**Romance Title Suggestions for February’s OTHG Book Club**

For February’s OTHG book club, we are all going to read different romance titles, and then gather to discuss a genre that is dominated by women authors writing for mostly for women’s enjoyment. So, for you folks who prefer literary fiction, you can go back to works like *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre* or any of Jane Austen’s novels. Late in that century, swashbuckling romances like *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and *The Prisoner of Zenda* became popular. If you like gothic/atmospheric romances, you could travel back to the authors our mothers (or at least mine ☺ read) like Victoria Holt (*The Mistress of Mellyn*) or Mary Stewart (*Nine Coaches Waiting, Madame Will You Talk, My Brother Michael*).

For those of you who want some more modern fun, here are some of my favorite authors and their best books. Basically this is SUCH a huge market, you can find romances in any flavor you wish. There are: sweet romances (no sex) inspirational romances (religious elements), Amish romances (yep, that’s a thing), cowboy romances, hot romances (tons of sex) historical romances (set in just about any time period you can imagine), paranormal romances (think ghosts, vampires and werewolves) and futuristic romances (set in space or the future).

Please note: some of these older titles may be out of print, but you can find them easily (and cheaply) through Amazon.

Joanna Bourne’s books are my fav, and my highbrow sister in Italy read them all promptly after I sent her just one for Christmas. Joanna writes smart, brave, resourceful heroines (mostly spies) caught up in the French Revolution. *The Forbidden Rose* *and The Spymaster’s Lady* are both great fun.

LaVyrle Spencer was probably one of the finest writers in the genre. *Morning Glory* is my favorite but you have to get past an ugly scene near beginning to get to a heart-warming story about two lonely outcasts finding love during the Depression. *Hummingbird* and *The Gamble* are well-written stories set in the Old West.

Nora Roberts has written some wonderful romances. Her mid-career books are her best because now she just cranks them out. *Born in Fire* is a terrific contemporary romance about a female Irish glass blower set in Ireland. *All the Possibilities* (about a potter and a senator) and *One Man’s Art* (about a reclusive political cartoonist) are both shorter books that were part of her popular MacGregor series.

Laura Kinsale is well respected by romance writers for her craft and original plots. I love her *Flowers from the Storm* about a mathematical duke who suffers a stroke and falls in love with a Quakeress.

Lisa Kleypas has written tons of good romances with intriguing characters. *It Happened One Autumn* is about a spirited American heiress forced to go hunting for a English noble husband by her ambitious parents. *Marrying Winterbourne* is another good one about a self-made entrepreneur and store owner for falls for a very genteel, sheltered young woman.

Mary Balogh (earlier works only) is a prolific Canadian romance author who has written some fun titles. I particularly enjoyed *Slightly Dangerous* about a school marm falling in love with a very lofty Duke.

Mary Jo Putney (earlier works only!) are well done and set in Regency or Napoleonic England… I liked *Silk and Secrets* (lots of time in the Arabian desert) and *One Perfect Rose* (about a nobleman who thinks he’s dying and ends up traveling with a troop of Shakespearean actors).

You might try Robyn Carr’s very first Virgin River book, titled *Virgin River*, if you’ve watched the series and you’d prefer to read a contemporary romance.

Of course, if you’ve been meaning to try *Outlander* by Diana Gabaldon, here’s your chance. The first two books in the series are very romantic, and then it becomes more of a family saga/time travel story.

BTW, please don’t read any of the Bridgerton books by Julia Quinn unless you are a total fan of the Netflix series. There are so many better romance authors out there. Her books contain pages of endless dialogue… nothing ever happens!

Hope you all enjoy, and I look forward to digging into the romance genre with you all!

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