Romantic Classics

Sonnets from the Portuguese
by Elizabeth Barrett Browning
The consummate volume of Romantic poetry. Fans may also enjoy The Brownings, Letters and Poetry, selected by Christopher Ricks. 821.8 BROW / 821.82 BROW

Persuasion by Jane Austen
Not the most obvious Austen pick, but certainly one of her most romantic works. A woman and her former fiancé are reunited years after social pressure led her to end their engagement. FIC AUST

The Scarlet Pimpernel by Baroness Orczy
During the French Revolution, an Englishman masquerading as a fop moonlights as the heroic Scarlet Pimpernel, keeping his true identity hidden from his enemies and from his wife. FIC ORCZ

Doctor Zhivago by Boris Pasternak
A haunting tale of lost love set during the Russian Revolution. In the midst of social upheaval, a poet/physician helps a young woman. Years later, when both are married, they meet and fall in love. FIC PAST

Far From the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy
An Englishwoman flouts tradition to run a rural farm on her own in this delicately woven tale of unrequited love and regret. FIC HARD

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare
Witty, riotous comedy that contrasts two pairs of lovers in a battle of the sexes. 822.3 SHAK / CD BOOK SHAK

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde
Satiric play about love, friendship, and mistaken identity in Victorian society. 822.8 WILD

Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand
Much-mimicked play about a gifted wordsmith with an unappealing appearance, his handsome but less-than-witty friend, and the woman they both love. 842.89 ROST

Love in the Movies

It Happened One Night (1934)
Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert. Screwball comedy wherein a spoiled heiress and an out-of-work journalist chasing her story meet on a bus and fall in love despite themselves. DVD

The Lady Eve (1941)
Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda. Screwball comedy in which a beautiful con woman traveling on a luxury liner falls for the shy, scientifically-minded man she sets out to deceive. DVD

The African Queen (1951)
Humphrey Bogart, Katherine Hepburn. A headstrong, proper English spinster and a shiftless engineer battle the wilds of Africa, the German army, and each other. DVD Blu-ray

The Way We Were (1973)
Barbra Streisand, Robert Redford. Two star-crossed lovers—a passionate social activist and an apolitical writer—reflect on their past through a series of flashbacks. DVD

Moonstruck (1987)
Cher, Nicholas Cage. Romantic comedy about a large Italian-American family in Brooklyn and a woman who falls in love with the “tortured” younger brother of her fiancé. DVD

The Princess Bride (1987)
Cary Elwes, Robin Wright Penn. Comedy, romance, and adventure combine in this beloved fairy-tale epic about true love. DVD

Pride and Prejudice (1995)
Colin Firth, Jennifer Ehle. The seminal adaptation of the Austen favorite about first impressions, misunderstandings, and social comedy. DVD

Possession (2002)
Gwyneth Paltrow, Aaron Eckhart. Adaptation of A.S. Byatt’s novel; two academics follow clues to the shocking love affair of two Victorian-era poets. DVD Blu-ray

"Love doesn't make the world go round, love is what makes the ride worthwhile."
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Is there a subject you’d like to read or learn more about? If you have suggestions for future pathfinders, let us know!
Marianne: helpdesk@bcplib.org
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Revised February 2014
The New Classics

Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks
A celebrated story of love and war which follows a young Englishman from his clandestine love affair in 1910 France through his experiences in the trenches of the Great War. FIC FAUL

The Thorn Birds by Colleen McCullough
Saga chronicling the forbidden love of a beautiful, headstrong young girl and a priest in early 20th-century Australia. Follows different family members from 1915 to 1969. FIC MCCU

Possession by A.S. Byatt
Two academics researching Victorian-era poets trace a series of coded letters, poems, and journal entries to uncover a shocking love affair. Blends romance, comedy, and mystery in both the Victorian and contemporary settings. FIC BYAT

Love in the Time of Cholera
by Gabriel García Márquez
Acclaimed novel about a man who can’t forget the love of his youth and decides to pursue her again, over fifty years after their parting. FIC GARC

The French Lieutenant’s Woman
by John Fowles
The contemporary affair of two actors is interwoven with the story of an engaged Victorian gentleman who becomes infatuated with a woman rumored to be the rejected lover of a French lieutenant. FIC FOWL

The Notebook by Nicholas Sparks
An elderly gentleman reads a story from his notebook to a fellow patient at a nursing home. His story begins in 1940 with two young lovers named Allie and Noah. FIC SPAR LT

Historical Romance

Duke of Shadows by Meredith Duran
An heiress stranded in India falls for a man whose parentage makes him an outcast in British-Indian society, but war and tragedy threaten to keep them apart. Beautifully written, with an intriguing setting and complex characterizations. FIC DURA

Once an Angel by Teresa Medeiros
Orphaned and left molding for years at boarding school, Emily decides to track her absentee guardian to an island off New Zealand where her father died under mysterious circumstances. A fresh Victorian with multiple plot twists. FIC MEDE

Kingdom of Dreams by Judith McNaught
Medieval tale where the enterprising heroine is abducted from a convent and forced to marry her family’s enemy. A perennial favorite of romance readers full of heart-tugging moments. FIC MEDE

For the Roses by Julie Garwood
Mid-19th-century Montana comes to life in this beloved tale of family secrets, mismatched brothers, and a sister’s romance with a Scotsman keeping a secret of his own. FIC GARW

The Shoemaker’s Wife by Adriana Trigiani
In an epic love story spanning continents and both World Wars, two star-crossed lovers meet in Italy as teens and are separated until they eventually discover their combined destiny in America. LT TRIG

Tales of True Love

The Geography of Love
by Glenda Burgess
Memoir of a woman’s fairy-tale romance with an older, twice-widowed man and their 15-year marriage, cut short by his death. B BURG

Love Is a Mix Tape: Life and Loss, One Song at a Time by Ron Sheffield
A memoir of love and loss that follows the romance and marriage of a couple episodically, through the mixed tapes that were made during their relationship. B SHEF

Romantic Comedy

Bet Me by Jennifer Crusie
A modern Cinderella story about mistaken impressions, chaos theory, and doughnuts. A bar bet between two men snowballs and a woman’s simple plan for revenge is interrupted by fate. Hilarity ensues. FIC CRUS

Julie and Romeo by Jeanne Ray
When love blooms between rival florists Julie and Romeo, the age-old feud between their families spurs interference from their grown children, Romeo’s elderly mother, and others. FIC RAY

Nerd in Shining Armor by Vicki Lewis Thompson
A lighthearted take on the desert-island fantasy featuring a woman stranded by a plane crash with a computer geek turned sexy savior. FIC THOM

Love Eternal

A Certain Slant of Light
by Laura Whitcomb
Two spirits who have been dead for decades fall in love and decide to inhabit the bodies of modern teenagers so they can be together. Usually considered a young adult novel, this book is ideal for romantics of all ages. J WHIT

The History of Love by Nicole Krauss
Less a love story than an examination of the emotion, this imaginative novel follows an elderly man recalling his past losses, a young teen seeking to cure her mom’s loneliness, and a very special book that connects them. FIC KRAU

The Gargoyle by Andrew Davidson
The mesmerizing story of a severely burned man and the possibly insane woman who shows up claiming that they loved each other before in medieval Germany. FIC DAVI

Short Story Anthologies

Flights of Love by Bernard Schlink
Short stories about different forms of love from the author of The Reader. FIC SCHL

My Mistress’s Sparrow Is Dead
edited by Jeffrey Eugenides
Love stories from Anton Checkov, Alice Munro, Milan Kundera, William Faulkner, Vladimir Nabokov, and more. FIC MY