

THE VIRIDIAN



VALENTINE'S EDITION

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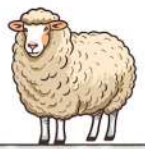
FROM SHEEP TO CHOCOLATE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY



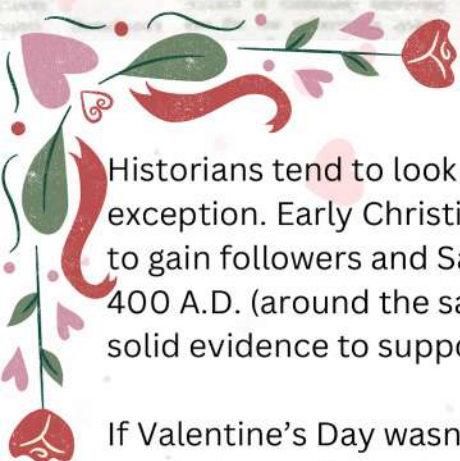
DANAE KARTOUDE

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Lupercalia was a Roman Festival to honor the god Lupercus who was the God of fertility... of livestock.

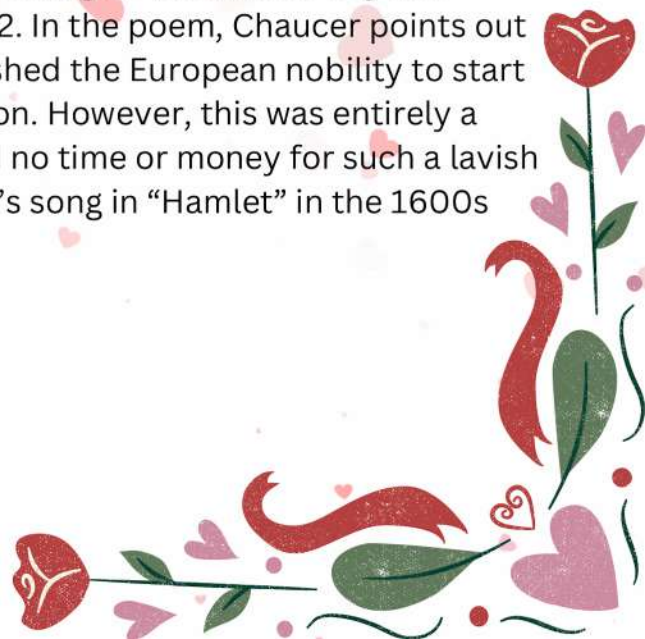
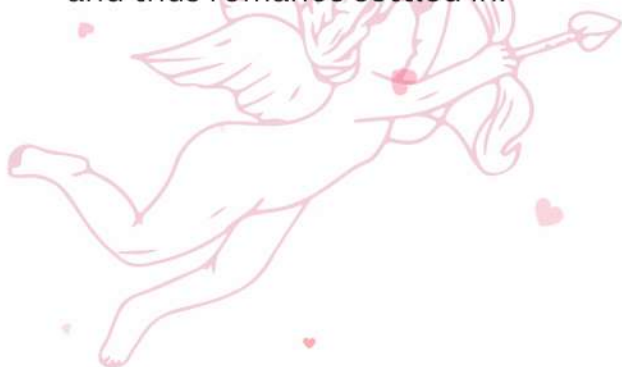
Yes, the most romantic day of the year has probably developed from a festival about sheep. The festival was ever so romantic, with dog and goat sacrifices and the hitting of people with the skin of these animals to bring fertility. Yes, it was every woman's dream. But how did this Pagan holiday develop to what we know today of Valentine's Day?



Historians tend to look at the Christianization of Pagan holidays and Valentine's Day is no exception. Early Christianity does have a track record of appropriating cultural customs to gain followers and Saint Valentine's Day was announced to be on February 14th around 400 A.D. (around the same time Lupercalia ended). However, this theory has very limited solid evidence to support it.

If Valentine's Day wasn't created to replace Lupercalia and guide Pagans to Christianity, it was truly created to honour Saint Valentine. The problem is, Saint Valentine is a very mysterious figure in history. There were many Christian martyrs named Valentinus and all of them have a chance of being the star of the holiday. The first candidate was a Valentinus who was killed in Africa along with soldiers, but not much is known about him. Another candidate is a Roman priest named Valentinus who was arrested and put into the custody of an aristocrat. However, Valentinus managed to cure the aristocrat's daughter's blindness and to repay him, the whole family was baptized. Once the Roman Emperor found out, Valentinus and the entire family were executed. The last candidate is (surprise, surprise) another priest named Valentinus, with a story almost identical to the previous one. These final two stories might simply be a variation of the same story or based on no one at all. Supposedly, the holiday of Saint Valentine is to honour their sacrifice. No matter real or not, whoever this saint actually was had nothing to do with romance. So, when did the romantic factor come in?

Well, it is estimated that romance didn't even factor in until 1,000 years after the holiday was established. The very first indication of romance relating to Valentine's Day was Geoffrey Chaucer's poem "Parlement of Foules" in 1382. In the poem, Chaucer points out that birds tend to mate around February 14th. This pushed the European nobility to start sending love-notes every year during bird mating season. However, this was entirely a festival for the aristocracy. Most of the population had no time or money for such a lavish celebration. The next published reference was Ophelia's song in "Hamlet" in the 1600s and thus romance settled in.



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Of course, it didn't take much time for opportunists to grasp Valentine's Day. The Industrial Revolution played a major role in the commercialisation of Valentine's Day with new, elaborately decorated cards becoming accessible to the public. By 1913, companies like Hallmark were mass-producing cards and by 1950, Valentine's Day was being celebrated nationwide in the US.

The story goes that the post-war world (WW2) was all-too willing to remember that love and peace was good, and so production of Valentine's Day merchandise skyrocketed to what we know today.

Therefore, Valentine's Day, the day of love, the day of Cupid (who wasn't even mentioned by the way) does have some solid footing for being a day for celebrating romance. For those who want to. If someone is truly in love with you, there is no need for a specific day of teddy bears and chocolate to reassure you. The stress surrounding creating the "perfect" Valentine's Day, finding the "right" present, picking the "prettiest" flowers creates unnecessary stress and anxiety which might impose stress in many relationships. Valentine's Day also ironically holds the record for the day for the most annual breakups, as people surrounded by the "happiest" couples start to identify flaws within their own relationships. Not only that, but the unrealistic expectations created force many people to spend absurd amounts of money in order to satisfy their partner.

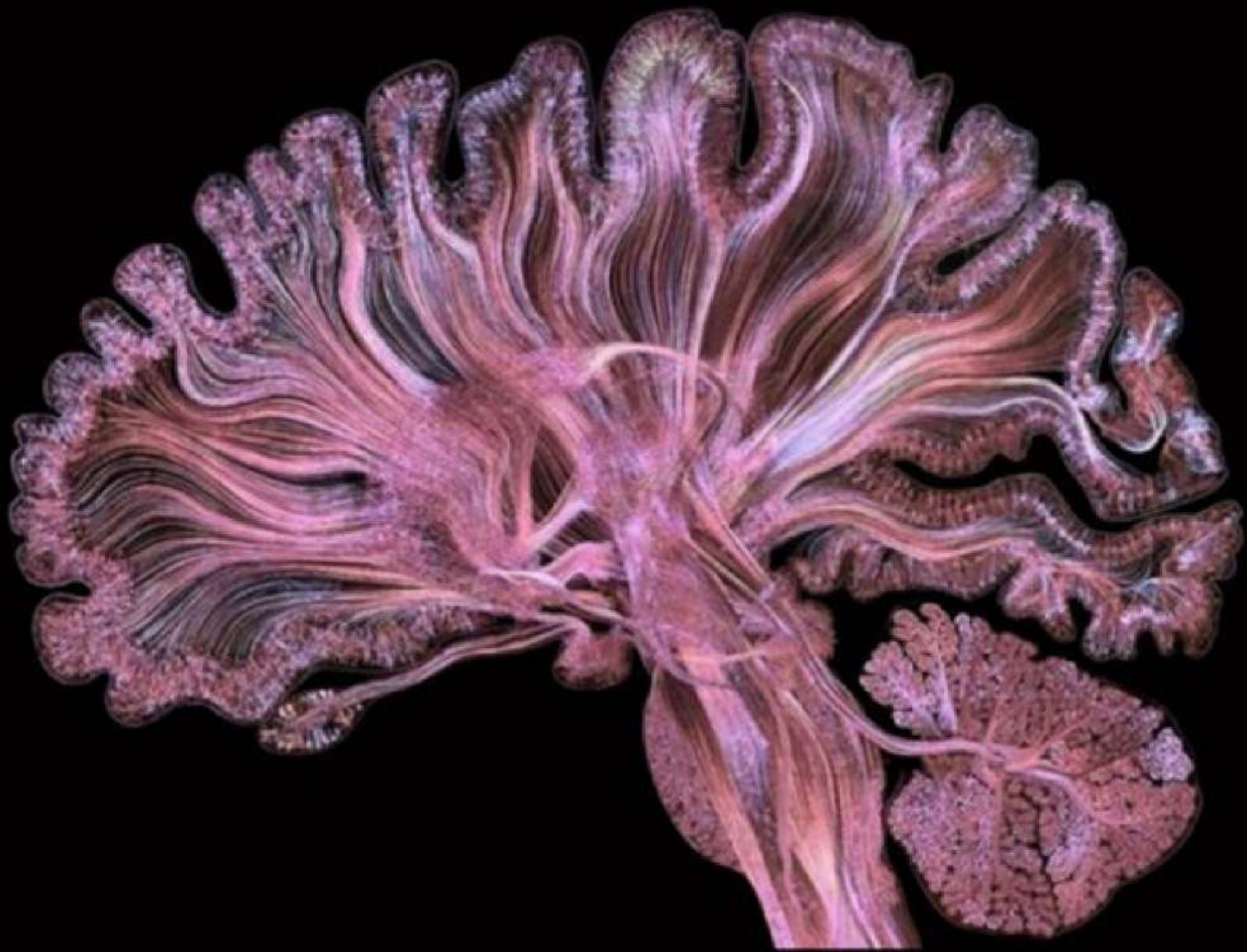
So, Valentine's Day is now a marketing strategy which provokes stress and forces people to spend money on their loved ones for reassurance.

But then again, pretty flowers, right?



FALLING FOR LOVE

NO WAIT, I MEAN IN...



PAVLOS BISMAL

THE VIRIDIAN

For thousands of years, philosophers, scientists and everyday people have wrestled with millions of queries, spanning from, will this plant kill me, to where is the edge of the universe? One question has transcended time, and crossed the minds of every generation, in the famous words of Haddaway, what is love? (baby don't hurt me)

There is no one answer to this question, as love is a fickle thing, it can be tedious and treacherous, whilst also the most delicate and beautiful emotion of them all. The only answer I can definitively give to this age-old question, is a scientific one, of what occurs to us, humans, when we are in love...

A few things happen when we 'fall in love'. These changes can be split into two categories: chemical changes in the brain, and physical changes in the body. For reasons better left to the imagination, we will only be talking about the chemical aspect... A discovery which revolutionised thinking about this topic, made by conducting many MRI scans on people 'madly in love' showed that the feeling one undergoes when in love is caused by the release of the hormone dopamine, which, amongst other things, is responsible for our motivation to find food, water and all our other survival basics. It is a very strong drug that triggers a 'rewarding' feeling to the brain, and so as this hormone is released when somebody comes into contact with a person they love, or are in love with, we soon begin to connect the two in our mind, thinking that this feeling comes only from this person, when in fact it's just from $C_8H_{11}NO_2$, which can be prepared in a lab.

Another one of the hormones released is Oxytocin, a hormone released both during childbirth, and falling in love. It creates a sensation of trust and longing to form a bond with someone and is especially important in the initial connection between a couple as they are driven by their very biology to spend time together. So, don't think your partner actually likes you, it's their brain lying to them.

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One of the most famous hormones released is Serotonin, the hormone of happiness, which, oddly enough, is in low supply during the first few months of a relationship. In fact, cortisol (stress hormone) is produced in much larger quantities. This imbalance causes the tell-tale signs of someone being in love, such as dilation of the pupils, 'butterflies' in their stomach and many others. But in reality, these are just your body's reaction to being overloaded with stress. Next time your significant other tells you how 'crazy in love' they are with you, just know you're causing them immense stress. The low serotonin levels are also responsible for a feeling of obsession and inability to focus on anything other than that person.

Once again, the brain is playing matchmaker.

One thing we can all agree on, is that falling in love is a scary, euphoric, beautiful and petrifying feeling, all at once. It encompasses everything a person is capable of feeling, spanning the entirety of the emotional spectrum. It can drag you through the lowest of the lows and propel you through the highest of the highs. It serves as a better motivator than any medicine or food, as it is made by the very chemicals that function to motivate you. Love is better than $C_{10}H_{15}N$ and essentially causes our brain chemicals to go haywire. It will make you feel as if you're on a planet where it is, quite literally, raining diamonds.

No matter how you feel about the topic itself, whether you think love is real, love is fake, love is blind or love is fate, love is something that everybody deserves to feel, and believe me, it is indeed real.

THE VIRIDIAN

Do you believe in the significance of Valentine's Day, or is it just another day for you?
Just another day!

What compelled you to become a teacher, and why teach the subject you are teaching?

I wanted to become a teacher since I was very young, that's how I 'tortured' my poor sister. I found the idea of continuous learning and sharing of knowledge, ideas and practices quite intriguing. Due to my over-analytical nature and love for reading it could only be this subject.

What's your go-to Valentine's Day dessert or treat?

Any chocolate, any day, anytime.

Favourite teaching memory which you have with your students, and why is it your favourite?

My favourite moment would have to be when, years ago, my A' level group had drawn on the board a scene from a book we were studying and had composed a song about our lessons using quotes from texts we had studied.

If you could have any famous individual or historical figure as a teaching assistant who would it be and why?

Virginia Woolf: she could talk about writing, feminism, history and mental health.

If you could add one more mandatory lesson or activity to the school curriculum what would it be and why?

Lessons on empathy and tolerance as I feel these are essential qualities in establishing any type of relationship with other human beings.

Who will you be spending Valentine's day with?

My family.

What is your favourite colour?

Can I pick two? Black and purple.

What is your favourite season of the year?

Autumn but I have to go with winter as I live in Cyprus.

What are some of your favourite hobbies?

I don't have hobbies, I'm a teacher and a mum.

**let us know who you think
it is on our Instagram!
@seniorschoolviridian**



The background of the entire page is white, decorated with numerous pink hearts of varying sizes and orientations. Some hearts are solid pink, while others are lighter and more faded. They are scattered across the page, with a higher concentration around the title.

TO ALL THE HOPELESS ROMANTICS

A POEM

STYLIANA AVRAAMIDOU

THE VIRIDIAN

Indeed, it is that time of year again. Valentine's Day.
When the whole world stops to pray
That their heart-shaped cards will arrive
To act as a reassurance that their love is still alive

An excuse to say 'I love you'
And prove that it is indeed true
Because love can be counted by the amount of roses
That a bouquet discloses

Surely, that must be true
Or else millions of hearts will be left feeling blue
At least that's what commercials illustrate
But how about we leave that up to a debate?

Love is seen and felt in all shapes and forms
Sometimes, it is dancing outside during storms
And other times it is holding hands
Or spending time with someone who truly understands

It is the most miniscule details
That prove what love truly entails
A flushed look and a prolonged glance
Accompanied by a smile that will inevitably lead you into a trance

And it's the comfort of embracing childish moments
And combating the bad times and all their components
It's the feeling that you have found a friend
That will follow you to whatever end

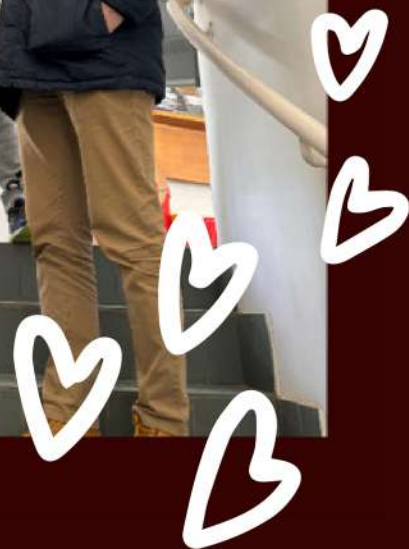
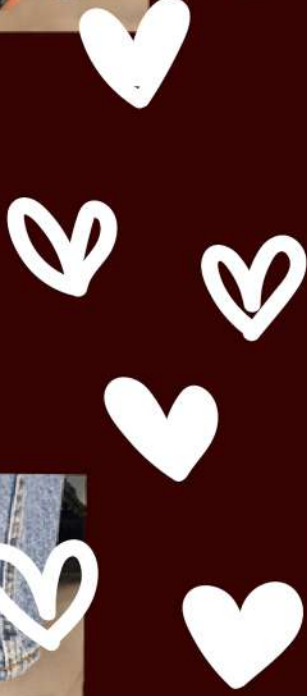
It is wanting the heart-shaped card that shows you care
And it is wanting the infinitesimal love that grandparents share
It is capturing the type of love recited in poetry
That forever acts in perfect symmetry

Because being a hopeless romantic is a blessing
And not a characteristic worth repressing
It is wishing for the type of love that is all-encompassing
It is both the feeling of being loved and the act of loving....

FASHION FAVES



SYNTHIA CONSTANTINO





THE ARTS

THE ARTS

REBECCA PETROU

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This past Thursday, on the 8th of February, our school presented the annual Talent Show, which is loved by many and looked forward to every time. This year, the Talent Show was titled “Imprints” as it encouraged all the performers to leave their mark, and present their passions to the audience in order to take pride in their artistic journey. The night was filled with an array of exceptional performances in all categories, including striking musical pieces, hilarious drama acts and incredible dance routines, all of which had the audience awe struck and impressed.

However to fully capture the feeling of being a part of the Talent Show, two Year 13 musicians who have taken part in many Talent Shows in the past, shared their thoughts and experiences surrounding the event.

Harry Ioannou, who is currently in his last year of the Senior School, has taken part in the Talent Show for the past five years when he started off by playing as a drummer in 2019, even though he felt nervous when performing and not very confident with his skills. Harry explains **“Both my band mates and the cheers from the crowd had elevated my confidence of performing to another level.”** He also shares how **“The thrill of playing in front of crowds with my friends that I’ve gained over the years provides me with an inexplicable feeling of joy and accomplishment.”** By being in Year 13, this Talent show was Harry’s last, which he comments on by saying **“ I look back at the past few years and reminisce what talent shows have given me: confidence, passion for my craft and most importantly (as cliché as it may sound) my best takeaway from the shows must be the friendships I’ve cultivated from the several bands I’ve played with as well as other performers who all share the same interest as me. All these connections will remain dear to me and shaped who I am today, I will miss them dearly.”**



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Callum Cannon, another exceptionally skilled student who has been taking part in the last four Talent Shows, says how “The Talent Show has always been something that has been created with raw passion and unparalleled drive” as it is an event that is put on each year with the clear motivation and focus from the Arts Department, including all the teachers who help to put on this “Memorable event”, as Callum put it, but specifically the incredible music teacher Eirini Filippou who always gives her all and contributes sheer dedication to the event, something that is so appreciated by all performers, who thank her for all she does.



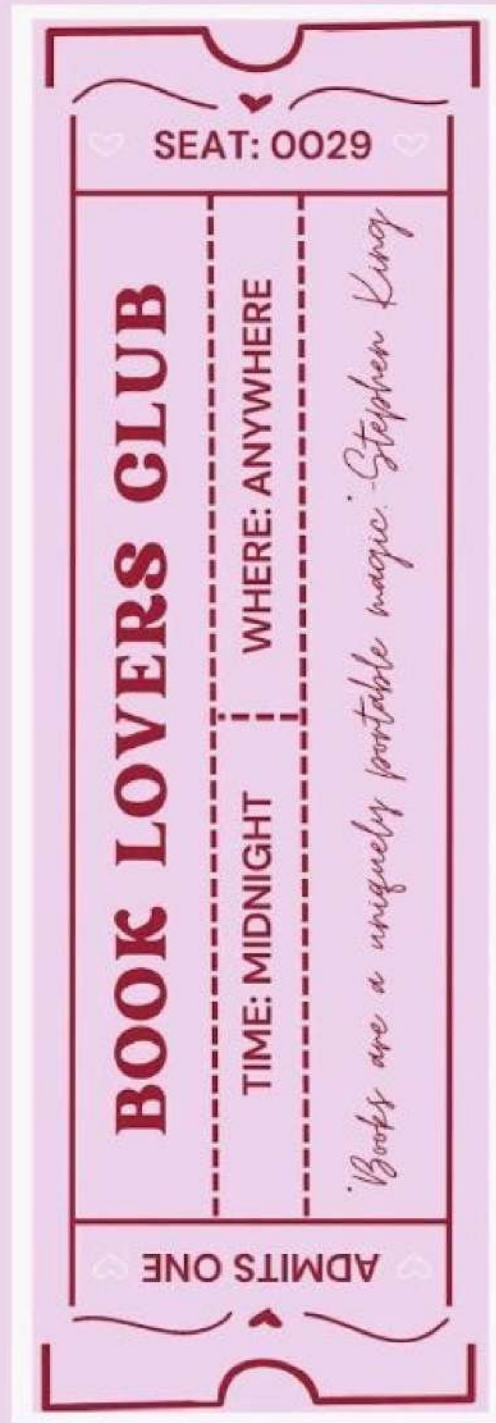
Year 10 student Alexa Michael also shared her strong love for the Talent Show by saying **“The Senior School Talent Night will always hold a great significance for me as in 2022 this is where I debuted my first original song in front of an audience.”** She explains how the abundance of support she was shown was truly encouraging, and was the reason that Art teacher Danae Frangoudes suggested Alexa take part in a young songwriter’s competition ‘Fengaros High’ in 2023. Alexa shares how this was a big moment in her journey as a songwriter and performer as following this competition she performed with her band in the Fengaros Festival in August and then record her music professionally. **“The Talent Show represents a full circle moment for me and I am thrilled to have performed again in 2024 accompanied by a band of other talented students and given the chance to announce the release of my music.”**



The Talent show was an absolute blast for everyone who attended either as a performer or audience member, and has provided many students with important experiences and new memories to cherish as they look back on this event.



BOOK CLUB



SOPHIA DOMBO

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It's that time of year again when those heart-shaped boxes of controversial, capitalistic, coloured chocolate come out to play. This year, whether betrothed or not, I'm here to keep your belief in true love alive.

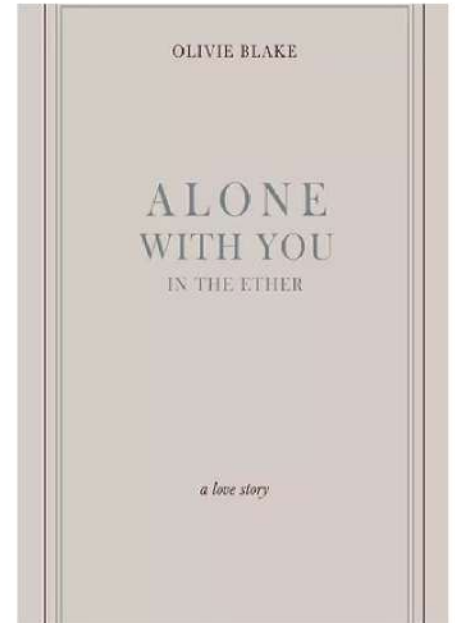
This month's recommendations are for the reader with a soft spot for soul-crushingly engulfing love.

Alone with you in the Ether by Olivie Blake

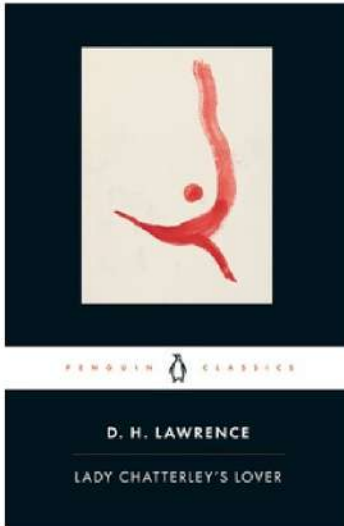
There aren't many books I can reread and feel entirely as shattered as I did when I read them for the first time.

Somehow though, for the past three years I have found myself rereading this novel and consistently wishing to find a way to fuse the fibers of my soul to the pages of this book...This is my favourite love story.

I am once again at a loss for words, which is quite unfortunate considering I'm meant to be giving reviews rather than self-indulgently fawning over every book. So, put simply, this book deals with so much more than love. The main characters, Aldo and Regan, are written as such complex individuals, both with each other and separately, making their love not only something they fight for but something the reader wants to fight for too. Now, as we know, I always connect with poetic narratives because I am nothing if not a lover of the ornate, however, the writing of this novel is not this overly descriptive flowery thing, it somehow speaks from the heart and the brain at the same time. It's intelligent, emotional, beautiful, heartbreaking, astonishing, and entirely perfect. If you are to read anything I ever recommend, I implore you to read this.



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Lady Chatterley's lover by D.H. Lawrence

Though I knew I would adore this book just from its destructive reputation, there is a very special moment when you are reading a book when you realise that no matter what happens afterwards, your opinion has been formed. My magical moment with this book happened on the second page: a resounding "I love this." There is romance, there is scandal, there is casual debauchery on every other page, and most importantly there is the fact it's a classic and so you can seem very cool and interesting when you bring it up in conversation. Really, what's there not to love?

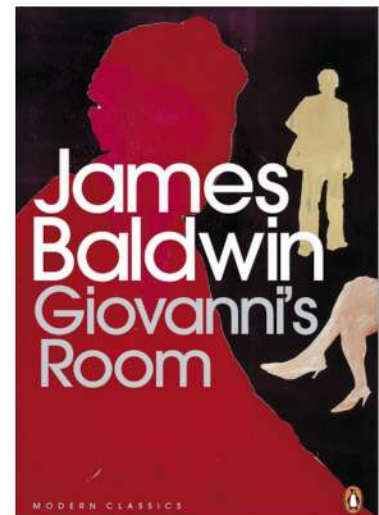
Giovanni's Room

by James Baldwin

I read this book for the first time this month and wow does Baldwin know how to write a book. I feel so strongly for this novel that I've been avoiding summarising or explaining it for fear I'll do it an injustice. To be honest, words abandon me in describing just how good this book is, so here is an excerpt that can hopefully say everything there is to say:

"I had thought of suicide when I was much younger, as, possibly, we all have, but then it would have been for revenge, it would have been my way of informing the world how awfully it had made me suffer. But the silence of the evening, as I wandered home, had nothing to do with that storm, that far-off boy. I simply wondered about the dead because their days had ended, and I did not know how I would get through mine."

And that is more in a paragraph than most books can get into one hundred pages.





ALEX THEODOROU

THE LONELY HEART KILLERS

A DARK AND TWISTED STORY

NATALIE HICKMAN

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For anyone who is single and ready to mingle may have heard numerous methods of how to meet their special person most often by downloading an online dating app or joining in a new group/club. However, during the 1940's and 50's due to the lack of the world wide web many lonely singles had to revert to the old fashion dating apps known as personal ads.

During this timeframe, there was a couple consisting of Martha and Raymond, who met each other through a personal ad in the newspaper called: 'The Lonely-Hearts club.' Here they wrote plentiful of vivid love letters, one of which they decided to meet up in Florida, ending with Raymond temporarily staying with Martha and her two kids. They lived in this honeymoon period until Raymond decided that he needed to go back to New York to earn more money and leave Martha. Still wanting more from him, she decides to go to New York to find him. Eventually, he confesses that he has been using the lonely-hearts club to extort money from deceived, lonely, and frail women and then covering it up by making them feel too embarrassed to go to the police. However, hearing this Martha felt she was already committed to Raymond, and that it was her duty to help him find and target their next victim. Fernandez demands that she needs to get rid of her two kids as they annoyed him, and she did so without hesitation. Following, this couple went on to murder -in cold blood- more than 20 women. Sounds like a simple case of two people who are naturally killers. Is something wrong with their brain chemistry? Did they do it simply for the money? Within the couple's family history there are many common features that can explain these questions through their behavior.

Initially, Martha suffered a biological condition that made her mature into a fully grown woman by age of 10. She was also obese and ridiculed by her mother and classmates. Moreover, in her early 20s she studied to become a nurse, was first in her class, but was rejected by all employers because of her weight and was given a job at the local mortician. Attempting at a new life, she moved to California where she got a job at an army hospital, she met a soldier and conceived a child, but he decided to commit suicide, leaving her with the thought, 'a man would rather die than be with me'. Later, she moved back to Florida where she secured a job at a Hospital for Children, where she was a very good nurse taking her responsibilities very seriously. Hence Martha's whole childhood and early adult hood consisted of trauma, leaving insecurities, self-doubt, and depression. Her last option was the lonely-hearts ad.

On the other hand, Raymond was born in Hawaii to disappointed Spanish parents; he had a frail and sickly appearance. During WWII he served with British Government as a spy and apparently achieved a certain notoriety in the intelligence gathering. Going to America, during his travels underwent a severe head injury which left him with a personality transformation becoming distant moody and quick to anger. From thence on, he embarked on a future filled with criminal activities, thus leading to his imprisonment. Once released from prison, he moved to Brooklyn to live with his sister and relatives, they were upset with his appearance, therefore Raymond locked himself in his room for days at a time. This is when he started to write dozens of letters to the Lonely Heart club.

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Finally, both had a troubling family history that traumatized them. Personality disorders that result from head injury are well documented and research suggests that the level of disorder hinges upon the severity and location of the injury. In Raymond's case, the injury fractured his skull was in the frontal lobe region that regulates the learning, reasoning, and logical segments of brain function.

Undoubtedly, Raymond was a changed man. Plus, Martha has suffered through so much trauma that he would give up her own kids to be with a man. Any man. Does this justify their murders? Did the societal structure impact their actions?

If dating apps and groups/clubs aren't safe, then what other ways can someone find safe and healthy love?

FYI: This story was later turned into a lot of western media, e.g, The Honeymoon Killers (1970), Lucifer (2016, S3 Ep 18,) 'The last Heart Break', -The broken hearts killer.

R&B

GENRE DEEP DIVE

songs that remind
me of you

songs that
me of

songs that remind
me of you

songs that remind
me of you

songs that remind
me of you

ELLIE PRODROMOU

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Rhythm and blues, more commonly known as “R&B” is an expansive music genre with a rich history. 21st century R&B, also referred to as contemporary R&B, is a genre utilised by some of the most well-known names in the music industry such as: Beyonce, The Weeknd and Rhianna. Though the genre has developed quite a bit since it began, the main elements of R&B music include keyboards, synthesizers, looped drumbeats, and strong bass lines.

Dating back to the 1920s and 30s, R&B was closely associated with the migration of African American families to urban cities in the 1940s. Early R&B artists brought influences of church music and blues to places like New York and Michigan, signing contracts with record companies that helped increase popularity. Due to its ties with segregation in America, the genre was often called “race music” before the term “rhythm and blues” was coined in 1947.

R&B has changed since its conception, it initially leaned towards a mix of jazz and blues, focusing on vocal harmonies and piano trios. In the 1950s the genre had close relation to rock and roll, where often the only difference was the race of the singer, before it deviated into a sultrier sound in the 1960s following the rise of soul music. The following decade, R&B stood as the base for emerging genres such as funk and disco, both popular sounds of the 70s and 80s. The golden years of contemporary R&B, the 90s, saw the rise of influential girl groups like Destiny’s child and TLC, who are both still household names. This period also saw the rise of hip hop which can be seen with the inclusion of synth and software loops in popular R&B music of the time.



Ain't nobody- Chaka Khan:

The vocals truly make this song something special. Kahn’s tone truly embodies the sound of the time and the song itself is so catchy that it's difficult not to sing along.

I say a little prayer- Aretha Franklin

Though this song leans more towards soul, the early R&B elements are very evident in this piece. Franklin is a pioneer of the genre, and this song specifically has great build up.



Pink + White- Frank Ocean

A staple name in contemporary R&B. Ocean has an addictive tone and when paired with the looped drumbeat of this song, it creates a dreamy listening experience.

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LEARN A SONG OR TWO...



N. Shaka recommends:

Sound of silence- Disturbed

My favourite part of this song is the lead singer's tone, his voice is like velvet, soft yet full of emotion. This piece toys the line between being powerful and emotive without ever feeling too dramatic.

A. Antoniou recommends:

Miles- Igor. Baby Panna

When I started this song, the last thing I expected was rap. Despite that, the song was an easy listen and a catchy piece that I see a lot of people enjoying.



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OUR TEAM!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!
DESIGNED BY ANTHI AND STELA

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'NUFF SAID.