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Sexing Up Your Subplot

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A Recipe for Success

Learn how to stir a sexy subplot into whatever flavor of genre you're writing.

The Making of a Subplot

Take a closer look at the functions of subplots, including base ingredients and variations.

Well-Known Subplot Recipes

Explore romance subplots in more depth using several popular movies and books.

Now Blend in Your Subplot

Learn how to blend your subplot into your main plot.

The Subplot Thickens

Find out what fuels the sexual heat throughout the arc of your subplot.

Turning Up the Heat

Discover how to mix in the right amount of sexual tension to build to a boiling point.

Cooking Alone or with Friends?

Analyze how a first-person POV romantic subplot can be different from a third-person POV romantic subplot.

Subplot Recipes for Multi-Course Meals

Learn how to spread out the sexual sizzle over multiple books (a series).

Cooking Advice

Check out a few more tips on heating up your romance subplot.

The Final Dish

Wrap up your sizzling subplot leftovers to take home and enjoy.

Appendix—More Subplot Help

Check out several websites that offer more help with subplots.



A Recipe for Success

Are you a mixed-genre writer who wants to spice up your story with a sprinkling or healthy dash of romance?

As mystery writers who blend romantic elements into our stories, we're going to teach you how to stir a sexy subplot into whatever flavor of genre you're writing—women's fiction, paranormal, fantasy, suspense, or mystery.

When the egg-timer goes off and this class is "done," you'll have learned how to create the perfect subplot recipe for your story.

The Making of a Subplot

Before we start talking about the ingredients you need to include to maximize the sex appeal of your secondary stories, let's take a look at the functions of subplots in general.

In the past decade, romantic subplots have become a hot commodity in various genres—and deservedly so, being that romance sales account for over fifty percent of the paperback market. So, if you can stir a pinch of romance into your story and lure a lot more readers because of it, all the better, right? Right. HOWEVER, sexy subplots aren't as simple as just having two characters kiss at the end of a book and run off to the chapel together.

Subplots must serve a much greater purpose than just attracting more readers or adding page count to novels. They must follow a story arc, mix well with the main plot, and enrich the story overall. In addition, any secondary characters featured in the subplot must be the stars of their own stories, including having their own GMCs and "stakes" in the subplot.

So, you want to cook up a good subplot. Do you have all the necessary ingredients?

Base Ingredients

Just as flour and water are required to make any kind of bread, there are some base ingredients that you should include in your subplot to make it more than just a page filler. Without these ingredients, there really is no reason to have your subplot in the story.

Reveal Theme

Along with your main plot, your subplot should reveal the theme of your story. What do we mean by theme? According to the American Heritage Dictionary, *theme* is an implicit or recurrent idea.

Many beginning writers (and not-so-beginning writers) struggle with understanding the concept of theme. Think of each scene in your story as a pearl. Theme is the string that runs through each pearl and ties them all together to make a beautiful necklace...or novel. Without the string, the pearls would just be a jumble of pretty, round beads in your hand. Whether you choose to make your theme blatant or hidden on the page is your call, but you need to have it there to bind your scenes together. Otherwise, your reader might finish your book (if she or he hasn't already thrown the book across the room out of frustration or disgust) and wonder what the purpose of the story was.

So, now that you understand the necessity for a theme, you can begin to appreciate how it can impact your story.

If your theme is a dark, highly emotional idea, your story will be dark and highly emotional. If your theme is light and airy, your story will be light and airy. That doesn't



mean if you're writing suspense, your theme has to be *death* or *murder* or *rape*. Your theme could be *hope* or *family* and still have your readers on the edge of their seat from page one. It's all in how you choose to use your theme.

Shortly, we'll explore theme and its importance, but for now let's move on to the next base ingredient.

Reveal Character

Your subplot must reveal important information about the characters involved. By this, we don't mean it should list hair color, eye color, bust size, or whether they prefer boxers or briefs. The subplot must enhance the reader's understanding of your characters' motivations—the "why" for each character's goal. It must also show the inner needs and relationships of the characters, giving the reader more reason to care about what happens to each character.

*Reveal more about your characters...*this sounds like great "stuff" to have in your book, right? Sure. But how in the heck are you supposed to do it? Well, that's the difference between thinking it's easy to write a good book and actually producing something that shouldn't be recycled into a cardboard box.

Think about when you first meet someone. When you're shaking their hand and they tell you their name, they don't also list all of their personality traits that explain why they're funny, depressed, or a border-line psycho. While knowing these kinds of details right out of the gate would make life easier, it just doesn't happen. For that very reason, you can't introduce your characters and immediately tell the reader all of the things about your story people that make them honorable or despicable. You have to plant seeds, interspersing them close enough to produce cross-pollination, but far enough apart that they will grow along with your page count.

When talking about a romantic subplot, this is especially true. After all, romance is based on emotion, and you can't make your reader instantly like your hero just because you say he's tall, dark, and drool-worthy (this is why instant lust only works in pornography.) While that may be an accurate description of his physical attributes, you need something deeper, something that touches on a likeable personality trait, something that pulls on our emotions and defines him as a hero who is worthy of the heroine. The true route to writing sexy subplots comes with a slower build-up. This doesn't mean it has to take ten chapters just to get to a first kiss, it just means you have to take a little time and effort to make your reader find a character interesting, attractive, or *drool-worthy*.

Okay, so you get the gist of what we mean by revealing character. Now let's hit on the final base ingredient/function of a subplot.

Advance the Main Plot

Finally, your subplot must advance the main plot of the story, keeping the pace moving while adding depth and meaning. As with any element in your story, if your subplot does not help move the main plot forward, it makes it stall—or worse yet, pulls it backward. A subplot that acts as an anchor needs to be cut loose. If your main plot is your mainsail, your subplot needs to be the jib, helping propel the story forward.

This concept may seem pretty simple, but it's actually fairly complex. You can't just throw in an exciting, sexy subplot that doesn't tie into the main plot in a way that is more than just the heroine mixing it up with a tall, dark, drool-worthy guy. The subplot has to serve a purpose. It has to interlace with the main plot. Its scenes need to move the main plot forward. Remember, if you can strip the subplot from your story and the main plot can survive on its own, you don't need the subplot.



Feeling intimidated yet? Wondering why you ever thought you'd throw in a subplot? Well, hold on. We're not done yet. Let's move on and talk about all of the various ingredients you can add to the subplot mix to spice it up even more.

Variations

Now that you know the three base ingredients that form the foundation of your subplot, you can start playing with variations that will not only mix smoothly with your main plot, but also enhance the flavor. Like bread, subplots come in many textures, forms, and flavors.

Here are a few common romance subplot variations that can add dimension to your story:

- **Comic relief**—Your subplot can explore humorous situations and/or feature funny secondary characters.
- **Reflection of the main plot**—Your subplots can explore a conflict or story problem in the main plot. Example: Secondary characters overcoming obstacles that the main characters need to learn to overcome (echoing the story's theme).
- **Contrast**—The subplot can provide opportunity to compare and contrast aspects of a character introduced in the main plot, perhaps revealing the deepest needs of a protagonist who makes every effort to conceal those needs in the main plot.
- **Complications**—How often do we hear the phrase, "this changes everything" after a couple has sex for the first time? Intimacy in a subplot raises the stakes and can be a rich source of conflict that spills over into the main plot.
- **Clues**—(these can also be false clues) Your romance subplot can be "seeded" with information (clues) that will be used later in the main plot.

Regardless of the variation, your subplot can end on a positive/happy or negative/sad note, depending on its purpose. Just remember, whether happy or sad, it has to be satisfying!

Well-Known Subplot Recipes

As we said before, your subplot should include the three basic ingredients of revealing theme, revealing character, and advancing the main plot, but it can have many variations. Let's explore this concept in more depth using the romance subplots in several popular movies and books from our personal archives.

****Warning—Movie and book spoilers to follow!**

Popular Movie Recipes

Bull Durham (Romantic Comedy)

This is the story of Crash Davis, an aging catcher who has been transferred to the Durham Bulls minor league baseball franchise by the "organization" to train Nuke LaLoush, a young, up-and-coming pitcher.

Reveal Theme:

The theme in *Bull Durham* is in your face right from the start—*Baseball*. The movie starts with Annie Savoy narrating how "the only church that feeds the soul day-in and day-out is the church of baseball." In this beginning narrative, Annie also mentions that "making love is like hitting a baseball; you just got to relax and concentrate." Here we have the introduction to the romantic subplot and see how it is immediately tied to the theme.



The baseball theme is strung throughout every scene in the movie, including the romantic subplot scenes. And at the end, in the final scene of the romance subplot, when Annie and Crash are sitting on the porch swing, baseball is still part of the dialogue. Crash announces that he quit after having fulfilled his goal of beating the minor league homerun record and Annie announces that she has quit, too—boys, that is (as in the annual baseball player that she took under her wing and into her bed every year). Annie begins to ramble on about baseball and her theories on why Crash would be a great baseball manager and Crash stops her, saying that he has plenty of time to hear all of her theories, but right now, he just wants “to be.” Annie says she can do that, too, and we know right then that Annie and Crash now have similar goals and will be together for a long time (or the romantic in each of us hopes that’s the case). Then Annie’s voice comes on (narration), and while we watch Annie and Crash dancing together in her dining room, she gives the final line of the movie and the main plot—a quote from Walt Whitman that involves baseball.

You can see, in this example, how even though the subplot is the romance between Crash and Annie, the theme of baseball is included in each scene (even the sex scene, when Crash comes to Annie’s door with the news that he’s been released—he’s come to her arms, needing her to help make him whole again).

Reveal Character:

We’ve already given an example of how the romantic subplot in *Bull Durham* reveals Crash’s character when he states his beliefs in the scene when Annie is measuring up both Nuke (the young pitcher who Crash is assigned to mentor) and Crash, picking who she wants as her lover for the season. One thing we didn’t mention about this scene that also shows Crash’s character is that when Annie says she wants to get to know both men to decide who to take into her bed, Crash bristles and asks her why she gets to choose and not him. From the start in this relationship, we see that these two are going to have sparks flying every time they are in the same room.

A little later, Annie and Crash are at the batting cage with Annie supposedly showing Crash how to hit. This scene not only shows that Annie isn’t just full of hot air, she knows how to swing a bat, but also shows that she’s not a complete tramp (unlike her blonde friend who has had sex with most of the team and switches “hitters” often). When Crash asks her if “this is going to happen—us?”, meaning get together, she tells him that “despite my rejection of most Judeo-Christian ethics, I am, within the framework of the baseball season, monogamous.”

This scene has several other important character-revealing bites (here are a few):

- Annie and Crash both discover their shared goal of giving Nuke the mentoring needed to get him to the major leagues. This shows they are both caring people, even though their reasons to succeed in their goals are very different.
- Annie tells Crash she knows his secret—he’s close to breaking the minor league homerun record. His reaction is to ask her not to tell anyone, especially the newspapers. Not only do they share a secret, but both Annie agreeing to keep quiet about it and Crash wanting her to keep quiet show admirable character traits.
- Annie rejects Crash (after he initially rejected her). This rejection game goes back and forth throughout the movie until Nuke is called up to the major leagues, Annie breaks it off with Nuke, and she and Crash are free to get together. By sticking to her monogamous declaration even though she’s obviously very attracted to Crash, Annie is showing that while she may be free with her sexuality, she is an honorable person who stands by her words.



Advance the Main Plot:

Could *Bull Durham* exist without the romance? No. While the romance takes a backseat (perfect place for a romance-ha!) to the story of Crash Davis and the downhill slide of his baseball career, the romance subplot plays a key role in showing the emotional side of Crash. It shows how he grows as a person (his character arc).

While Crash can hold his own on the baseball field, which we see in several scenes when he's in the locker room and in the ballpark, he's at his most vulnerable around Annie. When she is present, he is weak, frustrated, wanting more. She stirs something deeper than baseball inside of him. In the end, he is willing to give up his dream of being a major league baseball player, to settle for being a major league coach instead, but he isn't willing to give her up. He comes back for her, tells her, "I got a lot of time to hear your theories, and I want to hear every damned one of them." We know he wants her by his side as he strives for his new goal.

Bull Durham without the romance subplot would be incomplete. The romance not only spices up the story, it mixes with the main plot seamlessly to produce a delicious, fulfilling, tasty treat.

Witness (Suspense)

Witness is about a detective, John Book, who escapes to Pennsylvania Amish country after a young murder witness identifies Book's colleague as the culprit, unveiling a departmental conspiracy that puts them all in danger.

Reveal Theme:

The theme in *Witness* is *Community*. It's stated visually in the opening scene as we watch the members of this Amish community helping and supporting one another. In contrast, John Book, a Philadelphia detective, lives in relative isolation with connection to only one family member and one friend, his partner. When Book is shot and recovers (in hiding) in the Amish home, he is viewed as a community outsider, but trust grows between Rachael (the boy's mother) and Book, and they become connected by their shared experience, by their love for her son, and their mutual attraction. The theme is put to the ultimate test because of the romance subplot. At its climax, a gun is placed at Rachael's head, and Book must lay down his gun to save her, but backed by members of this Amish community the bad guy is defeated.

Reveal Character:

While he lives with this Amish family and recovers from his wound, Book has to stop acting like a cop, and instead act like a human being. In the romance subplot, his true character and feelings are revealed in glances, when they dance (while resisting an obvious attraction), in the way he guzzles a glass of lemonade while working. Book becomes a multi-dimensional character in this relationship with Rachael. His inner needs are exposed and the audience is now not only asking if Book will be able to protect Rachael and her son from the bad guys, but will they overcome their cultural differences to make a future life together?

Advance the Main Plot:

The romance develops while Book thinks Rachael and her son are safe at home, away from the danger that awaits him back in Philadelphia. Subplot and main plot intersect several times. When he learns that his partner is killed, Book can't go back to Philadelphia. The sense of jeopardy intensifies, impacting both the main plot and the romance subplot. Finally, because of his love for Rachael, the stakes couldn't be higher



when the murderers arrive to eliminate the threat that Book and Rachael's son pose, and one of them places a gun to Rachael's head.

While this is not a happily ever after romance, it's highly effective as an example of a romance subplot with passionate sizzle, essential to the overall story arc.

The Mummy (Action/Adventure)

This movie is about Evelyn, a clumsy yet intelligent Egyptologist, who wants to prove herself to her peers; and Rick, a swashbuckling, against-all-odds type of rebel who helps Evelyn undertake an expedition to Hamunaptra (a secret city rumored to be full of treasures) to discover an ancient book. Unfortunately, they accidentally wake up a mummy in the process, and all hell breaks loose.

Reveal Theme:

The theme in *The Mummy* is *Justice*, as in: everyone in the movie will get the justice they deserve. This theme is evident right from the start of the film, when Rick and Benny (a minor villain) are looking out at a huge army barreling toward them. Rick stands strong, his gun ready, facing certain death. Benny chickens out and not only runs and hides, but when Rick has to retreat, Benny blocks him from sharing the safe haven. At this point, we hope that somehow, someday, Benny will get punished for this act of cowardice.

The theme is not only strung throughout the scenes in the movie, but also in the characters' (primary and secondary) GMC. For example, Evelyn, the heroine, has a goal of being a Bembridge scholar; her motivation is it will give her the status of a peer that she deserves; her conflict is that the Bembridge scholars keep rejecting her. By the end of the movie, she proves that she is actually smarter than the Bembridge scholars and saves the world, and gets the justice she deserves—finally. An example of this with a minor character is the pilot Rick hires. His goal was to die a hero. Why? To be like his fellow pilots of old. His conflict is that he's still alive and has no medals of honor. When he flies Rick back to Hamunaptra through the mummy's deadly sandstorm and dies in the crash, he gets the justice he deserved—an honorable, hero's death.

But let's talk about the theme in relation to the romance between Evelyn and Rick. It's obvious that they each get what they deserve (each other in their happily ever after) at the end with that final kiss, but how does the theme play out in earlier scenes? At the beginning of their romance, Evelyn saves Rick from certain death by hanging. We know that whatever Rick has done to wind up in jail, it can't be bad enough to land him in a noose. After all, he's a hero; just a little rebellious is all. So, justice is evident when he isn't subjected to a criminal's death. Then there is the scene on the boat when he rolls his guns out across the table and they talk about the kiss he gave her while he was in jail. When she prods him for why he did it, he's flippant, saying it was no big deal, and Evelyn is upset (it's obvious the kiss meant something to her). Where is the justice for Evelyn? She's saved this guy's hide, is obviously attracted to him, yet he insists the kiss means nothing. This is a set-up for the scene when Evelyn gets drunk and Rick almost kisses her again. No longer is he glib about a kiss. Suddenly, it means a lot more to Rick, and in a sense, Evelyn gets what she deserves, Rick's attraction on a non-superficial level. In other scenes with Rick and Evelyn, there is talk about the mummy (someone we know to have been a ruthless man) and him getting such a severe punishment in death—justice he must have deserved. So, the theme is used in a variety of ways in the subplot.



Reveal Character:

Now let's talk about Rick and Evelyn, and how the romance subplot reveals more about their personalities.

Back to that scene on the boat and Rick's flippancy—because that single kiss meant so much to Evelyn, we know that her experience with men is very limited. Rick, on the other hand, kisses women for the hell of it. He's had his fair share of wine and women.

Now let's move on to the scene where Evelyn gets drunk and Rick almost kisses her again. Evelyn is a virtuous woman, proud of the hard work she's done in an effort to be a scholar. When she drunkenly defines herself as a "librarian," she shows Rick a side of her that he admires. She doesn't care about her looks, she only cares about learning. Rick is attracted to that. Sure she's beautiful, but he's had plenty of women who are easy on the eyes. Evelyn is smart, and Rick is turned on by that. This scene shows more of Rick and Evelyn's characters, gives us even more reason to root for them to share that kiss—unfortunately, a mummy is about to step between them and possibly remove any chance of their happily ever after.

Advance the Main Plot:

In this movie, the romance is key because it spurs the warrior in Rick. If he wasn't initially attracted to Evelyn, he might not have kissed her in jail. Then she saves his bacon, and he shows up at the boat to lead her, as promised, to Hamunaptra. Had she been an ugly, old, bitchy hag, would Rick have showed up? Maybe. But maybe not. As his attraction turns into something more serious, he becomes Evelyn's protector (not that she feels she needs one).

The romance in this story provides the grease for the main plot of finding the fabled city, the treasures, and then stopping the mummy. Rick believes in Evelyn's intelligence, turns to her for help with the mummy, especially when his guns won't stop it. He risks his life, battling a small army of mummies to save her. Evelyn in turn leans on Rick whether she wants to or not. She could lean on her brother for help, after all he's right there with her through most of the film, but her brother isn't a warrior. He doesn't have Rick's courage, and Evelyn is drawn to that bravery. She opens up to Rick, sharing with him—and us, the viewers—her knowledge about Egyptian history (her talisman), in return, he shares his guns (his talisman). This shows an intimacy almost as important as flesh on flesh.

Take the romance out of *The Mummy*, and the movie is dry and hollow—kind of like what the mummy's insides should be.

Blade Runner (Science Fiction)

In this futuristic detective story, humans have genetically engineered replicants, androids designed for labor and entertainment purposes in off-world colonies. A group of replicants have illegally returned to Earth to seek out a way to extend their four-year life span, and Rick Deckard, a former cop (blade runner) of questionable morality, is recruited to hunt them down and "retire" them.

Reveal Theme:

The theme in *Blade Runner* is a question—*What does it mean to be human?* In this dark and oppressive future world, the manufactured humans show more emotion and more appreciation for life than the real humans. Dispassionate blade runners test suspected replicants by asking emotion-provoking questions to provide indicators of the subject's "humanity." The Harrison Ford character, Deckard, conducts such a test at his first meeting with Rachael, a more advanced type of replicant who doesn't know she isn't human. He tests her, but it's also a test for him. Can he prove she's a replicant?



In a Deckard/Rachael relationship subplot scene at his apartment, Deckard is surrounded by photographs. He should have a sense of human connection through these family photographs although he appears empty inside. Rachael also has some family photos—connecting her to implanted memories. They both have evidence of connection—one supposedly real, one false. Is one more human than the other?

This question of what it means to be human echoes throughout the movie—in the Sebastian/Pris subplot (one human, one replicant, both with “artificial” friends) and in the Roy versus Deckard struggle for survival in the final scene as Roy has just minutes to live before his four-year life span comes to an end. Through Deckard’s relationship with Rachael and his battle against Roy for survival, Deckard finds his humanity.

Reveal Character:

In the beginning of *Blade Runner*, Rick Deckard is a very reluctant protagonist. He stares longingly at an advertisement to begin again off-world. Instead of taking this second chance at another kind of life, he is forced back into service as a blade runner. His emotions must be shut down so that he can do his job as a hunter/killer, but when Rachael confronts him at his apartment, demanding answers about the test, Deckard confirms her fear—that she is a replicant. She cries. He resists responding emotionally, but offers her comfort, human kindness—revealing something of himself beyond the blade runner.

In a later scene, we see his emptiness and grow to understand that the connection Deckard has with Rachael is the only one he has. He needs her. We see his vulnerability, another layer to the complexity of his character, when he calls her to meet him for a drink and she refuses him.

After she kills one of the rebel replicants and saves Deckard’s life, they have an even stronger bond—one of trust and mutual acceptance. As a blade runner, he will never hurt her, but he knows that someone else will try. He’s too much of a “guy” to declare his love, but he clearly cares for her.

At the climax of the romance subplot, Rachael studies his photos, plays the piano, and loosens her hair, as if trying to be more human. Deckard kisses her and she runs for the door. Blocking her path, he forces her to confront her feelings, her emotional needs and fears, and in turn, he confronts his own.

Deckard grows from an emotionally void killer to a man willing to embrace life and protect the woman he loves. Remove the romance subplot from *Blade Runner*, and the full growth of character is not possible, and the relationship aspect of what it means to be human is not proven.

Advance the Main Plot:

The main plot of *Blade Runner* is essentially a detective story about a jaded cop on the hunt for four individuals desperate to live. The romance subplot allows Deckard and Rachael to become more human. By illuminating the emotions driving the romance, it helps us understand the replicants’ drive to live. It adds complexity to the overall story as Deckard grows to no longer being able to dispassionately eliminate other living beings. Without the subplot the audience will not be as emotionally moved when Roy, the replicant leader, saves Deckard’s life in the climax of the main plot and then loses his own. Finally, the story arc of the subplot motivates Deckard to move Rachael into hiding, giving him a second chance at life—what he wanted in the beginning.



Your Turn to Cook—Movie Homework

Okay, we've given you several examples of how the base subplot ingredients are used in films, now it's your turn to analyze some films. We'll even provide a few hints to help you. Get cooking!

Two Mules for Sister Sara (Western)

In this nineteenth-century Western, Hogan (the hero) is a mercenary who hires his gun out to the highest bidder. While riding through the desert, he comes across Sister Sara (the heroine), a nun who's about to be raped. He saves her, and then she follows him through the desert, much to his annoyance. When Hogan hears of a chest of money headed for a French regiment in the town in which Sara's friends live, he's on a mission to fill his pockets with gold. Sara just wants to help her friends and dislikes the French. During their quest, a very unusual romance ensues.

Reveal Theme:

The theme in this movie is *Faith*, as in confidence or trust in a person or thing. However, it's also played with in relation to Sara being a nun. As you watch the movie, see if you can see how the theme is strung through the romance subplot.

Reveal Character:

Hogan being a tight-lipped, hardcore, atheist mercenary makes for a hard character to get to know. How can you offset such a hero? Make the heroine his opposite and shake in several tablespoons of romance. Because Hogan is attracted to her from the start (when he sees her naked and vulnerable as her would-be-rapists dance around her), he opens up to her in a way he has not with anyone else. Through her badgering questions, we learn more about the man behind the guns. And as she begins to show her true self with several slip-of-the-lips, we start to see that there is a whole other side to Sara that her nun's habit is disguising. But enough hints and help, watch the movie yourself and see just how the romance gives you a fuller understanding of who each character really is.

Advance the Main Plot:

How does the romantic subplot in this story advance the main plot? Here's a clue, look at how they come to rely on each other for help and information. Hogan, being a mercenary, is not someone who readily needs someone else, but in this movie, he allows himself to ask Sara for help. He needs her for the details she knows about the French (from the language, to the regiment, to the layout of the fort the French are occupying), and that need grows into something physical as he learns more about the real Sara under her nun's habit. Sara, in return, wants Hogan for his guns. She needs him to help her friends escape from the French. Their relationship builds from exchange, and this helps propel the movie toward the climax. Now it's your turn, watch the film, and think about how the romance advances the main plot.

Underworld (Horror/Paranormal)

Underworld is a tale about vampires and werewolves and the centuries-old war in which they've been embattled. The heroine is a female vampire named Selene, who has a reputation for her strength and werewolf-hunting prowess. The hero is Michael, a peaceful doctor who is bitten and becomes a werewolf. What he doesn't know is that he's the missing link the werewolves have been looking for to lead them to victory. But Selene knows of his power, and she intends to kill him before he has a chance to use it.



Reveal Theme:

In *Underworld* there is a theme of *Discovery*. From Selene discovering the truth about Michael's bloodline, to each character discovering the truth about who they really are and what is in their past, this theme is somewhat obvious. As you watch the movie, see if you can see how the theme is strung through the romance subplot.

Reveal Character:

The romance in this movie shows a softer side of Selene, a warrior known to kill werewolves without a second thought. As she gets to know Michael (in the process of trying to keep him from the hands of the enemy werewolves and discover why they want him so badly), we see a more vulnerable heroine. We also learn how she became who she is through Michael's questioning. As for Michael—well, watch the movie and see how the romance reveals more about his character and think about how things would change if Selene and Michael's relationship remained platonic.

Advance the Main Plot:

Through Selene and Michael's growing relationship, we learn the history of the centuries-old battle between vampires and werewolves. We also understand the motivation for each side, and in the end, we discover a truth that shakes Selene to the core and irrevocably changes her outlook. As you watch this film, pay attention to each scene involving the romance subplot and analyze how what occurs in the scene changes the main plot.

Popular Book Recipes

J.D. Robb's Naked in Death (Suspense)

This book is the first in a series of futuristic mysteries about Eve Dallas, a ten-year veteran police lieutenant, set in New York City. In her search for a murderer who is killing prostitutes, she finds herself falling for her number-one suspect, Roarke (the hero).

Reveal Theme:

In *Naked in Death*, the theme of *Secrets* is threaded throughout the story.

In the first scene of the first chapter, we meet Eve and learn she has killed a child-murderer the night before—the trauma of it has given her nightmares. This is the first hint toward Eve's big secret, revealed later in the story, of being sexually molested and abused by her father. At the end of this scene, Eve is contacted by her commander, told to skip the usually required psychological evaluation, and go straight to the scene of a crime with the knowledge that this is a "Code Five" (which means it's so secret that Eve will be working with just the help of one other cop and the press is not to know about it—another secret). The second scene involves Eve going to the scene of another murder—a hooker left in bed with three bullet wounds. The dead woman has her own secret, the identity of her murderer, and Eve's job is to figure out her secret. During this scene, we learn of a possible suspect: a very rich and powerful man who goes only by the name Roarke. Besides the whole secretive feel that comes with having a one-word name, we are told that Eve shouldn't even dare to point a finger at Roarke unless she is positive he's the killer, or he'll crush her. Oh, can't you just imagine all the secrets this Roarke character must be keeping? In the final scene of Chapter One, we visit a lush spa the hooker used to frequent. Here, we learn a little bit about the woman and her family, and a fourth secret is revealed: she had a date very recently with Roarke, who she said she



might be in love with. Now we are left to wonder what happened on this date—a secret between the hooker and Roarke.

So, you can see how the theme is laced through each scene. As the story unfolds, Eve has to try to uncover secret after secret, using the scant clues peppered here and there. But now let's focus on the subplot, the romance between Eve and Roarke, and how the theme is mixed into it.

As we've already said, Roarke, the hero, is introduced and immediately has secrets for Eve to uncover. The first time the two meet is at the hooker's funeral. By now, we have learned that the hooker lived in an apartment building owned by Roarke and that he collects guns. After the funeral, we dive into Roarke's head for a moment and find out he has an aversion to cops (this, of course, must be because he has some secrets to hide from the law). While Eve travels back to the city with Roarke, asking questions about the case, the sexual tension hovers, gaining momentum for both of them. As their relationship develops over the next six or seven chapters, Eve is torn between her attraction to Roarke and her suspicions about him. During these scenes, trust is being established, and Roarke is not an easy man for Eve to let her guard down around—plus, he is a prime suspect and a relationship of any kind with him could make her lose her job. Scene by scene, Eve (and the reader) uncover more and more of Roarke's secrets, and Roarke in return whittles away the wall Eve has hidden behind for years (along with her secret). By Chapter Ten, Eve gives in to Roarke and they have sex. More chapters go by and more of Roarke's secrets are revealed as his trust and affection grows; meanwhile Eve continues to hold out on him, keeping far enough away to protect the secret that made her who she is now. All the while, two more hookers are murdered and Eve is digging through clues to find out the secret identity of the villain. When she finds out in Chapter Eighteen that the staunch, politically ultra-conservative grandfather of the first hooker had been sexually molesting the woman since she had been a little girl, Eve takes it personally. She brings down the up-and-coming presidential candidate and in an emotional release after the big showdown, she tells Roarke her secret—the trust has finally been established in the relationship. Here you can see how the theme tied into the romance. Both the hero and heroine had secrets that they needed to share before the romance could be free to fully blossom. And in the last two chapters, we see a newfound closeness between Eve and Roarke that came from sharing their secrets.

Reveal Character:

The romance subplot between Eve and Roarke is very important in showing what drives Eve to risk her job and life to solve this murder case—her own horrible past. Because of her growing affection for Roarke, we see Eve taking risks she never would have before. We can identify with this part of Eve. She's not just a die-hard, work-addicted cop, she's a woman who has feelings, who is willing to risk losing the thing she covets most in her life—her job—to explore these feelings and desires.

As for Roarke, his growing love for Eve shows us a very soft side of a man who at the start of the story is so powerful that Eve should be cautious to even give him a dirty look. When he first meets Eve, he admits that he's attracted to her in spite of her being a cop, which is unprecedented for him. During the black moment, we can see how hurt he is by what he believes is her lack of trust. And by Chapter Eighteen, he admits his love for her. The poor sucker is hooked now.

Without the romance subplot, Eve would just be a cardboard, police character. Her relationship with Roarke makes her human and more likeable—and shows her flaws.



Advance the Main Plot:

Without Roarke, Eve would never have solved the case. Several times throughout the story, it's because of her use of Roarke's possessions and/or help that she figures out another clue and the main plot moves forward.

For example, Roarke has access to illegal information due to his immense wealth and power. Eve uses this access to find out secret information about the Police Chief, who has been trying to stop her investigation. The only reason Roarke allows her to have this access is because of the developing intimacy between the two of them.

Kristin Hannah's Between Sisters (Women's Fiction)

Between Sisters focuses on Meghann Dontess, a woman haunted by heartbreak. Twenty-five years ago she was forced to make a terrible choice that broke her relationship with her sister, Claire. Now, Meghann is a hotshot divorce attorney who doesn't believe in intimacy—until she goes home for her sister's wedding and meets the one man (Joe) who can change her mind.

Reveal Theme:

In *Between Sisters*, Meghann, Joe, and Sam (Claire's father) all made tough choices in the name of love, but those choices have driven wedges into their relationships. They cannot have the loving relationships they need until they forgive themselves—the theme that is woven through the main plot and the subplots.

In the main plot, we see Meghann in repeated visits to her psychiatrist. She seeks help with her "issues" but doesn't want to talk about the root cause of her problems—that when she was sixteen, desperate to keep her nine-year-old sister out of foster care after their mother abandoned them, Meg called Claire's father in the hope that he'd take them both in. But Sam was angry at his ex-wife and, by association, Meg and he rejected her. So, Claire and Meg have this love/hate relationship because Claire feels Meg abandoned her much like their mother did, and Meg can't forgive herself for what they've become—"polite strangers who share a blood type and an ugly childhood."

When Meg is forced to take a vacation and travels to where her sister grew up to give her the wedding Meg knows Claire always dreamed of, she meets Joe, an emotionally broken former doctor who was acquitted for euthanizing his cancer-patient wife. Meg seeks relief from her pain through one-night stands, and she picks him up in a bar because he's all that's available, but their loneliness is a bond, and through the story arc of this romance subplot, they grow from a state of hopelessness to being hopeful that this can become a real relationship. But, to have the relationship they long for, they must forgive themselves before they can accept someone else's love.

Reveal Character:

The romance subplot serves a major purpose of showing how conflicted Meg is. She is the queen of one-night stands, a control freak, and she is falling for a guy who she thinks is as pathetic as she is. But, unexpectedly, she has feelings for Joe. She's becoming hopeful. Through this subplot, she lets her guard down, she gives up her need for everything to be on her terms, and we see her vulnerability. Although we know Meg is one tough bitch and the advocate any woman would want if she were in trouble, Meg's afraid to call Joe to ask him out on a date. In another scene, she is emotionally drained and needs his strength. This subplot reveals the "tough bitch" exterior to be a mask Meg wears and does it very effectively.



Advance the Main Plot:

The romance in this story advances the main plot through reinforcement of the theme of *Forgiveness*, but it also gives Meg and Joe some hope and the emotional healing they need to face their fears. Meg and Claire's relationship is restored, and Meg is able to talk to Sam about his rejection of her twenty-five years earlier. Joe, a former doctor, becomes instrumental in saving Claire's life—something he couldn't do years earlier for his wife. These characters form an extended family, completing the story arc.

Janet Evanovich's One for the Money (Mystery)

In this first book in the Stephanie Plum series, we meet Stephanie, a recently-fired lingerie buyer turned bounty hunter. The first bail jumper case she receives is for Joe Morelli (the hero), a local vice cop and ex-lover, who has been and continues to be nothing but trouble for Stephanie. In her quest to bring Joe in so she can get paid, she crosses the path of a nasty prizefighter and not only is her next meal at risk, but so is her life.

Reveal Theme:

While this story is mainly about Stephanie Plum's trials and tribulations in her new vocation, bounty hunter, the theme in the story is *Family*. On the first page of the book, right after we learn a little about the setting ("the burg") in Trenton, New Jersey, Stephanie mentions in her narration that Trenton "was an okay place to raise a family." Next, after we learn a little bit about the history between Stephanie and Joe, the story moves to Stephanie driving home to her parents for the standing Sunday pot roast dinner. Again, family is important right at the beginning of this story, and we know from here on out that Stephanie's family will be important secondary characters in this story. Now let's look at how the romance subplot is strung along on this theme. In the very first scene with Stephanie and Joe together, Stephanie tells Joe she is going to take him to the police station because he's in violation of his bond agreement. He laughs in her face. She says to him, "What about your mother...what will she say to everyone, that her son Joe was too cowardly to stand trial?" She tries to use familial guilt to convince him to let her take him in (which doesn't work). Stephanie even goes so far as to visit Joe's mother while trying to find him, and again, she runs into a brick wall. Throughout the other scenes with Stephanie and Joe, family is often mentioned or thought about. So, family plays a role in defining the history between Joe and Stephanie and the present, and the romance supports the family theme running throughout the book.

Reveal Character:

We learn a lot about Stephanie from her past and current relationship with Joe Morelli right from the start. The first line of the book reads, "There are some men who enter a woman's life and screw it up forever. Joseph Morelli did this to me—not forever, but periodically." Stephanie's feelings for Joe, a man who she knows she should never get involved with but can't help herself, reveal a lot about Stephanie.

We know from the first line that whenever these two are together, Stephanie is going to have trouble with control. We also know from this that Joe has some killer sex appeal. The author doesn't have to go into a lot of detail on his character to convince us of his ability to make females swoon. She just tells us a couple of stories about how Joe got Stephanie to let him play choo-choo-train with her as kids and then seduced her out of her virginity at the bakery where she worked in high school, and we know right away that he is extremely charming.



In their first scene together, after informing Stephanie he is not going to let her take him anywhere, Joe looks her up and down and says, "I like the way you've let your hair go curly. Suits your personality. Lots of energy, not much control, sexy as hell." In that line, Joe has just revealed a lot about Stephanie for the reader, something Stephanie could never narrate believably (it would come across as author intrusion).

As the mystery progresses and Stephanie learns more about the situation that landed Joe on the "most wanted" list, she begins to have doubts about Joe being guilty and second thoughts about taking him to the police. The romance is showing that while Stephanie is in dire need of cash and finds Joe extremely frustrating, she is having trouble with her conscience when it comes to having him locked up again. She goes so far as to make a deal with Joe to help him find the "real" killer in the story. Through the romance subplot we see that Stephanie's affection for Joe goes deeper than just lust—she cares for him, which makes her a deeper, more likeable character.

Advance the Main Plot:

If there wasn't a hint of romance when Joe and Stephanie are together, Stephanie would not find herself questioning Joe's guilt. She would never agree to help him prove his innocence by finding the real killer—especially since she has to put her life on the line and hang out in very dangerous places to help him. The romance is necessary to help motivate Stephanie to unravel the mystery, and it lends itself nicely to the humor that is laced throughout the book.

Your Turn to Cook—Book Homework

Okay, we've given you a couple of examples of how the base subplot ingredients are used in books, now it's your turn to analyze the pages on your own. We'll even provide a few hints to help you. Get cooking!

Laurel K. Hamilton's Guilty Pleasures (Horror)

Anita Blake, nicknamed the "Executioner" by vampires, is a necromancer and vampire hunter. While vampires are officially protected by law, it's her job to bring down those vampires who break the law and kill. In this first book in the Anita Blake series, there is a murderer on the loose and innocent vampires are turning up dead (well, deader than they already were—ha!). Even though she is not a fan of vampires, it's Anita's job to help figure out who and why.

Reveal Theme:

The theme in this first book is *Uncomfortable Relationships*. Throughout the story, Anita's shows her discomfort with her relationship with supernatural beings (especially the sexy vampire, Jean Claude, a.k.a. the hero) and with her own powers as a necromancer. As you read the book (if you can stomach some graphic murder details), see if you can see how this theme is strung through each scene in the romance subplot.

Reveal Character:

We know from the get-go that Anita is a kick-ass heroine, but what is her weakness? Well, Jean Claude helps us to see this. Her attraction to the vampire makes her uncomfortable as hell. We begin to see that Anita is not as black and white as she'd like to be. While you read the story, notice how her reaction to Jean Claude (and romance) shows us the chink in her armor.



Advance the Main Plot:

How does the touch of romance in this story advance the main plot? Anita needs Jean Claude's help to solve the case, Jean Claude needs Anita's help to become the leading vampire in the city. Would the story be as exciting if they developed a friendship instead of battle a romance? No way. Anita is so strong that the story needs her weakness around Jean Claude for us to believe she is fallible. Read for yourself and note the effect of the romance subplot.

Dean Koontz's Watchers (Paranormal)

Watchers is about the struggle between good and evil—both animal and human. The animals are products of recombinant DNA experiments that went horribly wrong. One looks like a normal golden retriever; the other is an apelike killing machine in relentless pursuit of the dog. Both have human intelligence. The dog is taken in by a despondent man, who is transformed by the relationship he forms with this amazing dog, and the emotionally fragile woman who comes into their lives.

Reveal Theme:

According to Dean Koontz, *Watchers* contains the following themes: The healing power of love and friendship; the struggle to overcome the past and change what we are; the moral superiority of the individual over the workings of the state and large institutions; the wonder of both the natural world and the potential of the human mind; the relationship of mankind to God; transcendence; and how we sustain hope in the face of our awareness that all things die.

The theme element running through the romance subplot is the healing power of love and how it helps us overcome the past. Both Travis and Nora are damaged souls, filled with emotional scars of the past. With love for one another and a shared love for Einstein, the dog, they become a family (providing the love and support they have longed for most of their lives) and find emotional healing. As you read the book, see if you can see how the theme is strung through each scene in the romance subplot.

Reveal Character:

We quickly learn that Travis is ex-Special Forces, skilled in how to kill and how to survive. But in a close encounter with a rattlesnake he wants to do neither. He's beyond caring. In the relationship subplots, we see him grow to care. Einstein gives him something to care about (and protect). He meets Nora and we feel his vulnerability in their awkward first encounters. As you read the story, notice how through the growing relationship with Nora, Travis reveals himself to be a fierce protector embracing the commitment he once feared.

Advance the Main Plot:

The romance subplot advances the main plot by creating a family unit with Travis, Nora and Einstein to stand against the threat of evil—the "Outsider" and a hired killer. By making them an emotionally whole family, the stakes are at their pinnacle when their home is under siege by the killers. Read for yourself and note the effect of the romance subplot.

Now Blend in Your Subplot

Okay, you've learned all you need to know about the basic ingredients of a subplot. Now it's time to blend those in with your main plot.



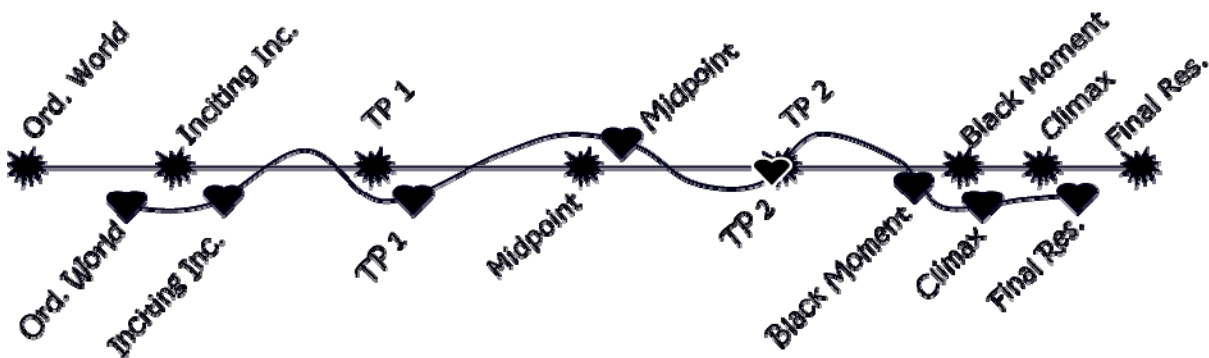
The subplot requires a story arc. What do we mean by story arc? According to Webster's Dictionary, it's "the principal plot of an ongoing storyline in the episodes of a narrative; the continuous progression or line of development in a story."

For the purposes of this workshop, the story arc consists of the following steps in the order listed:

- Ordinary World
- Inciting Incident
- First Turning Point
- Midpoint
- Second Turning Point
- Black Moment
- Climax
- Final Resolution

(**Note:** For more on story arcs, see http://www.justaboutwrite.com/A_Archive_Plot2LL.html)

Since a subplot is a secondary plot, it must begin after you've started the main plot and finish prior to the ending of the main plot. In addition, the subplot's story arc needs to interweave with the main plot's story arc as illustrated in the example below (romance subplot line represented by the curvy line dotted with hearts):



This is not an exact formula. Your subplot's beginning and ending, as well as the major story elements' occurrences, can blend into the main plot wherever they work best for the tale you are telling, but the subplot shouldn't run parallel without interweaving once. It's up to you to decide the weave pattern and frequency.

The Subplot Thickens

Okay, we've talked about the story arc, and that we are going to reveal theme, character, and advance the main plot in every one of our subplots. Now, let's stir in some romance.

Just like in the romance genre, romantic subplots in women's fiction, paranormal, fantasy, suspense, or the mystery genre are, at their core, all about sexual tension—the sexual awareness between two characters that escalates with every scene, creating an intimate, emotional bond. And what fuels that sizzle throughout the arc of your subplot? Internal conflict. There is some internal problem keeping them apart—typically, some lesson a character needs to learn.

A sexy subplot doesn't require a consummated love scene. Write what fits the story and the lessons your character(s) need(s) to learn. Just be aware that the sex act (in order for it to be interesting to your reader and you, the writer) should put your character into



an emotionally exposed situation. In non-romance genre fiction, this can be an especially useful tool for developing the distinctive individuality of that character under pressure. And there's nothing like sex to apply some pressure on our story people!

Turning Up the Heat

Because your main plot is not romance, you don't have as much time to develop the romance in your story. However, BEWARE of throwing in instant lust. You can't have your characters meet, shake hands, and then hop into bed. Well, you can, but if you want your reader to feel the sexual tension and excitement that comes with the bed scene, you have to build more slowly.

Several years ago, Linda Howard presented the following Twelve Steps of Intimacy based on Desmond Morris's human behavior research:

1. *Eye to body*—The old once-over, except it happens in a fraction of an instant. Only a few significant details are absorbed. Attraction occurs or it doesn't.
2. *Eye to eye*—Eye contact is sustained only between intimates. If a stranger stares, it's considered rude or an act of aggression.
3. *Voice to voice*—Ranges from small talk to intimate.
4. *Hand to hand*—This requires some trust. Hand to arm counts here, too: a man's excuse to get his hands on her, by guiding her.
5. *Arm to shoulder*—May be a hug.
6. *Arm to waist*—Can be sexual, especially if "waist" is considered the small of the back.
7. *Mouth to mouth*—Full frontal contact during a kiss.
8. *Hand to head*—Requires trust.
9. *Hand to body*—Any body part: breast, shoulder, chest...
10. *Mouth to breast*—Obviously sexual.
11. *Hand to genitals*—We're not talking about baseball players adjusting themselves here.
12. *Genitals to genitals*—No mistaking this.

In an article titled, *Sexual Tension and Intimacy*, Kerri-Leigh Grady gives some great advice about these steps:

- First, spread these out. You don't want the first ten included by Chapter Two. Titillate the reader. Spread them out and reuse a few when necessary.
- Progress naturally. Don't have the heroine with a hand down the hero's pants in Chapter Seven, then in Chapter Eight they have their first kiss, unless the intent is to throw the characters for a loop (which can do wonders for sexual tension).
- Don't skip anything major. First kiss and first sexual intercourse (unless you write sweeties) are vital. So is talking. So is eye contact.
- Keep in mind, too, that the hero and heroine MUST BE AWARE that they are experiencing each of these, or it's not really going to do much to increase sexual tension. In fact, you can use the awareness of each of these as replacements for the 'tightening in his groin' or for other overused euphemisms.

We can't stress how important it is to avoid the Instant Lust Syndrome. If you are writing for a genre outside of the romance genre, you are going to have readers who may not "love" romance in their stories. If you make the romance unbelievable and too heavy handed, you're going to lose fans.



Cooking Alone or with Friends?

Have you ever thought about what Janet Evanovich's book *One for the Money* would have been like had the story been told in third-person point-of-view (POV) and we got to be inside Joe Morelli's head as well as Stephanie Plum's?

A first-person POV romantic subplot can be very different than a third person POV romantic subplot, especially if you allow the reader to see inside both the hero and heroine's head.

For example, if readers know only what is going on in the heroine's head, they experience the doubts and wonders of what the hero is thinking, along with the heroine. But if the reader is allowed to head hop and find out that the hero is head-over-heels in love with the heroine, that unknown element is removed from the story. The romantic tension therefore changes. One example of a change would be from (in first-person POV) the reader wondering if the hero even has any feelings for the heroine to (in third-person POV) if the hero and heroine can overcome their differences and find their happily ever after.

Subplot Recipes for Multi-Course Meals

What if you decide you want to write a series and extend the romance of one hero and heroine throughout multiple stories? No problem. You need to have the relationship arc expand through the whole series rather than just one book.

Janet Evanovich's Stephanie Plum series is a great example of this. In the first book, the romance begins, but only goes so far as the first turning point in the romantic subplot. At the end, Joe and Stephanie have gone from being adversaries to friends with a strong current of sexual tension rippling between them. As the series progresses, so does their romance.

If you're thinking about writing a series and you want to have the same heroine and hero throughout it but want to keep the sexual tension strong and exciting, you're going to need to find a way to develop that relationship a little slower. That doesn't mean they can't have sex in the first book. In JD Robb's *Naked in Death*, Eve and Roarke have sex midway through the story. While they've crossed that physical boundary to intimacy, they are at the very beginning of their relationship when it comes to true openness and intimacy. Eve is very closed, guarded. She never even says she loves him (or thinks it) in this first book, even though Roarke tells her he loves her. We know that as the series progresses, Roarke has his work cut out for him if he wants to reach a truly deep level of closeness with her.

Cooking Advice

As if we haven't already said enough about the topic of subplots, here are a few more tips.

- When you write your sex scene, it can't just be about sex. If you want to write about sex just to have steamy words on a page, submit a story to *Penthouse*. In a romantic subplot, a sex scene has to have a purpose. It must provide some kind of conflict that keeps the plot moving forward. If you can delete the scene and the story keeps whistling along without even a hiccup, it's a gratuitous sex scene and that's it. Your readers aren't dumb. They'll pick up on this.
- Sex between two characters should make their problems worse, not better. What's more, it should add to their list of troubles and dilemmas.



- Make your romance fit your characters. For example, if your heroine is a very serious person and never cracks a smile, she shouldn't be giggling through the sex scene. If your character is always joking around, she shouldn't be angry or violent while she's in the throes of passion.
- On that same note, make your romance fit your voice. If your stories are full of humor, your sex scenes should probably have humor mixed in them, too. If your story is graphic and violent, your sex scenes shouldn't take place while Disney show tunes play in the background.
- Don't get too caught up in the moment. While sex is fun and great, a fifteen-page sex scene is going to get really boring. Imagine your reader, lying there in bed next to your two bunny-rabbit characters, inspecting her fingernails, twirling her hair, and continually asking the two, "Are you done yet?"

The Final Dish

Whew! That was a lot of time in the kitchen. But look at what is now sitting on your table—a mouthwatering dish of a story with a romantic subplot that not only spices up the main plot, but makes your entire book sizzle with sexual tension and excitement.

If you've done your job mixing in the romance just right and made sure not to overcook your sex scenes, you're going to have readers beating down your door, clamoring for your next masterpiece. You have everything you need now, so sit your butt down in that chair and sex up your subplot!

Your Fellow Chefs

Wendy and Ann are two Golden Heart finalists: one finaled in the Strong Romantic Elements (SRE) category, the other has years of experience developing romance subplots and judging the SRE category.

Feel free to contact either of us with any questions or thoughts or comments.

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- Wendy Delaney: wendy@wendydelaney.com



Appendix—More Subplot Help

Following are websites that offer more subplot help.

- Classic Story Structure: http://www.writersstore.com/article.php?articles_id=30
- Romance Subplot: <http://www.romanceaustralia.com/articles/robinson%20secondary%20plot.htm>
- Sexual Tension and Intimacy: <http://groups.msn.com/RomanceWritingTips/sexualtension1.msnw>
- Story arcs: http://www.justaboutwrite.com/A_Archive_Plot2LL.html
- Subplot Lessons: <http://www.mybooktherapy.com/?p=256>
- Subplot Tips: <http://www.cannell.com/page.php?id=8&k=ad2e84ef4d5f66e6494135bff711e66a&t=3>
- Subplots Versus Layers: <http://www.mybooktherapy.com/?p=254>

Bibliography

Ann Charles

Ann Charles writes mysteries full of mayhem, fun, and a little bit of romance. Ann has a B.A. in English with an emphasis on creative writing from the University of Washington. A former Golden Heart and Pacific Northwest Writers Association Literary Contest finalist, she has been a member of the Greater Seattle RWA chapter for many moons, serving as Vice-President, Emerald City Conference Assistant, and Editor/Agent Chair. Ann has written several contemporary novels and is currently toiling away on her next while her agent works on selling her manuscripts. Visit her online at: <http://www.anncharles.com>.

Wendy Delaney

Former Golden Heart finalist, Emerald City Opener winner, and frequent contest judge, Wendy Delaney writes romantic mysteries. She has been an RWA member since 1997 and has served the Greater Seattle chapter as Tape Librarian, Secretary, Treasurer, and Conference Chair.