

About romantic novels of the past:

- The first romantic novel – arguably the first modern novel in English – was *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn, published in 1688, full of drama, violence and cruelty; it ends tragically.
- The first romantic novel with a Happy Ending *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, by Samuel Richardson, was published in 1740. She marries the boss – eventually!
- First spoof of a romantic novel – *Joseph Andrews* by Henry Fielding (1742) – about *Pamela*'s virginal brother. Didn't take long, did it?
- EM Hull's *The Sheik*, published in 1921, gave heart-throb Rudolph Valentino his signature image as Sex Personified, eclipsing his tango dancer turn in *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.
- Baroness Orczy's *Scarlet Pimpernel* (1905) has been filmed and adapted for television 20 times so far. The elusive master of disguise and gentlemanly rescuer is French Revolution pre-cursor of James Bond.
- Rhett Butler is the archetypal omnicompetent Bad Boy who tells the heroine the truth. When David Szelnick bought the rights to Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, only six months after its 1936 publication, the whole world cast Clark Gable before the ink was dry on the contract.