



I am a compulsive researcher and planner. I want to read everything on a subject before I give it a try. This has its downsides – do I really need to compare 16 dishwashers before I buy one? – but it can also be a positive thing. It means I’m a plotter when it comes to creative writing. And I feel more confident knowing this before I write a story.

Many writers identify as either a pantsers or a plotter. These categories define whether you prefer to just get writing or spend a lot of time planning your story. I’m a hopeless plotter – I love doing research, reading books on writing craft, and filling out charts and workbooks as I get to know my characters and their stories.

As a literature professor who specializes in women’s fiction and early literature, I have read thousands of stories. One of the reasons I love my job is that I get to read and compare the ways great writers bring emotions and ideas alive.

As I worked on plotting out romance novellas I found I had to adapt a lot of the romance models for the shorter form. Could I fit in all 20 key scenes from C.S. Lakin’s framework if there weren’t 20 scenes in my story? Did the 9-beat structure have to be adapted or condensed for novellas? Could I get all of Gwen Hayes’s Romance Beats into 8 chapters?

This led me to create the Romance Novella Plotting Cheat Sheets. I’ve already written a post for the simpler pantsers edition. If you’re new to writing romance and want the quick-start version, [here is that one](#).

