**Romancing the Beat by Gwen Hayes- Beat Sheet**

**PHASE I - Set Up 0-20/25%**

Introduce characters, world, premise, romance arc. Know: character’s flaw, wound, misconception about love.

1. Introduce H1 & H2 (2 scenes, 1 chapter)
   1. Must be compelling - slice of life with a hitch, some kind of trouble or something unexpected.
   2. Introduce external goal with stakes, bonus if H1 & H2 are in opposition.
   3. Hint at needs, and what’s holding them back.
   4. Every scene is through the character’s wound/lens.
2. Meet Cute
3. Sparks fly, internal thoughts.
4. Showcases external goals and internal flaws are in conflict
5. POV character has physical reaction and emotional ‘not for me’ reaction (due to wound).
6. No Way #1
7. Argument MC voices against falling in love. “The lady doth protest too much”.
8. Adhesion
9. Characters have met and expressed their non-interest in falling in love OR in having a fling and getting it out of their systems.
10. Story is crafted so neither can leave the other.
11. Ex- convenience, on the run, fake relationship, contest, opposite goals, forced partnership.
12. Introduce additional external goals.
13. Set about making them miserable.

**PHASE II - Falling In Love 20/25%-50%**

Fun & Games. MC(s) proclaim unwillingness to change but you start shooting holes in the walls around their hearts; each scene builds sexual tension; 2 steps forward, 1 step back. Later they’ll look back and see they’re a better person with/because of that other character.

1. No Way #2
   * 1. Restate argument about not falling in love, add a bit of backstory.
     2. Characters are gathering their ammo and girding their loins as they’re not stuck with the other character and want to avoid temptation (but keep tempting them).
2. Inkling (It Could Work)
   * 1. Give them a hole in the wall around their heart and make them stop and think.
     2. Ex- intimate moment, witness good deed, witness an off-character thing that makes you see them differently, tender or sexy moment, share personal truths/secrets, defend the other, feel ‘us against the world’.
3. Deepening Desire
   * 1. Falling for each other, 2 steps forward.
     2. No longer deny themselves that they physically want each other.
     3. Feeling drawn in a way that’s hard to fight - lingering gazes, visceral reactions, sweet moments, start to show glimpses of who they really are.
4. Maybe This’ll Work (almost 50%)
   * 1. Ramp up desire/intimacy.
     2. They’ve been showing each other things that make them vulnerable to the other. What if they gave in?
     3. If already had sex, make this different/more meaningful.
     4. They need to be more vulnerable by the end of the beat.
5. Midpoint (50%)
   * 1. Show them everything they want and that it’s in reach.
     2. Ex- perfect morning after night of sex; they open up; or tell a friend/themselves how right it feels.
     3. Bring them really really high.

**PHASE III - Retreating From Love (50-75%)**

The change they need has to come from facing their flaws, wounds, misconceptions, and overcoming them. They’re reluctant to fully commit. Start attack on soft spots.

Ex- Their shards- all women cheat, all men leave, can’t have love & career because her mom gave up hers to raise a family...hit them hard in their issue button.

1. Inkling of Doubt
   1. Things feel good but gunna get a quick sucker punch in the feels. Give inkling of doubt.
   2. Each beat will get progressively harder so think of the worst thing that can happen and level up to it.
   3. Remind them of their wound/flaw, and plant seed(s) of doubt.
2. Deepening Doubt
   * 1. Starting to get attached but seed of doubt is poking through.
     2. They’re not going to admit something is wrong, but they’ll feel it from the other, causing them to feel more guarded.
     3. Could still have sex, but internal dilemma & it doesn’t feel the same.
     4. Could have more than 1 scene for this beat.
3. Retreat Retreat!
4. Make sure beats are tailored to their weakness - she’ll misinterpret signs/things the other does, not just misunderstandings - could be keeping a secret, which makes the other defensive, and therefore she puts up her own boundaries.
5. Actually say their fear and that they’re protecting their hearts - not to the other but to themselves or family or friends.
6. Shields Up
7. They think their fears were right, their fears have come true.
8. Self-fulfilling prophecy
9. Break Up
10. Might’ve broken up in the last scene, or this one. Final blowout.
11. One or both characters have to choose love or fear and they choose fear.
12. This can happen alongside the external plot called ‘black moment’, to add emotional layer. The moment they choose to hold onto their fear, flaw, wound, misconceptions, instead of opening up their heart completely.

**PHASE IV - (75-100%)**

Your characters realize they’ve been dumb and claw their way back to each other, with the footholds you laid in Phase II.

1. Darkest Night of Soul
   * 1. Realize they did it to themselves, or mentor/friend tells them they’re an idiot.
     2. They have to know they chose this path, this fear, instead of what they wanted (love).
2. Wake Up!
   * 1. MC has spent time realizing they’re miserable because they chose to be.
     2. They had some advice and realize they need to destroy the wall around their fears/wounds/misconceptions.
     3. ‘This time I chose love over fear’.
     4. At least 1 of them needs to go out on a limb to woo the other back. They may realize they may be too late to win back the love they lost.
3. Grand Gesture
   * 1. He/She must be willing to put it all on the line now or risk losing the one thing they need to become whole-hearted.
     2. Ex- death of career, pride, goal, dream, or literal death.
     3. Grand gestures - race (to airport/destination), ticking clock with obstacles, public declaration with risk of humiliation, overcoming of fear (heights, snakes, children) which would’ve been laid out earlier, literal risk of life, sacrificing a dream/goal for the other to see their dreams come true.
     4. Happy Ending. Kiss.
4. Whole-Hearted
   * 1. Contrast of beginning - mirror meet cute, 1st kiss, intimate joke, first date, etc.

**EPILOGUE (if needed)**

Too perfect is boring. Create a scene with a little conflict that is still intriguing.