

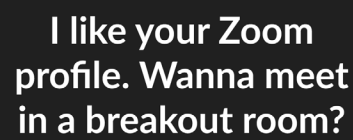
*Welcome to the Voyeur 2021!*

*Happy Valentine's Day.*

## The Voice Editor

# If Valentine cards were honest

The Valentine cards at the store are too generic and never seem to say exactly what you want them to. They might be cute and punny, but they don't really explain the feelings you have in your heart. Here are some examples of straightforward and sincere Valentine phrases you can use for free when the capitalist tradition of buying overpriced paper fails you.



# A perfect theatrical love story in six steps

BY CAMERON DINGERSON  
Contributor

“The Phantom of the Opera” has been called “the perfect love story” by critics and fans alike. That theory has contributed to how the production became the longest-running musical in the United States. However, there are many other musicals that have “less problematic” plotlines that are much more deserving of that title, like “Dear Evan Hansen” (oh wait, that love story was based on a lie) or “The Last Five Years” (which ends with a divorce).

Anyway, the title of “perfect love story” certainly does not fit “The Phantom of the Opera.” Below, I am going to objectively explain to you how the Phantom’s love story with Christine Daae goes along in the show, and you can decide for yourself whether it is “the perfect love story” or not.



## Step Two: Stalk her

According to the show, the Phantom has been spending years teaching Daae how to sing through the walls without ever seeing her. When Christine’s childhood friend, Raoul, attempts to ask her out on a date, the Phantom reveals himself to entice Christine to reject Raoul’s offer.

## Step Three: Kidnap her

After the Phantom appears in her mirror, he takes Christine to his secret lair under the sewers of the opera house and tells her that she needs to take on the lead role in the opera instead of Carlotta, a diva who was originally cast to sing “The Music of the Night.”

## Step Four: Discover she has a boyfriend

Six months later, when the Phantom orders Christine to star in an opera he had written, “Don Juan Triumphant,” he discovers that Christine is secretly engaged to Raoul.

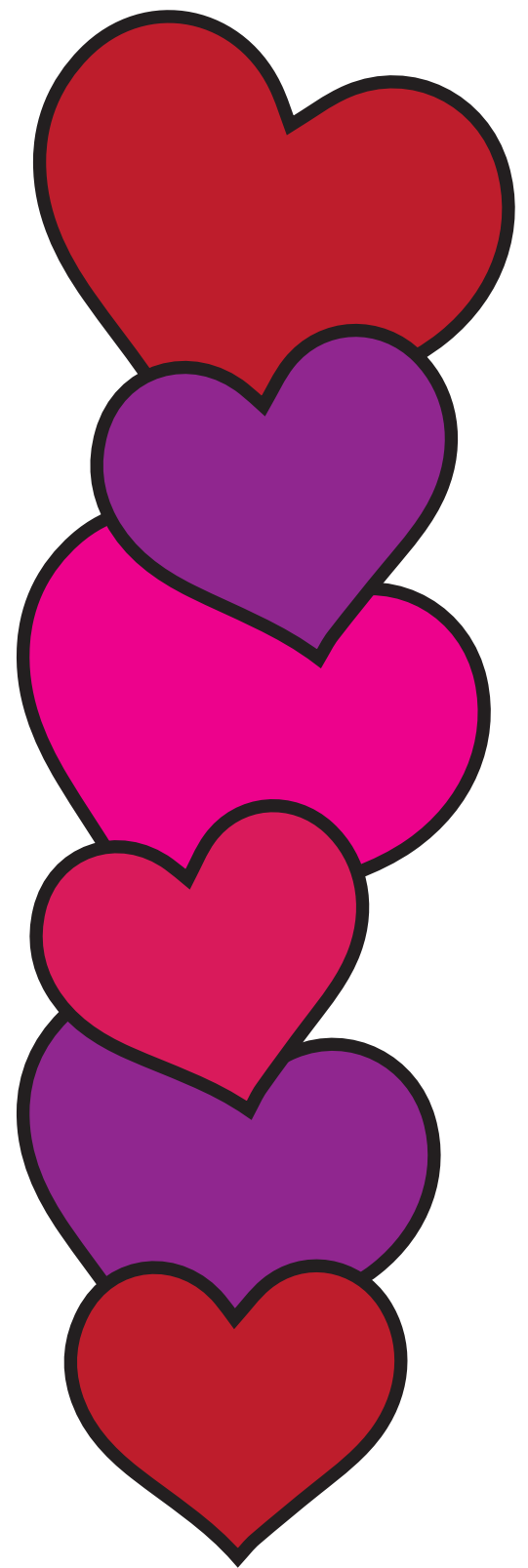
## Step Five: Try to kill the boyfriend

Following the forced performance of “Don Juan Triumphant,” the Phantom forces Christine to wear a wedding dress, and then ensnares her boyfriend in the Punjab Lasso, protesting that he deserves what he wants (Christine) because the world has always been cruel to him. Then, the Phantom tells Christine that he will kill Raoul unless she promises to stay in his lair with him in “The Point of No Return.”

After Christine kisses him and tells him that he is not alone, the Phantom relents and releases Raoul. He orders them never to tell anyone where his lair is and then yells at them before breaking down in tears at the kindness Christine showed.

## Step Six: Live happily ever after on Coney Island

Well, in all candor, this happens in the sequel musical, “Love Never Dies,” which, for good reason, did not achieve the same critical acclaim as its predecessor. However, the musical does follow roughly the same storyline. In that musical, the Phantom contracts Christine to perform at the opening of a new attraction at Luna Park on Coney Island.



# Go back to basics on Valentine’s Day

BY ANDREW DERDENA & GABBY CADIEUX  
Contributors

In the beginning, lovers sent grandiose letters through messenger pigeons, Cupid shot his arrows into fannies and love was proclaimed from the highest mountaintops. Today, 21st century couples have showcased their affections through ordering takeout and the classic, “Netflix and chill.”

Of course, during this global pandemic, couples are now forced to simplify their plans. While the holiday appears to be isolating this year, maybe simplifying things could work out in everyone’s favor.

Usually during this time of year, budding couples or longtime partners feel an immense amount of pressure to get the right gift, secure reservations at the perfect restaurant and create the most romantic night of the year. While all of that sounds good, is it truly necessary?

The commercialization of Valentine’s Day is like no other, if the stuffed animals, ridiculously large chocolate boxes and expensive flowers littered

throughout your local drugstores say anything. Society has created a standard that if your partner’s place does not look like the set of a Hallmark movie, they’ve failed miserably.

Instead of letting society control your Valentine’s Day plans, perhaps doing something more sentimental would be better for everyone’s hearts and pockets.

At its core, Valentine’s Day is about expressing your love for the person or people who mean the most to you. There are a plethora of options to make the day more meaningful with your loved ones, whether you’re together or apart.

If you and your significant other are able to be together, going on a date to the dollar store has quite literally never looked better. Frugal and fun? Check and check. One might ask “What can you find at the dollar store?” Great question. The dollar store is a place that’ll answer your every “They have these here?” with a simple “Yes, yes we do.” Therefore, a movie night is a fantastic option to use \$1 candies and snacks to the utmost advantage.

This is not limited to just couples; you or your friends could have a Zoom movie night on any streaming service with the “Share Screen” option. Whether you’re in a relationship or more than content with yourself, technology presents nearly endless options to connect with others, which is the point of the day.

Valentine’s Day should not be about getting your partner or loved ones the most expensive designer this or that. It’s about connecting with others on a basic human level. Obviously, it is more complicated given the current pandemic, but not impossible. FaceTime your loved ones, Zoom with your partner and tell the people important to you that you love them.

Love is arguably the most powerful emotion and does not need any grandiose measures to be expressed. So, whatever it is that you do on your Valentine’s Day, make sure it is simply with love.

“Can masks kiss? It is not expected but of course”  
- Joyce Carol Oates



# BLIND LOVE

BY KOLBE SCHENDL  
Contributor

One of the most divisive holidays has come around for its yearly appearance. Half of the world will be waiting in line at the grocery store, hands full of overly priced flowers, stuffed animals and/or sweets. The other half will be bashing on those people.

Yes, you guessed it: Valentine's Day has arrived. Although society has formed many different opinions about Valentine's Day, it is important to recognize when the heart-shaped chocolate boxes become more important than what it's all truly about: love.

Few things exemplify this more than the legend behind the origin of this holiday, which dates all the way back to the third century.

Valentine's Day is named after St. Valentine, a priest that the Catholic Church recognizes as a saint. At the time of his sainthood, Emperor Claudius II, also known as Claudius the Cruel, reigned over Rome, and because of the Imperial Crisis, he needed as many soldiers fighting as possible. Of course, he did the most logical thing he could think of: outlawing marriage for young men so they would solely focus on fighting.

A young priest named Valentine believed in matrimony and the freedom to marry, so he secretly performed marriages for soldiers in the middle of the night before they would head off to war.

Eventually, Claudius caught Valentine and sentenced him to death. While staying in his jail cell awaiting the days until his execution, he met the jailer's daughter, a blind girl. After passing notes back and forth, his final note before his death was signed, "Love, your Valentine." Upon hearing these final words, she was healed from her blindness.

This story, though tragic, reminds us all that it's not about the number of gifts you give your significant other or about buying the most expensive bouquet of roses. Rather, it's about sacrificing your wants for the sake of others.

What St. Valentine did was an act of true love. Let's follow in his footsteps this Valentine's Day and find ways to love our friends, family and significant others with the true, sacrificial love that St. Valentine perpetuated.



## NETFLIX

### romance movies to heart or hate

BY MALLORY CLARK  
Contributor

I've rounded up the best — and the worst — romance movies to watch during a COVID-19 Valentine's Day. Whether you are chowing down on chocolate or snacking on candy hearts, these Netflix originals will either set the mood or ruin it. Here's a list of films you may "heart" or "hate."



N FILM

*To All the Boys  
I've Loved Before*



Heart

An absolute staple in Netflix's repertoire. Based on a book, this film captured every teen girl's attention. Who doesn't love young love, high school drama and hot people?

After a teenage girl named Lara Jean has her secret love letters sent to their recipients, her life gets turned upside down. The charming atmosphere and characters in this film make it a rom-com must-see. If you really enjoy this one, there are two more sequels.



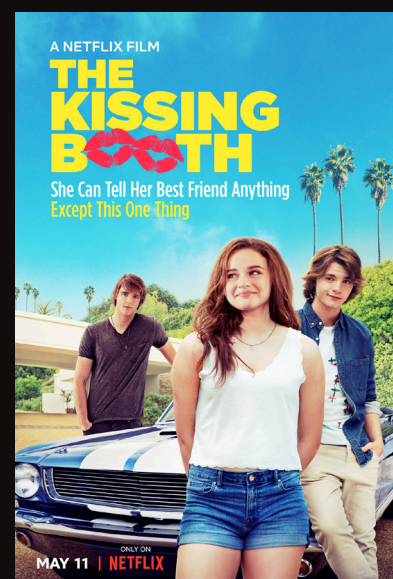
Hate

N FILM

**THE KISSING BOOTH**

Now, they can't all be winners. "The Kissing Booth" presents one of the worst on-screen couples I have ever seen. Can we talk about the height difference? The whole "falling in love with her best friend's bad boy brother" is not Joey King's finest performance.

"The Kissing Booth" appears to be a hit, but is really filled with empty promises and sexist jokes. There is no love, no magic and no chemistry — only short skirts and possessive boyfriends. Unsurprisingly enough, I hate it.



N FILM

**ALWAYS BE MY MAYBE**



Heart

Not only does it star bombshell Ali Wong and comedic actor Randall Park, but this movie is also everything we could ever wish for from a Netflix rom-com. Childhood friends reconnect years later to find they still have feelings for each other, despite how much they have changed. How cute is that?

A diverse cast and a cameo from Keanu Reeves makes this film an essential watch for any rom-com connoisseur. That dinner scene alone is hysterical. I heart, heart, heart this film.



Hate

N FILM

**Sierra Burgess  
is a Loser**

Netflix sure went heavy-handed with the teen rom-coms in 2018. "Sierra Burgess" is your infamous catfish love story. The trailers promised us an uplifting story, but the end product could not be more dissatisfying. What I thought was going to be a positive message for high school "losers" ended up backfiring.

They also bring in Noah Centineo because why not? He is the king of the nice-guy Netflix hotties, and he might have been the only redeeming quality of this movie. Needless to say, this film left me disappointed, and I really do hate it.







## The villain valentine of the year:

BY VALERIE VASCONEZ  
NEWS EDITOR

Ever since Capcom dropped its trailer for Resident Evil Village on Jan. 21, almost everyone on the internet hoped the game would turn from a horror adventure to a dating simulator, all thanks to its villain, Lady Alcina Dimitrescu.

The sudden popularity for the character had even caught the attention of the game's art director, Tomonori Takano, who showed appreciation to fans. The team released a statement thanking the fans for the enthusiasm and confirming Drimitrescu to be 9 feet and 6 inches tall.

While she doesn't seem to fit into a doorway, she seems to fit perfectly into the internet's heart, even that of non-gamers. This is most likely earning her the title of video game villain valentine of the year.

Dimitrescu has skin as pale as winter snow, ruby red lips to contrast and eyes that glow like fire, all to emphasize the fact that she's a vampire villain. While her claws might be intended to kill the player character, most have fallen head-over-heels.

In just a short search on anything tagged with Lady Dimitrescu, you can find copious amounts of fanart, cosplays and memes done by fans, most of which are adoring the giant vampire.

Her main appeal has been debated amongst fans.

One could argue that it's just the mystery of vampires that they're drawn to. After all, there's been a ton of vampire romances made in film.

Perhaps, it's the fact that she's also a powerful



villain, capable of wreaking havoc.

Or maybe it's her stature alone. Her height plus the way that she commands attention, as a mistress of a castle should. The power of a woman in charge can seem thrilling for some.

Her luxurious style, resembling an old Hollywood glam, could be the eye-catcher. She dons a wide-brim hat on top of her curled bobbed haircut and completes her ensemble with a white dress, paired with a pearl necklace and black gloves to hide her retractable claws. There's much to adore about her outfit.

Then again, it might be something else. We can see visible aging on Dimitrescu that could put her into her mid 30's to mid 40's in human years. Although, following vampire logic, she could be hundreds or even thousands of years old. She certainly must be ... experienced at what she does.

Although there's so much to love about the villain of the next Resident Evil game, it seems that fans will be waiting for more until May 7 when the game releases, which could lead to an interesting dilemma.

Resident Evil villains and bosses have been known to have a second transformation that's usually grotesque. We'll see how gamers feel about their beloved giant woman in the final showdown, but for now, Dimitrescu has a special place in the internet's heart.

*P.S. Lady Dimitrescu, if you're reading this: I am free to hang on Feb. 14. Contact me and I'll set everything up.*





## A Hilltop Love Affair

BY HALEY JOHNSON

Editor-in-Chief

*I knew at once you were the one for me  
Well, after a rejection letter or three.*

*I moved in within months, which some may say is too soon.  
That summer orientation night just made me swoon.*

*A bright-eyed youngster, I was hot to pursue:  
Could the "mid-size, big difference" rumors be true?*

*One-third Greek, I thought "How exotic."  
I didn't even care that your cooking was toxic.*

*How elated I was; my heart couldn't get bigger,  
Then I realized you were quite the gold-digger.*

*I've shelled out thousands in the past four years.  
The debt I've accumulated just brings me to tears.*

*Still every semester, you send a book list and beg.  
Admittedly, I've cheated on you with Chegg.*

*When the pandemic hit, you pushed me away.  
I had nowhere but my parents' to stay.*

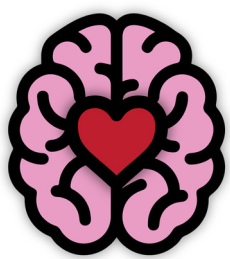
*All spring and summer, I fantasized our reconciliation.  
I didn't know what I had before our separation.*

*Hesitantly, you welcomed me back in the fall.  
You didn't resemble your former self at all.*

*You weren't into parties or concerts or sporting events.  
Sometimes I wondered if you even made sense.*

*But we're making it work, even if over Zoom.  
We do spend lots of time in my bedroom ;)*

*When it's safe, give your restrictions a shove.  
Your capacity limits don't apply to my love.*



# LOVE ON THE BRAIN: OUR PHYSICAL RESPONSE TO

BY TIRZAH CHIRSTOPHER  
Contributor

One time, I was sick and had excruciating pain in my leg, but later that night, I fell asleep to a heavy metal song on repeat, which had been recommended to me by my then-boyfriend. I do not like loud noises of any kind and am more of a soft R&B kinda gal, so this was definitely weird for me.

Another time, this guy who fancied me drove over 800 miles to surprise me with a gift in-person for my birthday. There was severe weather, and anyone in their right mind would have called it a day and resigned themselves to finishing some work at home.

Most of us can relate to doing something completely out of character when we find ourselves falling in love with someone, which feels inexplicable at the time. There is some good news, though. I have scientific explanations for how we feel and what we do while falling in love.

Both the mesocorticolimbic system and the ventral tegmental area of the brain are involved in the process of cultivating a budding romance. A bunch of neurotransmitters and hormones are released into the nucleus accumbens, amygdala and the medial prefrontal cortex.

Too much science? Probably. But let me break it down:

## The Cocaine Phase

The beginning of many relationships is perfectly magical, with a sprinkle of uncertainty that every part of you wants to explore. During this first phase, as you are unable to predict your partner's responses, every action of theirs surprises you, hence piquing your curiosity. When you get back from seeing them, your confidence level is at an all-time high, and you feel invincible.

While you're consciously swooning over your

new-found love, your brain is whirring with signals all around to send messages about this new experience to the cells in your body. Neurotransmitters are the messengers that are used to communicate these messages to every cell in the brain, namely neurons.

One such neurotransmitter is dopamine, which is released from a tiny cone-shaped structure called the hypothalamus every time you are expecting a reward. So the next time you think about or see this special person of yours, your mind experiences euphoria due to the increase in dopamine levels, as you associate this special person with pleasure.

The important thing to note here is that dopamine changes all your focus to the source of pleasure, hence taking up all of your cognitive resources to work around this person. Surprise, surprise.

One of the major areas in the brain affected when you fall in love is the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for executive functions, such as attention, impulse control, judgment and future planning. This explains why you're so reluctant to notice pretty clear, bright, crimson, red flags in the people you date. At the time, anything that challenges your seemingly perfect relationships feels like an attack. In reality, it may mean you should run and never look back.

## The Heroin Phase

Once the "let's go crazy, we only live once" phase ends and your special person becomes a little more predictable, the body starts releasing its own opioids in the brain. These opioids are what dominate the companionship phase of the relationship, where things are more mellow and the reality of life is kind of kicking in, but you are still comfortable and safe.

The more you emotionally bond with your partner, the more a different network in the brain called the salience network gets activated, which lets you develop feelings of empathy for them. Studies have shown that when a loved one has a negative

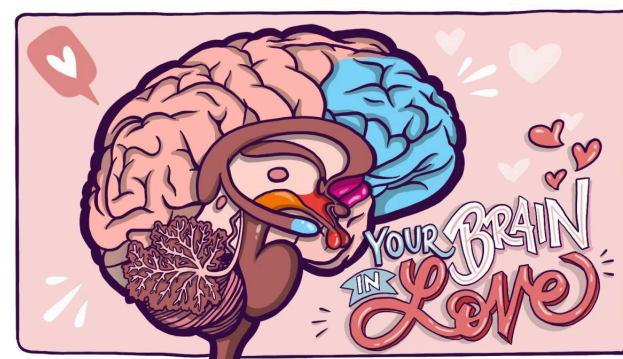
experience, the way you feel will correlate very closely to how they are feeling, scientifically proving that they have become a part of you.

Another neurotransmitter that is released during both phases is oxytocin, also known as the cuddle hormone. This wonderful neurotransmitter is what makes you chuckle randomly during the day when you think of that cute moment from your previous date, feel safe and warm when you hug the other person, make up disgustingly adorable nicknames for each other and get clingy when you don't see them for a while.

In fact, if you spritz some oxytocin up your nose it can cross the blood-brain barrier and actually make you feel fuzzy and nice (the perfume industry should capitalize on this idea).

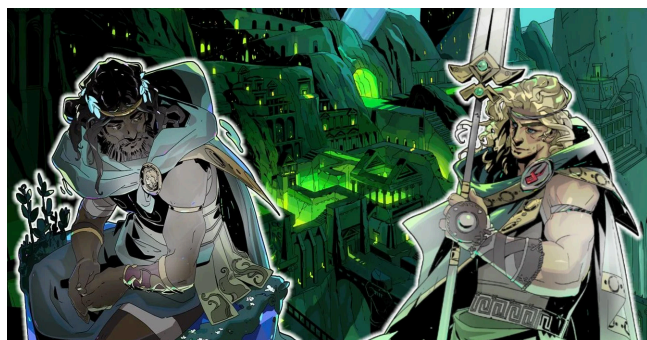
It is pretty obvious by now that love is too complicated to completely understand. It's nearly impossible to decipher what exactly causes us to behave in this way. However, it is funny how our bodies have mechanisms for us to get high from time to time, and possibly stay in that place of mellow comfort for the rest of our lives.

May this Valentine's Day be a fun one, but hey — if your relationships work out beyond these phases — you may have a valentine to celebrate with every day.



BY SYDNI ADAMS  
Contributor

With icy cold weather across the Midwest and an ongoing pandemic, there are plenty of reasons to stay inside this Valentine's Day. Now is the perfect time to celebrate the season of love by getting into reading and supporting LGBTQ+ authors. As someone who has Googled "books with LGBTQ+ representation" too many times to count, here is a list of five books with LGBTQ+ relationships to help you celebrate this Valentine's Day.



## 1. 'The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue' by Mackenzi Lee

"The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue" is a fun romp in 1700s Europe through the eyes of Henry Montague (Monty), who needs a taste of reality. Faced with having to take over his father's business upon returning from his last chaotic adventure while battling his feelings for his best friend, Monty determines that his next step is to have as much fun as possible before being trapped in his father's shadow for the rest of his life. This book is captivating and sweet, and Lee does a fantastic job of turning a spoiled, rich kid into a lovable guy with a crush on his best friend.

## 2. 'The Song of Achilles' by Madeline Miller

"The Song of Achilles" is more of a serious retelling of the events of "The Iliad," with warrior demigod Achilles and his lover Patroclus, a boy exiled to Achilles's father's kingdom. The book follows Patroclus as he grows up with Achilles and trails behind him into the Trojan War. It will warm and break your heart simultaneously, so make sure you have tissues available.

## 3. 'It's Not Like It's a Secret' by Misa Sugiura

"It's Not Like It's a Secret" is possibly the most diverse novel on this list, with Sana, an Asian-American in high school, moving to a new town in California and struggling with feeling at home in her skin. She befriends Jamie, a beautiful and intelligent girl who Sana finds herself thinking about all the

time. This book dives into topics of race, family and a teen girl's newfound gay feelings.

## 4. 'I'll Give You the Sun' by Jandy Nelson

"I'll Give You the Sun" twists the narratives of twins Jude and Noah throughout the years, with their childhood being narrated by one twin and the present narrated by the other. As children, the twins were connected at the hip, but secrets, lies and heartbreak have torn them apart. This story depicts the love between siblings within a broken family, while also diving into the feelings of a gay main character. Although the LGBTQ+ relationship isn't the main focus of this book, the familial love between the siblings captured my attention the entire read.

## 5. 'Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe' by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Closing off my recommendations, this award-winning novel follows young and angry Aristotle and soft spoken Dante after they meet each other at a swimming pool on a hot summer day in the '80s. Another story with a diverse cast, as both main characters are Mexican-American, "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe" explores the characters' different connections to their families. It also focuses on their developing friendship and relationship over the years in a beautiful and occasionally serious depiction of teen boys learning to find support in each other.



# Comparing Harley's relationships on Harley Quinn

By Daniel Kerns  
Contributor

"Harley Quinn" is an adult animated series from DC Comics that follows the misadventures of the titular supervillain as she strikes out on her own with a misfit crew after her breakup with the Joker.

Much of the show is spent exploring Harley and her relationships. The most significant ones are the Joker, Poison Ivy and Harley herself.

## Poison Ivy

In contrast, Poison Ivy starts the show as Harley's best friend and always supports her, even when Harley doesn't support herself. Ivy goes along with Harley's evil schemes at great risk to her well-being, but she respects herself enough to be honest when the situation isn't great.

That all changes when Harley and Ivy share a passionate kiss after they escape "The Pit" in season two. Ivy denies these new feelings for Harley to focus on her upcoming wedding to Kite Man, the comedic relief, low-level supervillain. (His catchphrase is "hell yeah.") After several romantic encounters during the bachelorette party, Harley asks Ivy to be with her. Ivy turns her down because of Harley's flighty and spontaneous nature, preferring the stable yet unfulfilling Kite Man.

All of these scenes flex how strong Kaley Cuoco and Lake Bell are as Harley Quinn and Poison Ivy. Their chemistry as both friends and lovers is phenomenal, with equal parts hilarious and heart-wrenching.

At the wedding, Kite Man paints an incredibly specific picture that Ivy realizes she doesn't want. She recognizes that Harley has grown into a person she wants to be with. Glowing in the light of their new relationship, Ivy and Harley drive off into the sunset as they escape the cops.

Harley and Ivy's relationship is significant as it is one of the few mainstream LGBTQ+ couples in one of the most popular genres. Other queer characters are relegated to supporting roles or just obscure.

Ivy's reluctance to leave her loveless engagement to Kite Man can be interpreted as a form of compulsory heterosexuality, first identified by Adrienne Rich in 1980. It was easy for her to go along with it because that's what was expected from her. Being with Harley allows Ivy to explore herself and discover who she is.



## THE Joker

In addition to being a supervillain, the Joker's also a jerk. He's completely toxic and not just from all of the acids and chemicals. In the first scene of the series, he leaves Harley to buy time while he escapes from Batman. As Joker goes into his submarine, he promises to quickly break Harley out of Arkham. He doesn't. It takes her a year, in addition to Poison Ivy's help, to realize that he never had her in mind.

Given the opportunity, Joker always uses Harley to further his own goals and constantly puts her in danger. When they're together, they're a horribly unbalanced pair. Harley is completely under Joker's thumb. When she tries to introduce her own ideas, he quickly undercuts them and gets his way.

After Harley tries to break up with him, he twists the situation to make himself look sympathetic. He lies and says he didn't break her out because it would be too dangerous for them to be together. She falls for this and immediately jumps back into his arms. She then bakes him a bread pudding, which he immediately shoots because he thinks it has raisins. He would have known they were chocolate chips if he had tasted it first instead of unloading a clip into it mere seconds after his loving girlfriend set it down.

## HARLEY QUINN

Harley's journey through season one is becoming her own woman after leaving an abusive relationship. Her past self, Dr. Harleen Quinzel, a licensed psychiatrist, often appears as her conscience and tells her what she needs to hear.

As Sammy Davis, Jr. will tell you, "I can't be right for somebody else if I'm not right for me." Although he sang it in a different context, the point still stands: Self-love is key to lasting happiness, whether you're with someone or not.

Harley reconnected with her self-worth and forged a new identity, separate from her trauma but born out of it.

For everyone else this Valentine's Day, love someone. Love your partner, love yourself, love a family member, love a stranger. The world needs love, and it needs you.



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