

Romance Trading Cards

What are Romance Trading Cards?

Romance Trading Cards is a spur of the moment collaboration that started with a few conversations on Twitter (#romancetradingcards) and has grown from there. To participate, each author creates and prints their own card featuring a character from their book, hero, heroine, villain, one or more--it's ALL up to you. Bring the cards to signings and conferences for readers to collect and trade.

Who's in Charge?

No one is in charge, though I have taken the liberty of creating a unified template according to participant suggestions. There are no requirements, the templates are just there to help. This is a grassroots, guerilla type marketing campaign. It's about the interactions that develop from the experience, not about rigid rules and expectations. Be creative. Have fun!

Down to the Nitty-gritty, how do I participate?

First off, you will need to know, or have the assistance of someone who knows imaging software enough to format it for you.

1. Download the template for your genre from <http://www.jeannelin.com/index.php/romance-trading-cards> The template contains layers and is compatible with Adobe Photoshop or Macromedia Fireworks.
2. There is a back and front template. You are free to do whatever you wish with either side, but this is the intention:
 - a. Front – Full image of your cover. Border is optional
 - b. Back – Romance trading card border with your character info in the middle. The character profile may include an image (original art, stock images, icons, or part of cover), stats, biography or book info, favorite lines, your website. The back design is COMPLETELY open. Please don't feel trapped by my prototype. I'm not a great designer.
3. Create the images in your imaging program and save them as .jpg files. Notice how they need to be flipped on their side horizontally before sending to the printer.
4. Go to GotPrint.com and select Collector Cards (2.5 x 3.5). Put in your order. The standard is 14pt gloss cover, Color both sides, No rounded edges. The number is up to you. The wizard will show you the price.
5. Upload your images and complete your order. Make sure you leave enough time to get the cards shipped to you in time for your conferences.

6. Bring the cards to RT and RWA and provide to readers at signings and appearances. Be a team player and direct readers to other authors as well as much as you can. The more people play, the cooler this will be.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Question: I don't know Photoshop. What do I do?

Answer: Unfortunately, you have to find someone who does and be really nice to them. There are several graphic artists working in the romance circuit. Perhaps they'd be willing to help for a small fee? The effort to set this up is similar to having bookmarks designed, but perhaps a little less intensive.

Question: I don't have any original artwork of my characters. Any suggestions?

Answer: You can use a close-up of your cover if your agreement allows it. I know that Harlequin doesn't allow you to chop up the cover for promotional purposes, but other houses may vary. You can also use stock images such as those available from istockphoto.com , 123rf.com or one of my favorites for different costumes and romance-ready images, hotdamnstock.com.

You are also not required to show any images at all. You can simply use logos, icons, or just text.

Question: What about the character profile section? What do I put there?

Answer: That's where it's totally up to you and your genre. I chose to make mine sort of mirror an RPG game because it seems to suit for my characters and genre and perhaps my readers will enjoy that. It's going to be different for everyone and I don't want to tie things down. For example, a great suggestion was that Contemporaries might list Occupation as a category. Paranormals might have Race and Special Abilities. Let's keep it open because 1) No one has the time to be the standards bureau and 2) Rules? We don't need no stinking rules

Question: What do I owe? Who do I pay?

Answer: You owe no one. You pay nothing. The only requirement is your good intentions and the creation of a card. There is no gatekeeper. There is no clubhouse. If you wish to be added to the listing online so the other participants know you're in, contact Jeannie Lin who is always online.

This is the first venture. We'll make mistakes, learn things, evolve. For now, I can't wait to see what people will come up with. **Welcome to the game!**