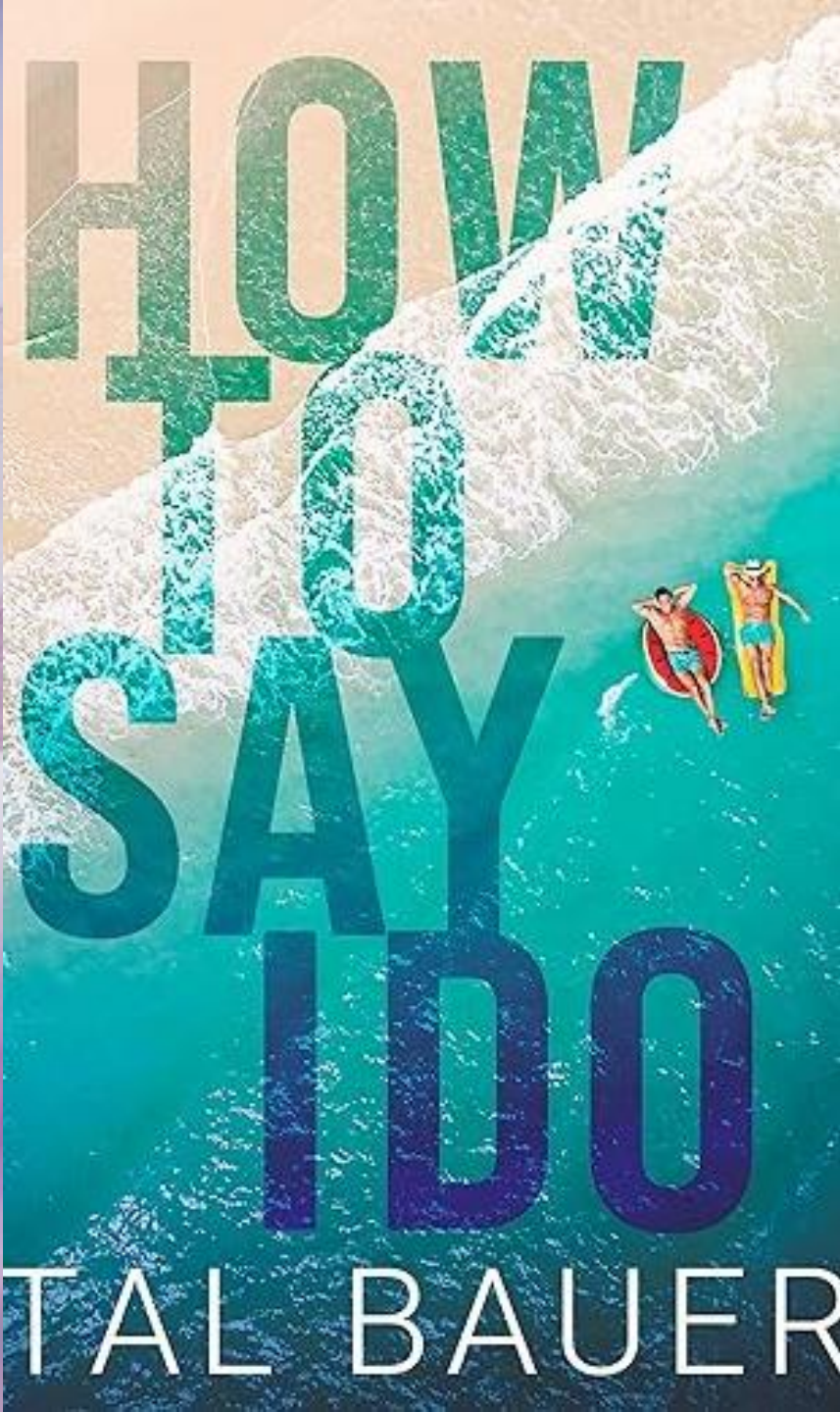
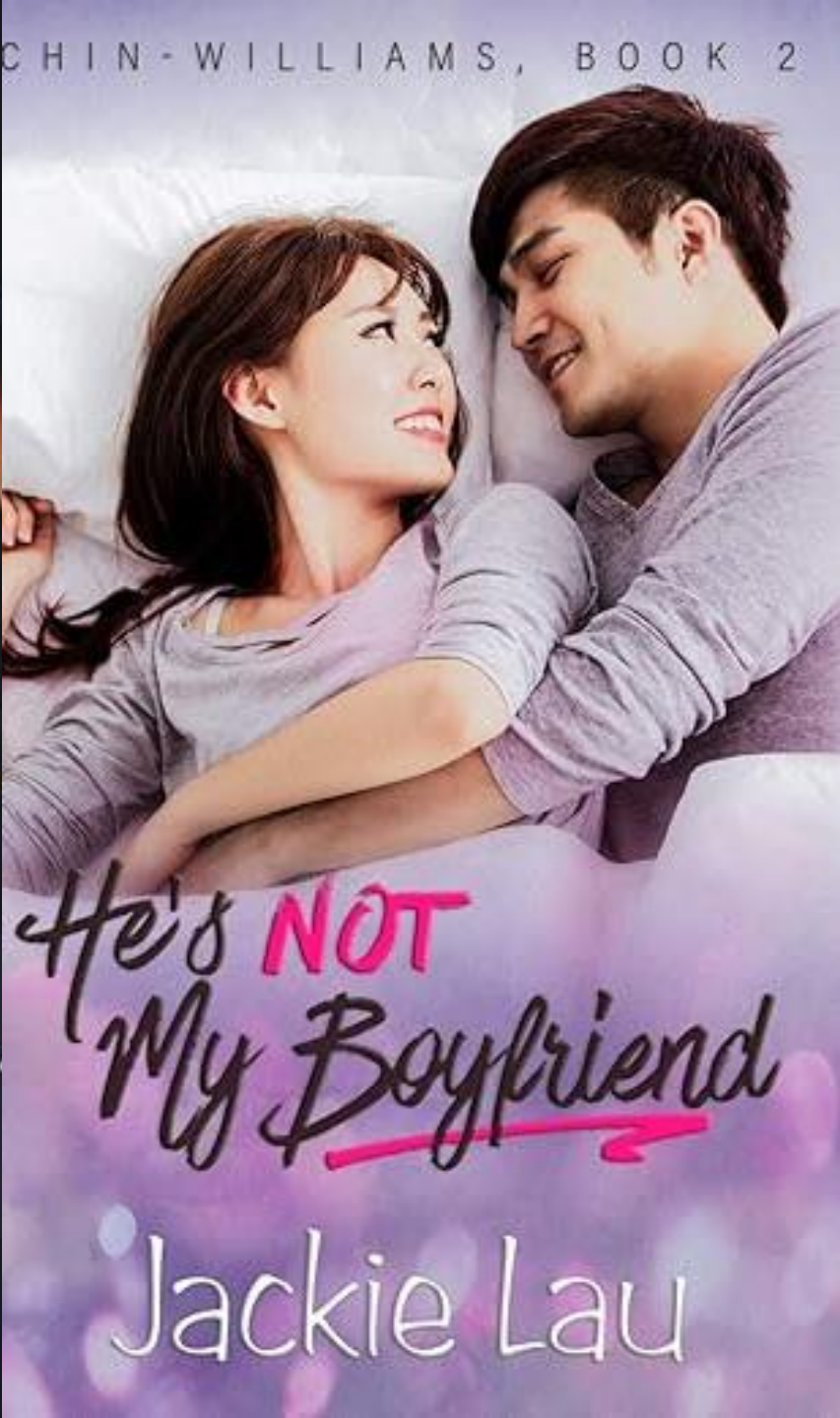
Contemporary Romance

There is no “One size fits all” for cultural, sexual, or gender identity

The floodgates for representation have opened and the happily ever afters are rolling in for everyone.

Caution: don't judge multiple authors with one broad brush.

Caution #2: The work doesn't stop with the purchase, give books by under represented authors a marketing and promotion push.





Some contemporary authors

Sandra Kitt

Nia Wilson

Roxie Rivera

M. Malone

Bernice Layton

Nana Malone

HelenKay Dimon

Caridad Piñero

Tracey Livesay

Alisha Rai

Chelle Cordero

Kaia Bennett

Elizabeth Cook-Howard

K. M. Jackson

Josh Lanyon

Damon Suede

Samreen Ahsan

Tasha L. Harrison



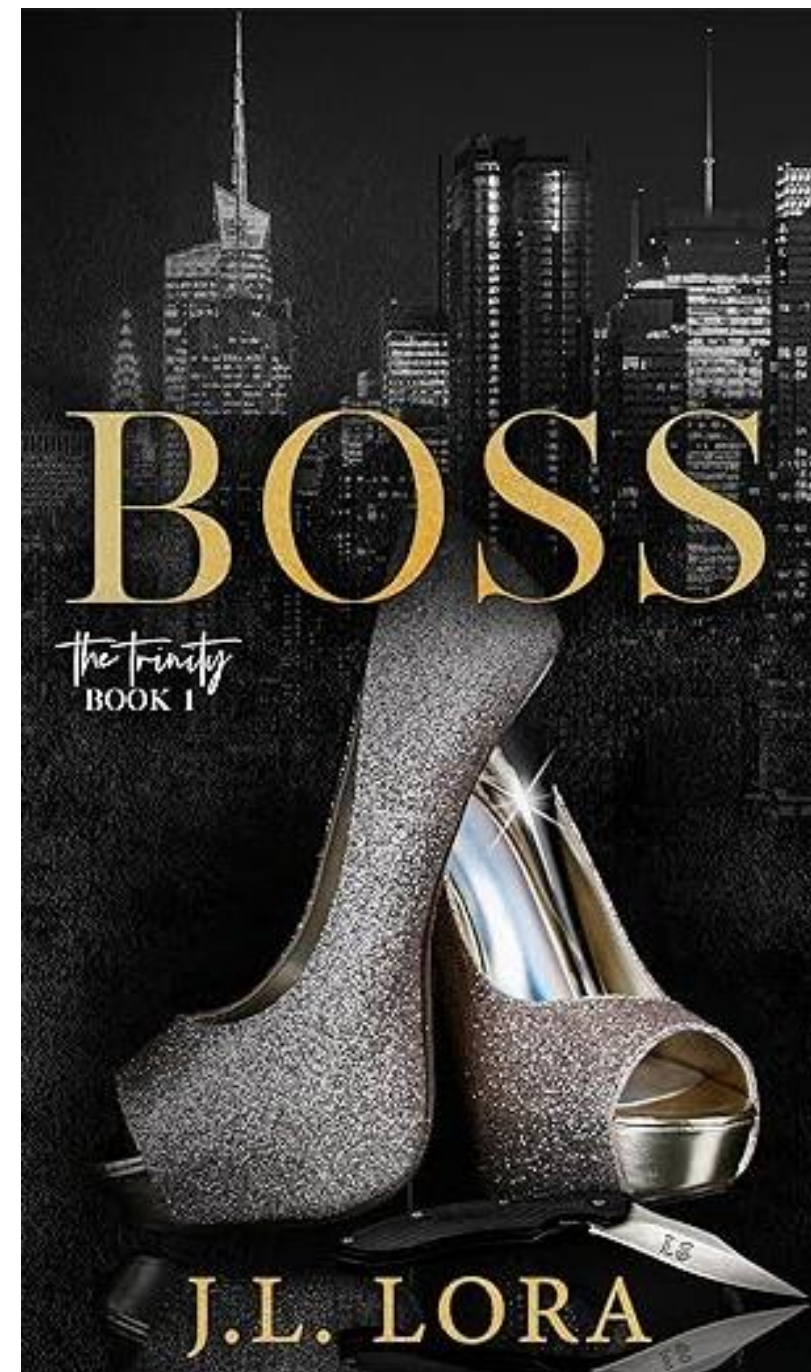
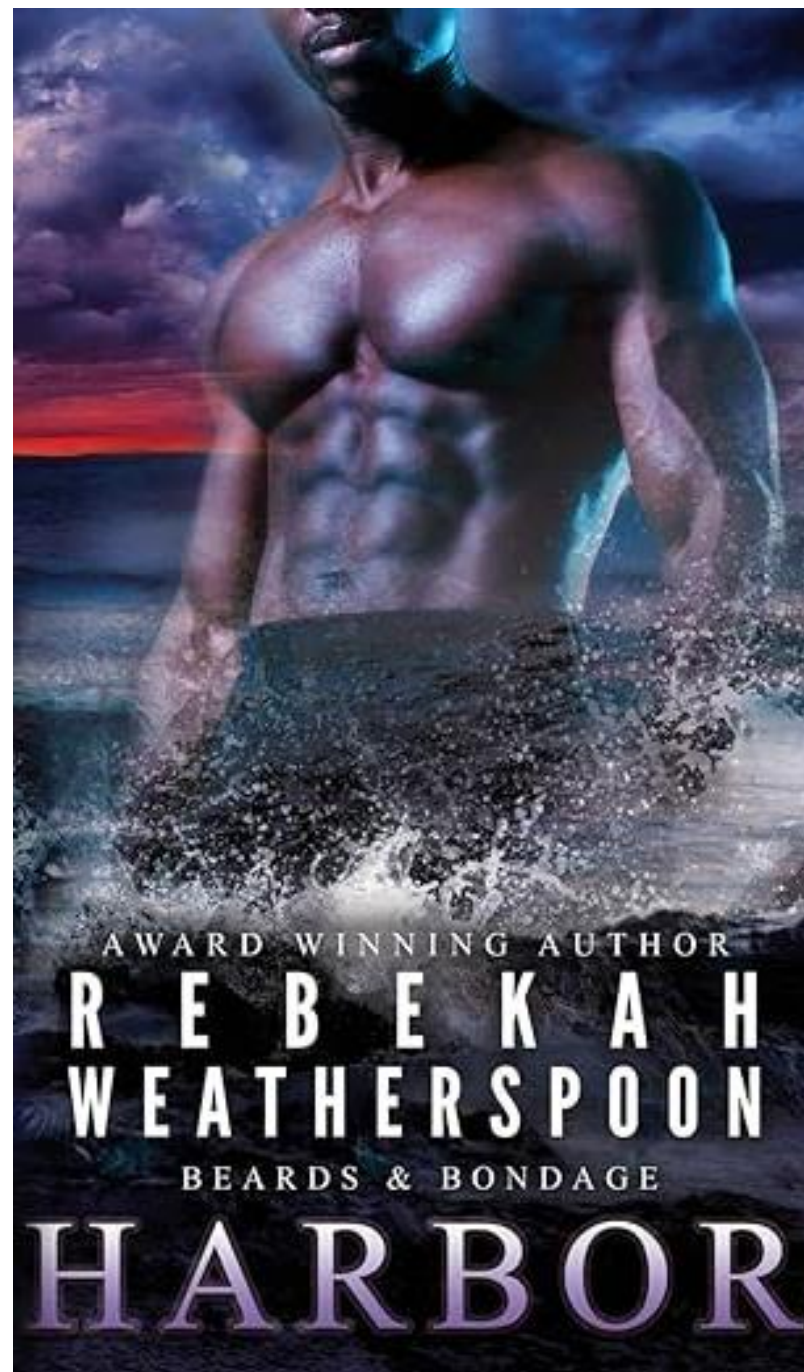
Romantic Suspense

Romantic Suspense

Romance with a nice helping of adventure.

Everyone can be the hero/heroine of their story.

Can vary between slight adventure/danger to very hardcore violence.



Paranormal Romance



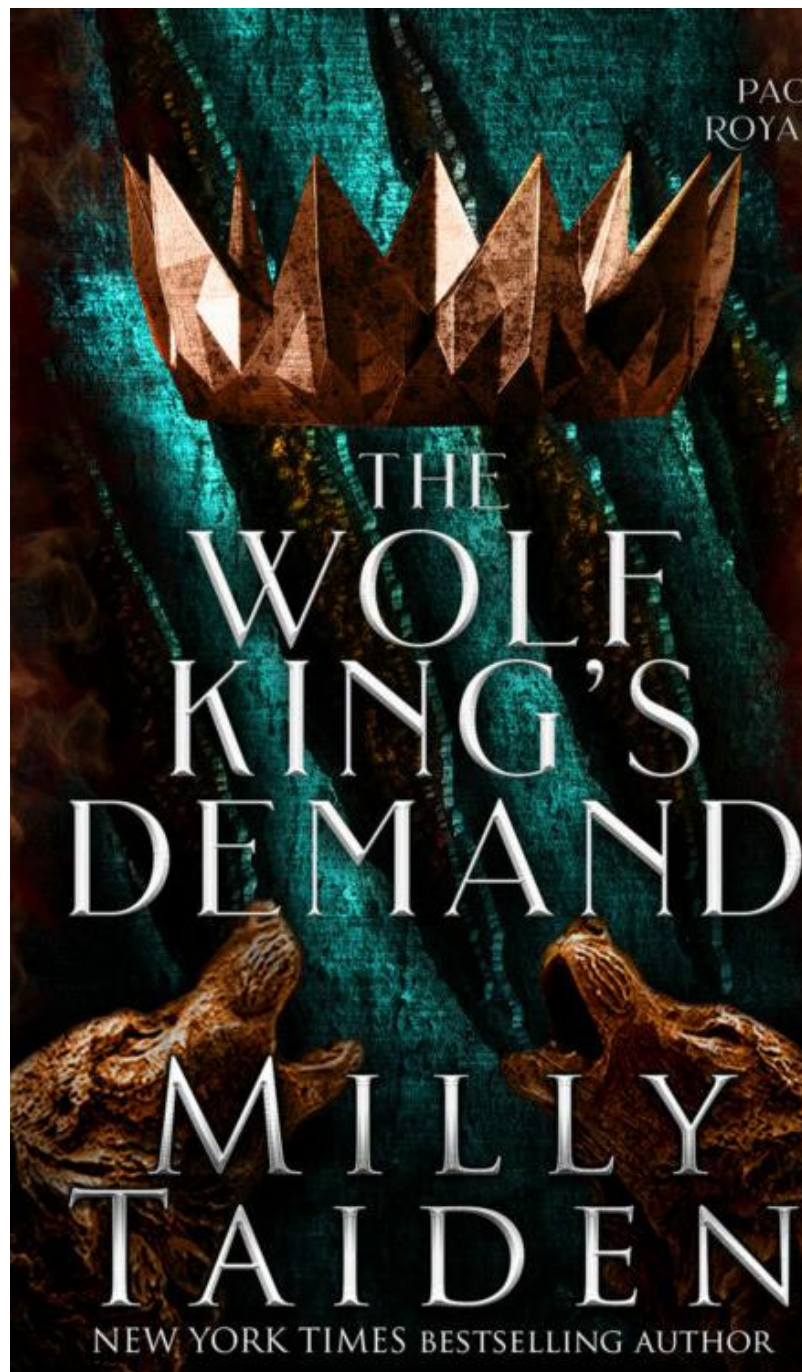
Paranormal Romance

The
supernatural
subgenre

Witches,
Werewolves,
Vampires, oh
my!

Can be historical
or
contemporary.

Perennially
popular



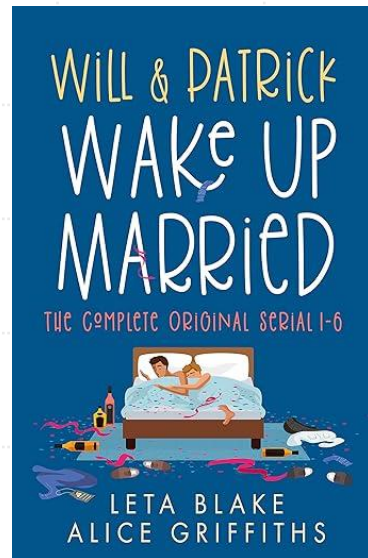
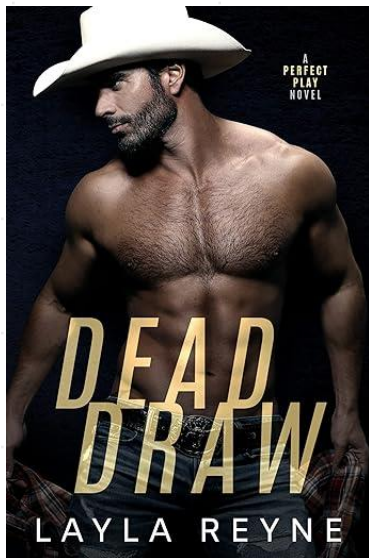
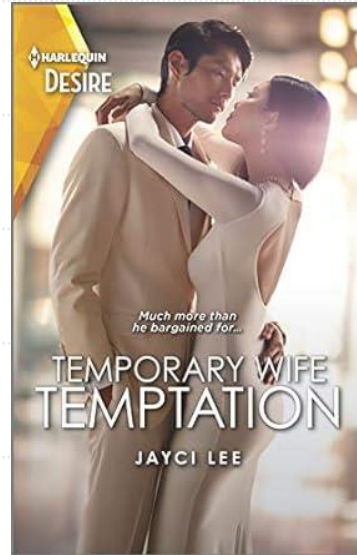
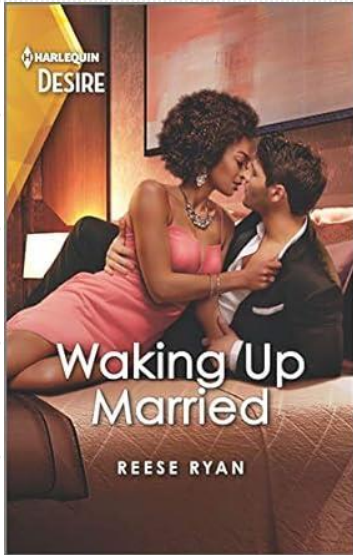


But also tropes

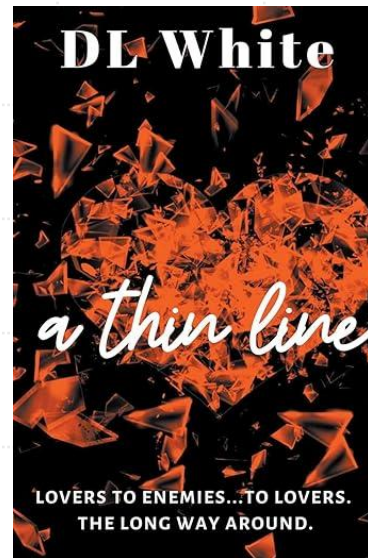
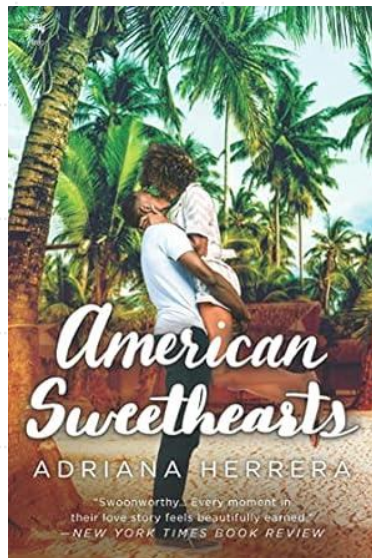
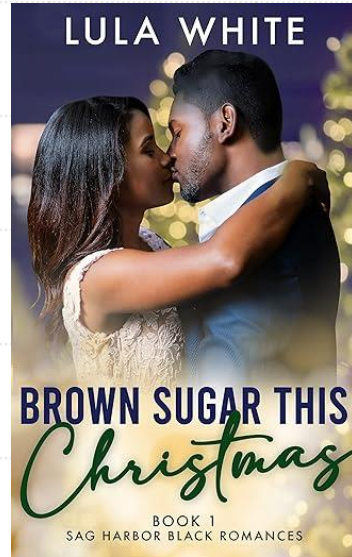


Tropes

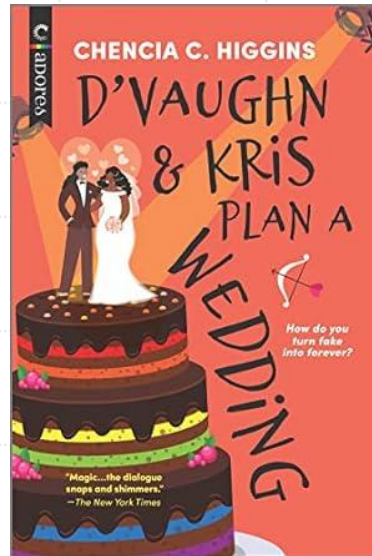
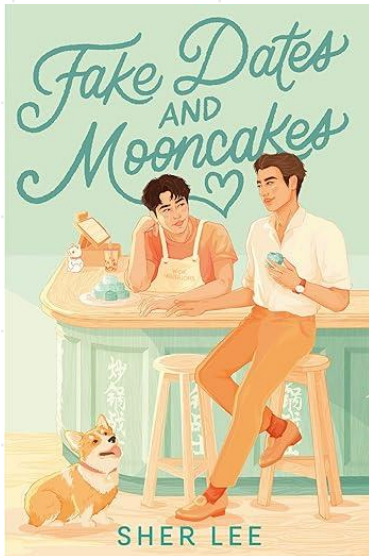
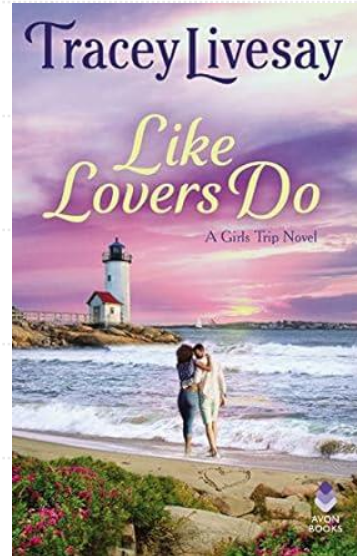
- Plot characteristics
- Make or break for some readers



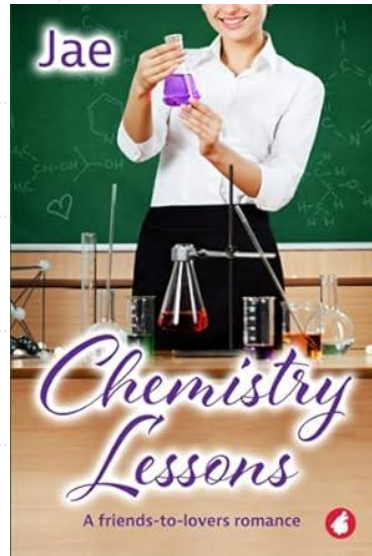
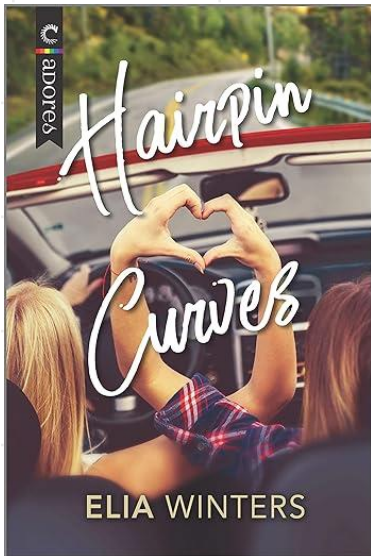
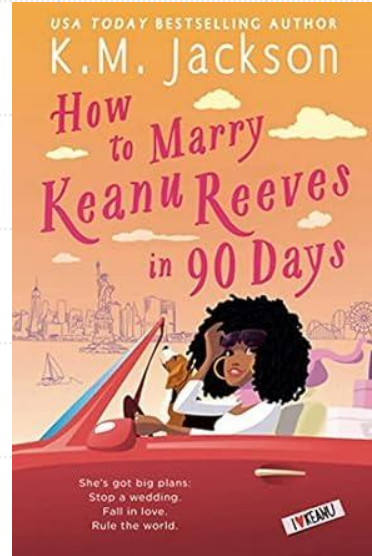
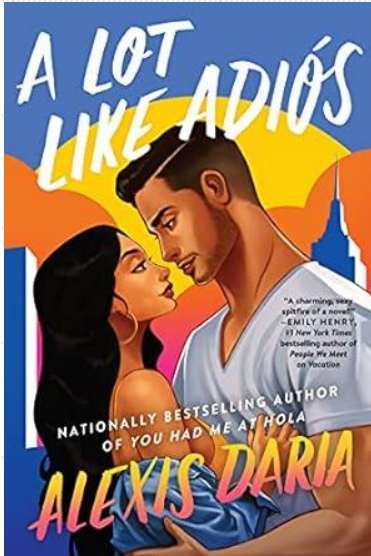
Marriage of Convenience



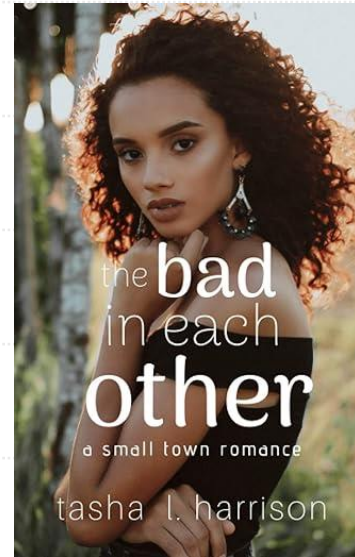
Enemies to Lovers



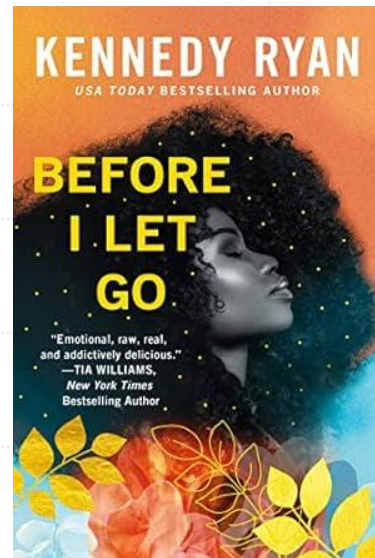
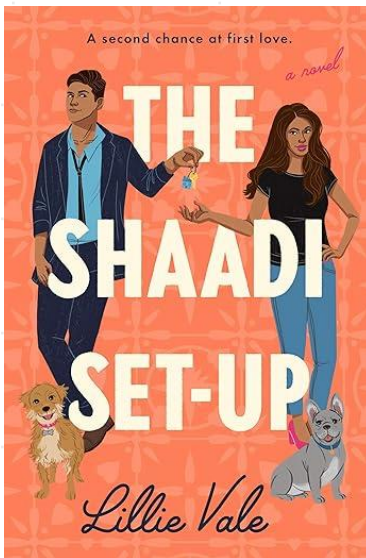
Fake Relationship

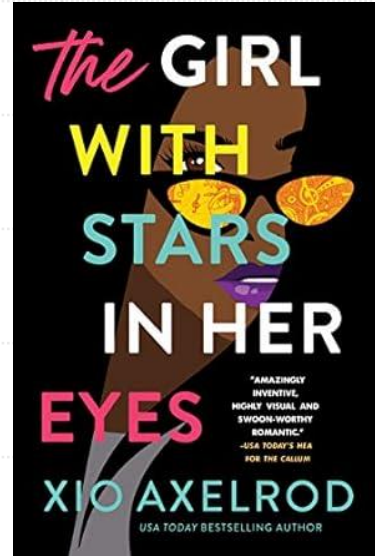
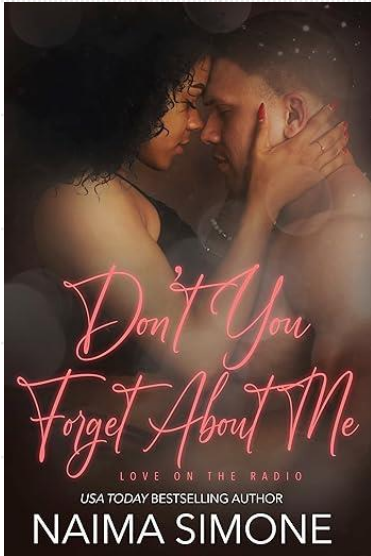


Friends to Lovers

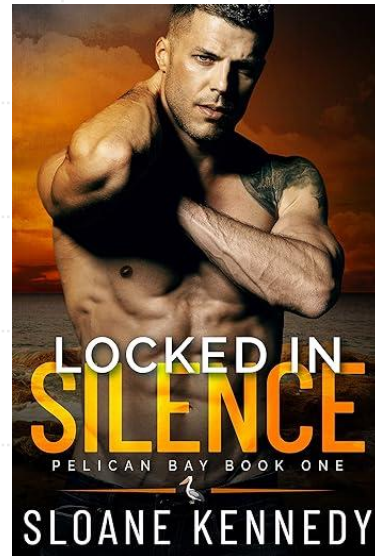
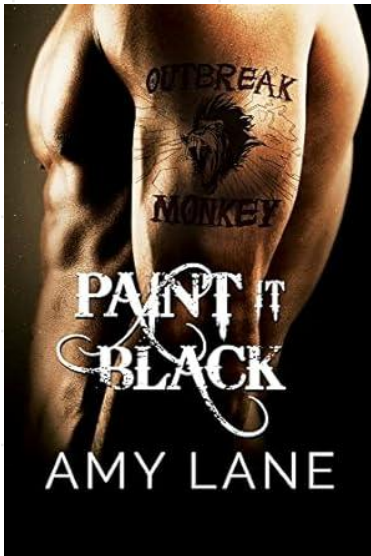


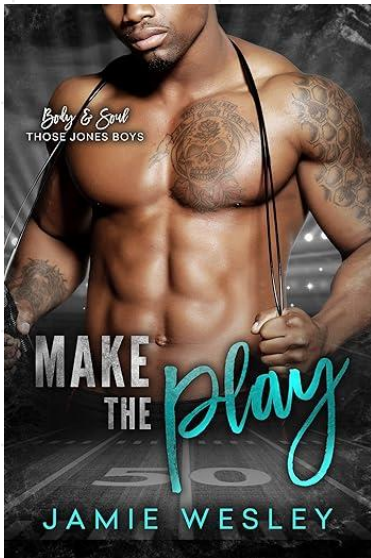
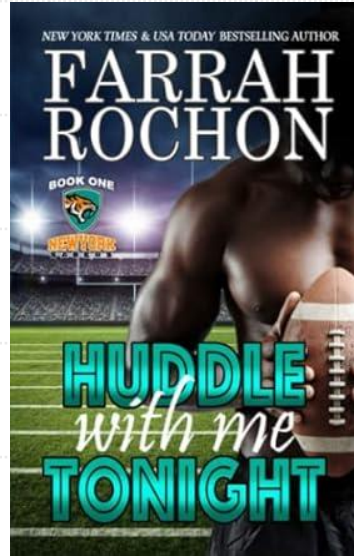
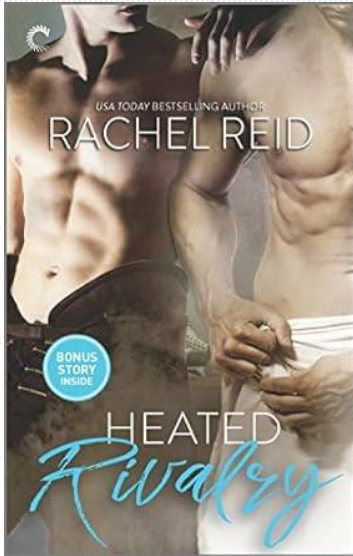
Second Chance



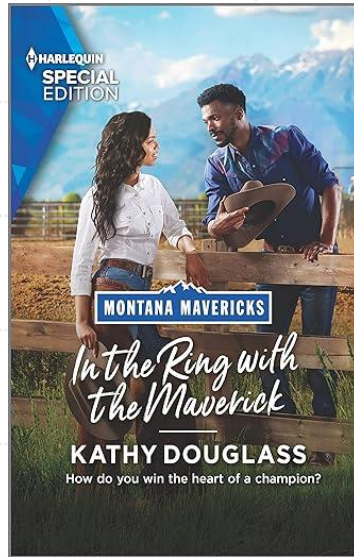
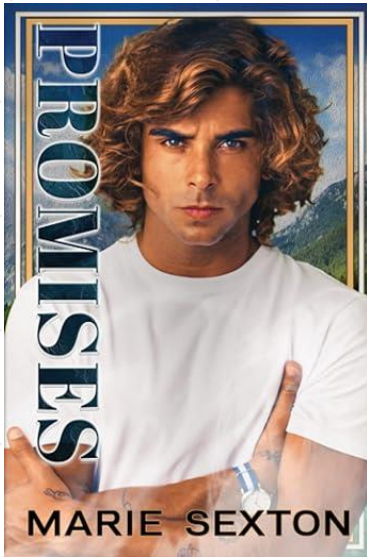
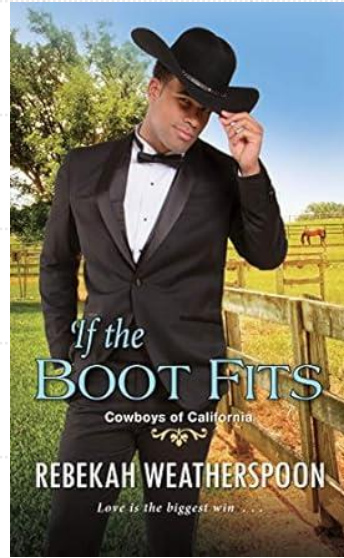
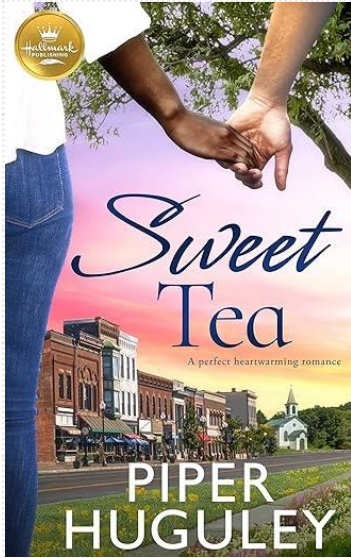


Rock Stars/Musicians



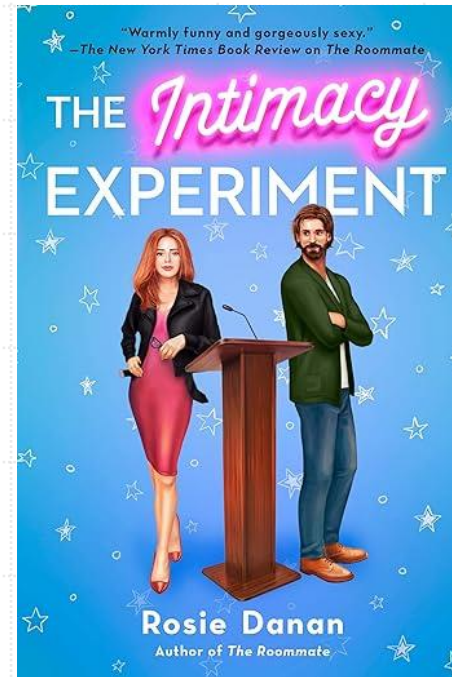
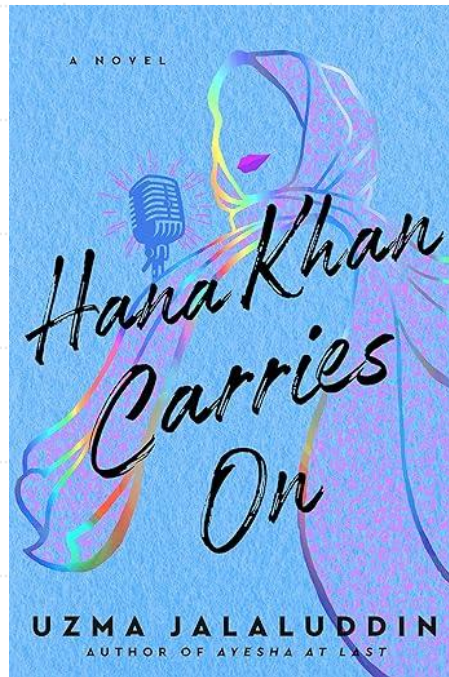


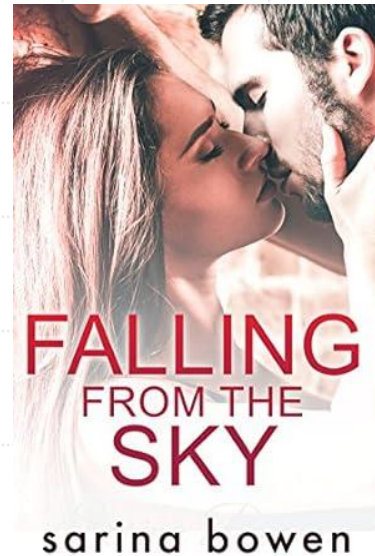
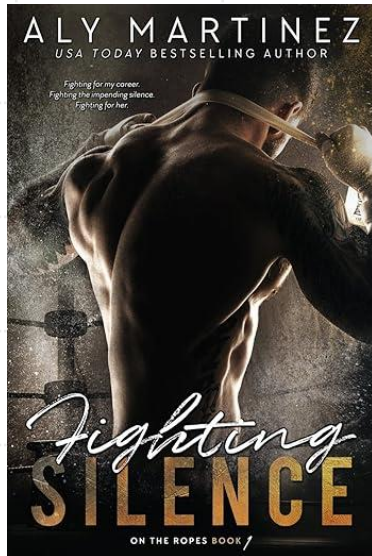
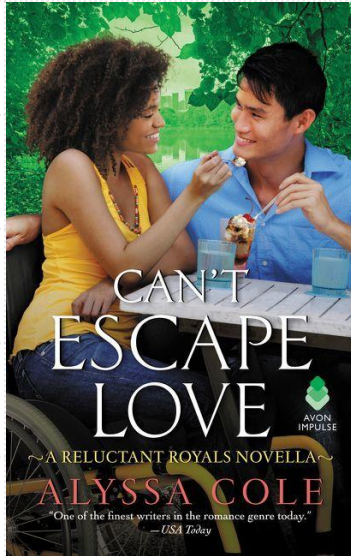
Sports



Small Town

Religion and Cultural Underrepresentation





Disability Underrepresentation

Getting from
A to B.





Finding Underrepresented Titles

- Nearly the same
- May have to look a little bit harder
- May have to do specific searches
- IT IS WORTH THE EFFORT to have stories from many different perspectives
- These titles aren't so much hidden as they are hidden in plain sight.
- You're getting them all from the same places.

Acquiring Underrepresented Titles

- For the most part, traditional publishers are acquiring more titles by underrepresented authors featuring characters that have been invisible heretofore in romance.
- A lot of “diverse” titles are also written by indie authors, which do not have quite the same library distribution as traditionally published books.
- If they are locked to one digital vendor, check for paperbacks.
- Knowing about something, even if you don’t have it in the collection, will help in multiple ways.
- The story doesn’t stop with acquisition.





Promotion and Marketing

- Because so many myths persist about books by/about underrepresented people, they need a bit more help making it into people's hands.
 - Let people know that they're for EVERYONE, not just for the group represented by the character or the author.
 - Promote the book for the plot/characters/subgenres/tropes and not just by the representation. It's not the MOST important part of any story.
 - Make connections (through booklists, displays, etc) between the most popular books and those featuring underrepresented characters. They are more similar than they are different...just like humans.



Questions and Thank You!

- If you think of a question/comment later, feel free to email me at Robin.Bradford@gmail.com
- Or you can reach out on twitter/bluesky @Tuphlos
- Thanks so much!