Love/Hate Relationships:
New Approaches to Game Romances

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ICEBREAKER
MASS EFFECT
PERSONA 4
DRAGON AGE
(ANY OF THEM)
FIRE EMBLEM: AWAKENING
Old woman

You have to keep telling her exactly what it is she wants to hear. That’s a surefire way to win her heart!
> The only sound you hear is the crashing of the waves...
THE FORMULA

They Meet Cute
They’re Drawn Together
They’re Pulled Apart
They End Up Together

- HAPPY ENDING -
"Trust me," he says.

"... Okay?"

"Okay!" he says. "Now open your eyes."

She does. And she's shocked - and not just by the sight of her boyfriend down on one knee in front of her.

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choice
  He needs to hold the ring higher.
  set coordination +tiny_change
  goto pitchers_mound
  He should smile more!
  set streetスマート +tiny_change
  goto pitchers_mound
  Stop fusing. This... this is just beautiful.
  set confidence +tiny_change
  goto pitchers_mound

label pitchers_mound
```

The girl looks above him, and of course - she's standing on the pitcher's mound, smack in the middle of her favorite ballpark, the man of her... dreams? Well, this damn sure feels like a dream - pooping the question, here and now.

She stammers.

And she stammers again.
TEAMWORK
SURPRISE
CHOICE
Teamwork
“What's needed, from a gameplay perspective, is a romantic partner who is sometimes also functionally the villain.”

- Emily Short, 2009, *GameSetWatch*
Action Challenges

- Player is stronger in:
  - Street smarts
- Love interest is stronger in:
  - Hacking
- ... and they’re evenly matched in:
  - Athleticism
  - Impulsiveness
Banter Ideas

- **Push-Pull**
  - Rank the player as aggressive vs. introverted; adapt the rival’s style accordingly

- **Putdowns**
  - Trade insults and cheap shots to stoke rivalry

- **Trust exercises**
  - Challenge the player to trust the rival right when they think they shouldn’t
  - Violate that trust, but for good reasons

- **Intimacy opportunities**
  - Start with awkwardness and flirting; end with ... look, we’re all adults
You’re Stuck Together (Mostly)
Surprise (!)
A Simple Way to Mess With Your Players
Choice

"You, of course."
"I can't wait to see Chie."
"I'm looking forward to Yukiko."
"Kanji, no question."

Rise
Hey, who are you looking forward to seeing in a swimsuit, Senpai?
***** Seed 1

1. *choice 32* # Memory 1
2. *choice 34* # Do it.

- *choice 32* # Just prop a broom against the door to keep it from opening. I mean, why overthink this?
- *choice 50* # This is Dog Week - the week when people bring their pets to work, to dinner, and onto the trains, and I have twenty of them lined up to mob her train.
- *choice 68* # I paid some kids on rocket skates to be ready to career across the dock. Set 'em loose!
- *choice 94* # Tell her I lost a thing! She has to help or ... I don't even know what!

- *choice 117* # Moving van!

- *choice 137* # I just - I don't know what to do without it, my diary was in there, pictures of my dead grandmother -

- *choice 26* # Carter.

- *choice 77* # Well, sure. I could have dressed up today, but my mind is on the work.

- *choice 87* # Matchmaker Match-Up: $name_rival makes Hearts Quiver, $name's Rep is About to Wither

- *choice 94* # I can't decide - I don't know - what's $he going to do?

- *choice 119* # Act chilly and say $his name.

- *choice 154* # You wish.

- *choice 255* # That's my client.

- *choice 282* # Don't try to match quips with $him. You're wasting your time.

- *choice 329* # I don't know, I'll think of something. I'm not a professional revenge-maker. I just hate $him so much!

- *choice 340* # Okay ... maybe $he and I had the idea at the same time.

- *choice 354* # Maybe. If I say it is.

- *choice 31* # Hide well.

- *choice 37* # Maybe shake the funnel a little.

- *choice 43* # Don't kiss $him.

- *choice 19* # Well - it sounds dicey, following a stranger around, spying on him, all to mess with his life and maybe get in the way of the girl of his dreams...

- *choice 41* # Run up, tug his arm, smile and ask for directions.

- *choice 87* # Look sad and hapless.

- *choice 123* # Choose the right moment to walk past them on the way to the bathroom.

- *choice 150* # Okay. Take the photo. Take a moment to get a good shot.

- *choice 173* # No. No! Wow! Who would have believed it?

- *choice 204* # Can I help you?
SO, LIKE I WAS SAYING ...
Get in touch!

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