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# Where did all the rom-coms go?

**Paul Swartz**

Assistant Voice Editor

Last year, the romantic comedy film "Anyone But You" (2023) shattered box office projections, grossing over \$220 million worldwide. The movie's success led many to believe a mainstream rom-com resurgence was on the horizon.

Over a year later, we're still waiting.

Rom-coms have been on the decline for years. In fact, only one of the 10 highest-grossing highest grossing US rom-coms ever was released in the past fifteen years (2018's "Crazy Rich Asians"). So what changed? Why do we seem so far gone from the days of movies like "The Proposal," "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days," and "Hitch"?

To put it simply, media companies don't think audiences want them.

Despite its success, "Anyone But You" was the 35th highest-grossing highest grossing movie of 2024, making less than films that were considered flops, such as "Napoleon" or "The Flash." The highest-grossing highest grossing rom-com ever, the 1990 classic "Pretty Woman," would've been just the 14th highest-grossing highest grossing movie of 2024.

Additionally, there's been a noticeable trend toward making art darker, — more grounded, and realistic.

Rom-coms don't fit into that box. They often present an idealized, upbeat world where the biggest concern is ensuring two characters successfully navigate a romantic relationship. Romance controls the plot, drives the narrative and it drives the narrative and it defines the conflict. A rom-com would be a break in all of the trends currently employed by the film and TV industry. But maybe that's precisely exactly what the world could use. A break.

Take, for example, the Apple TV show "Ted Lasso." It's not a rom-com or even a movie, but for the sake of breaking away from the darkness of modern media, there is no better example.

"Ted Lasso" rejected negativity, providing a positive experience that was, for many viewers, an escape from the confines of most modern prestige television. And it was praised by audiences and critics alike, winning two Emmys for Outstanding Comedy Series over its three-season run.

So, how do we bring rom-coms back to the mainstream? If you look at the most popular films in the genre, there's one common denominator.

Stars.

"Anyone But You" featured rising stars Glen Powell ("Top Gun: Maverick") and Sydney Sweeney ("Euphoria"). "The Proposal" had Ryan Reynolds and Sandra Bullock. "Hitch" had Will Smith and Eva Mendes. Successful rom-coms have a tried and true formula: bringing in big names.

Give us a rom-com with Tom Holland and Zendaya, John David Washington and Zoe Saldana or Daniel Radcliffe and Emma Stone. Studios should use their superstars to attract bring in an audience, just like the classics did.

Rom-coms aren't going to be safe. Not all of them will are going to achieve the success "Anyone But You" enjoyed. But the biggest rewards pose the biggest risks.

Maybe future rom-coms will experience a resurgence. Maybe they'll give audiences a break from the rest of the media landscape.



**ANYONE BUT YOU** 2023

running time 103 MINUTES  
 directed by WILL GLUCK  
 produced by WILL GLUCK, JOE ROTH, JEFF KIRSCHENBAUM

starring SYDNEY SWEENEY, GLEN POWELL, ALEXANDRA SHIPP, HADLEY ROBINSON, MICHELLE HURD, GATA DERMOT MULRONEY, DARREN BARNET, BRYAN BROWN



**HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS** 2003 PG-13

RUNNING TIME 116 MIN  
 GENRE COMEDY, ROMANCE  
 DIRECTED BY DONALD PETRIE  
 WRITTEN BY MICHELE ALEXANDER, JEANNIE LONG, KRISTEN BUCKLEY  
 STARRING KATE HUDSON, MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY, KATHRYN HAHN



**CRAZY RICH ASIANS** 2018 PG-13

RUNNING TIME 120 MIN  
 GENRE COMEDY, DRAMA, ROMANCE  
 DIRECTED BY JON M. CHU  
 WRITTEN BY PETER CHIARELLI, ADELE LIM, KEVIN KWAN (NOVEL)  
 STARRING CONSTANCE WU, HENRY GOLDING, AWKWAFINA



## The Voyeur



# Life after 'WAP': How women's pleasure came to the forefront of music and continues to rise in popularity

**Anaiah Davis**

*Co-Editor-in-Chief*

The world hasn't been the same since Aug. 7, 2020. If you're imagining that a historic event happened on this date, you'd be correct.

The rap duo we didn't know we needed at the time, Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi B, dropped their hit single "WAP" on that fateful fall Friday.

The empowering sex-positive anthem is a testament to the artists' commitment to normalizing women's pleasure in their music.

A fan favorite and commercial success, "WAP" is now certified 8x platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). Songs receive RIAA certifications after meeting hefty sales and streaming requirements.

Sex and relationships are not new topics in music, but this single saw immense backlash from social and political conservatives. Critics claimed the song set "the entire female gender back by 100 years" and that the rappers are "what happens when children are raised without God and without a strong father figure."

Of course, explicit rap music isn't everyone's cup of tea, but the condemnation this song received was unlike anything I'd ever seen. Now, a little over four years after "WAP," sexually suggestive music from female artists is even more commonplace in the industry. Let's talk about why and how music with this content continues to empower and instill confidence in female fans.

Historically, women have not always been free to openly express interest in physical intimacy. For a long time, sex was seen as something done to women rather than an act they willfully participate in. Even now, when women do talk about enjoying sex, they are chastised and accused of oversexualizing themselves.

Honestly, that's simply untrue and unfair. If you look at it this way, numerous male rappers have, in one way or another, always objectified women's bodies when discussing sex, often bragging about what they do to women with little comment on their partner's experience. Barely anyone bats an eye because their lyrics are "expected." But when women approach the subject, it's a problem? That's unacceptable.

We continue to see female artists across various genres proudly write music about sex, and the fan response is the same: they love it. America's latest pop superstar, Sabrina Carpenter, took the world by storm last year with successful summer singles before dropping her sixth studio album, "Short n' Sweet."

Carpenter, a young, petite blonde woman, who arguably fits the mold of stereotypical female innocence, doesn't hold back from talking about everything from using fuzzy pink handcuffs, trying new positions and initiating sexual encounters on songs like "Juno," which has

been certified gold by the RIAA.

Fans praised Carpenter for embracing her sexuality, and on tour she teased different sexual positions while performing "Juno." Carpenter primarily employs a skillful use of double entendres when referring to different aspects of intimacy, but at times is more direct. This makes her music fun, honest and charismatic.

Other artists have taken the same liberties. Around the same time Carpenter had her run, R&B sensation Tinashe had the internet in a chokehold with her viral hit "Nasty." The Kentucky native effortlessly landed an addictive dance track with a ridiculously catchy hook. The shamelessly sexy song has been certified gold by the RIAA and NPR named the track one of 124 best songs of 2024.

More than anyone, Megan has remained steadfast in preaching sexual confidence and liberation since "WAP." From her self-titled third studio album, also released last year, came tracks like "Spin" with Victoria Monét and "Down Stairs DJ." The former champions the Texas rapper's prowess in the bedroom, and the latter relishes in the upsides of self-pleasure.

There is no shortage of charming, emotional and romantic music in the industry today. Brilliant ballads and future wedding songs are still around, and they always will be. Why can't we enjoy both styles? Why can't women express deep love for their partners and discuss the wonders of fornication?

Talking about engaging in and enjoying sex isn't an indication that women are broken, disgusting or fatherless. It doesn't mean they are diminishing women's rights. It doesn't mean they are dumb or incapable of being taken seriously as complex, intellectual beings. It means they are adults who are capable of and entitled to making their own decisions about their bodies. Shouldn't we all be celebrating that?

"WAP" wasn't the first song in which female artists talked unabashedly about sex, but it did bring the concept into the limelight and change how the industry views the topic. To the delight of fans, we've seen more and more artists bring sensual lyrics to their music, whether through clever innuendos or straight-up assertions. One thing is for sure: women deserve to speak on these experiences just like their male counterparts do.

It must be said that this music isn't being forced on anyone, and despite all of my arguments, you don't have to like it. But claiming that this music doesn't merit enjoyment or carry important messages about bodily autonomy and sex positivity for women warrants criticism. If you still don't get it, I don't know what to tell you.

Let these powerful, confident and fearless artists be a reminder that women taking and asserting control over their wants and needs is a beautiful, admirable and, most importantly, normal thing.



# The Voyeur

## BDSM: Be Discreet when Shagging at the Mall

**Rome Tews**

*Voice Editor*

There was a point in time when taboo meant something, and it's about time ignominy resurged.

Kink-shaming became a hot-button issue in the 2010s as society continued to shift toward acceptance and loving one another despite our differences. However, after the pandemic and lockdowns, it appears we forgot that other people are actually people.

Social atomization is essentially that concept boiled down into a catchy phrase.

As online communities grow and more people spend their time alone together, individualism and social disconnection flourish simultaneously. This leads to jaw-dropping situations that might be acceptable in your Discord server, but not on public property.

The spark that lit this fire was experiencing someone being led on a leash while walking on all fours at my local mall. There was nothing to do except stare and then drive home in stunned silence.

Objectively, you can argue that staring was wrong, and maybe it was, but it's difficult to mind my own business when I am forcibly involved in something

I didn't consent to.

Bringing your kink into public purview is not only beyond inappropriate, it is borderline illegal depending on how far the scene goes.

Walking your gimp past the food court exposes all that not just to uncomfortable adults, but also to unsuspecting minors. If you need it spelled out as to why presenting your sex life to children is bad, you're the problem.

Countless reports of similar activities have cropped up all over TikTok in the last year, which, while concerning, reinforces the idea that social atomization can be attributed to these incidents.

In their minds, the onlookers are not people, but rather tools for their pleasure, literally. Fun fact: you're not the only ones in the world.

All this to say kink-shaming is bad, but whatever that was is worse.

You're free to do whatever you want with your significant other(s), just not within 50 feet of my person. I'm telling you now: this is a restraining order.





## The Voyeur

Hey, Valentine's Day. You're looking a little... **murderous** this year.

**Scarlett Rose Binder**

*Assistant News Editor*

Valentine's Day totally slays.

At least, if you're in love it does. For many singles, enduring the hyper-commercialized holiday can feel as torturous as getting slain.

And in today's film landscape, that's exactly what happens.

Welcome to the 2025 Valentine's film scene, where swoony, heartfelt romances are out, and R-rated bloodbaths are in. I'm looking at you, "Companion" and "Heart Eyes."

These recently released films take a stab at blending horror and romance, each exploring the darker, more terrifying side of love in its own way.

"Companion," released Jan. 31, kicked off the month of love with a compelling, though less-than-romantic, start.

The movie stars Sophie Thatcher ("Heretic") and Jack Quaid ("The Boys") as Iris and Josh, a seemingly quaint couple on a weekend getaway. However, it soon becomes clear that their relationship is more sinister than it appears, with Josh exerting a level of control over Iris that no one could have imagined. Unless, of course, you've already seen the trailers and marketing materials.

Best to avoid those.

As "Companion" unfolds, Iris and Josh's dynamic spirals from toxic to downright diabolical, taking audiences on a wild ride packed with unexpected twists and turns. The result? A well-written commentary on controlling relationships, deceptively wrapped in pink and red packaging.

It's never been more clear that the color of love is also the color of blood.

Real love may take a backseat in "Companion," but in "Heart Eyes," Cupid grabs the wheel, slams on the gas and drives straight to hell.

Released Feb. 7, "Heart Eyes" is a fun story carried by the chemistry between Olivia Holt ("Cruel Summer") and Mason Gooding ("Scream") as Ally and Jay, respectively. Despite these captivating performances, the movie just

can't decide what it wants to be.

In many ways, it's a rom-com, complete with a coffee shop meet-cute, workplace drama and witty banter between Ally and Jay. At the same time, it's a full-fledged slasher, as our inevitable lovebirds become the latest targets of the Heart Eyes Killer, a masked murderer who hunts down couples on Valentine's Day. The only things sharper than their one-liners are the heart-adorned weapons flying around throughout the film.

In its attempt to mash two genres, "Heart Eyes" ends up at war with itself. Bumpy pacing and an absurd villain backstory sink the film's potential like a doomed romance, but it at least makes for an entertaining ride as it goes under.

"Companion" and "Heart Eyes" are just the latest entries into the romantic horror genre. Apparently, love and terror are natural counterparts. Maybe it's the whole "til death do us part" thing, or maybe it has to do with the dark origins of Valentine's Day itself.

The holiday likely takes its name from two men named Valentine, both executed on Feb. 14 in the third century and later martyred by the Catholic Church. If that's not dark enough, Valentine's Day also has roots in the Roman festival of Lupercalia, historically celebrated from Feb. 13 to 15, where men sacrificed animals and whipped women with their hides, believing it would boost fertility. The brutal event also featured a matchmaking lottery, pairing young men and women together for the festival's duration.

But hey, Feb. 14, is a total love-fest; the epitome of romance. Not to mention every marketing team's dream.

Who said love is dead?

Maybe those two guys named Valentine. Or the women dodging sacrificial animal hides at Lupercalia. Or those of us left sitting alone at the movie theater.

This Valentine's Day, love may be more alive than ever. But watch out, sometimes, this holiday doesn't make your heart skip a beat.

Sometimes, it tears it right out of your chest.



## The Voyeur

# Negotiating the isolating atmosphere of Valentine's Day as an aromantic

**Cassie Maxwell**

*News Editor*

Being aromantic is a spectrum. Some people experience no romantic attraction whatsoever, while others only experience it when certain requirements are met. Either way, it's difficult to celebrate a holiday dedicated to romance when everyone else seems to experience it differently than you do.

Even for those not on the aromantic spectrum, Valentine's Day can feel like a capitalistic slog. Really, why does everything in February have to be red, pink and heart-shaped? Do you need to buy flowers and chocolates just to show someone you care about them?

If you're anything like me and thought that Bo Burnham saying, "If you want love, just pick a girl and love her" was genuinely how crushes worked, Valentine's Day might go as far as feeling horrid.

After all, it's a holiday that puts romantic love on a pedestal. Sure, you can argue Thanksgiving or even "Galentine's Day" is supposed to fill the platonic appreciation void, but Galentine's Day doesn't fill the shelves, and anything Thanksgiving-themed at Walmart is almost certainly not dedicated to the 'thanks' in its name.

Maybe Valentine's Day wouldn't be that bad if only one aspect of Western culture enforced this romantic over platonic mindset, but there's so much more. Even platonic terms are named after romantic ones. Hanging out with friends is a "playdate" and the relationship between two male best friends is often called a "bromance."

In a world where romantic love is valued so much more than platonic, how can the day that embodies that standard not be isolating for aromantics? It spurs this giant swirl of ques-

tions: "Will my friends ever love me as much as they love their romantic partners?" "Am I incapable of love?" "Is there something wrong with me?"

Of course, the answers to these questions are "If you find the right people," "Probably not, and if you are, that's okay" and "Absolutely, but it's certainly not related to your sexuality," respectively. Still, it's concerning that a holiday brings up these questions at all. Instead, for my fellow isolated aromantics, let's ask a question we can control the answer to: what do we do?

Above all else, while cliché, it's important to take care of yourself. Eat some food, take a shower or put on a funny outfit – just try not fall to the dreadful grasp of a commercialized holiday. Do whatever is needed to get through this, whether that is reaching out to friends and family or self-isolating until the holiday is over.

If platonic love can be just as powerful as romantic love, so can self-love. Self-worth is not defined by other people's love, so take the time to prove it.

Secondly, if corporations are trying to take advantage of your love, take advantage of those corporations. Get those heavily discounted chocolates after the holiday ends. Take those free items people randomly pass out on Valentine's Day. Just because you're not participating in the holiday conventionally doesn't mean you don't get to participate at all.

Valentine's Day can trigger feelings of shame and isolation, so for the aromantics out there, you're not broken. You don't need to be fixed. Your love is not inadequate.





## The Voyeur

# We need love too: Romance novels for Black women by Black women

**Anaiah Davis**

*Co-Editor-in-Chief*

Romance has always been one of the most popular literary genres. Between the palpable yearning and blush-inducing intimacy making its way into books these days, there are almost too many love-filled novels to choose from.

What's interesting is the way books with Black main characters don't receive nearly as much attention as their white counterparts. Black women experience the same types of positive and fulfilling romantic connections as other groups do. Their characters deserve to be included in conversations about the genre, especially when the books in question avoid negative tropes and fetishization.

This Valentine's Day, I'm giving the rundown on three books that showcase Black women getting the love they want and deserve.

### "Seven Days in June" by Tia Williams (2021)

I'd be remiss if I didn't include a novel by Tia Williams on this list. Although she has numerous books to her name, she's most known for "The Perfect Find," an age-gap, workplace and forced-proximity romance that readers loved so much it was adapted into a Netflix film in 2023.

Rivaling "The Perfect Find" to take the number one spot in Williams' catalog is "Seven Days in June." Eva Mercy is a single mother and bestselling erotica author who is caught between writing for the fans who made her famous and writing from her heart. She meets Shane Hall, a withdrawn award-winning writer, at a literary event. Their attraction is undeniable and their connection is tangible, but no one knows about the week they spent in love twenty years ago.

Now, they'll spend another seven days together in the heat of the Brooklyn summer, with Eva hesitant to trust Shane despite yearning for them to reveal all of the things that went unsaid before. Deeply passionate, at times frustrating and incredibly beautiful, "Seven Days in June" will make you feel every emotion and then some.

### "Sex, Lies and Sensibility" by Nikki Payne (2024)

This one is for my current and former English majors. Nikki Payne is best known for her Jane Austen-inspired romances, which she hopes bring new life into classic storylines and appeal to the hopeless romantics of the world. It's only right to feature her incredibly steamy remix of "Sense and Sensibility."

Nora Dash and Ennis "Bear" Freeman become unlikely business partners in the hilarious, sexy and wild ride that is this novel. Nora and her sister Yanne arrive in Maine, tasked with renovating the dilapidated inn they received in their father's will.

The catch? They have less than a year to make repairs or they lose their inheritance. Bear, an Abenaki eco-tour guide who was using the property as his business' unofficial headquarters, initially writes Nora off before seeing her determined spirit.

With out-of-this-world chemistry, a shared love for running and stifled sexual desires that are evident every time they're near each other, Nora and Bear's story is intense, sensual and emotional. Nora, still awash with embarrassment after explicit videos of her were posted online, and Bear, guilt-ridden and anxious over what happened with an ex, struggle to trust each other and confront their issues head-on. In the end, they'll have to face their pasts if they want a shot at happily ever after.

### "The Kiss Countdown" by Etta Easton (2024)

Etta Easton may be new on the literary scene, but she came out swinging last year with her debut novel, "The Kiss Countdown." While employing many familiar tropes, the likable characters and balance of lighthearted and serious moments make for a wonderfully-paced book with mature writing.

To avoid being spotted by her ex and his new girlfriend at her favorite coffee shop, Amerie Price, an unemployed event planner, pretends to date Vincent Rogers, an astronaut living in town until his next mission. As books with fake dating typically build on, Amerie's impromptu lie turns into a three-month arrangement of pretending to date Vincent. At first, it's a simple win-win situation: Vincent saves face in front of his overbearing relatives, and Amerie lives rent-free in his house so she can scrape together money for her start-up. However, as you might've guessed, their feelings don't remain platonic for long.

This pick is for book lovers who don't need authors to reinvent the wheel to craft a good love story. So sit back and enjoy the budding relationship between two characters who must balance the all-too-real reality of their competing individual needs with the uncertainty of the future.

Romance novels are fun, but they are also complex and deserve to be appreciated. Thus, books that display Black women in a positive light, with dynamic storylines that don't diminish their racial identity while also not relying too heavily on stereotypes, are gems that we need to cherish and support. These works arguably carry increased significance in a time when society continues to portray Black women as unworthy and undeserving.

So, this week and every week after, remember to celebrate Black authors who bring these stories with the perfect mix of angst, tension and intimacy to life.

# The Voyeur

## Five items under \$100 to get your significant other for Valentine's Day

Latif Love

Sports Editor

It's time to prepare for Valentine's Day, men, so put your money where your mouth is.

I understand that we are college students, and many don't have the funds to break the bank. That's why I'm here to offer inexpensive options to make your significant other feel special.

### 1. Flowers

I mean, duh. 99.9% of women like receiving flowers any day, but especially on Valentine's Day. My go-to's are FromYouFlowers or 1800Flowers. Both websites have deals right now on bouquets, which will only cost you \$40-\$70. I prefer FromYouFlowers because they allow you to include a card with a printed message. Both options offer same-day shipping or scheduled shipping for Valentine's Day.

### 2. Hand-written letter

There's no better way to remind women that chivalry and courtship are alive and well than with a handwritten note. If you feel strongly about your significant other, you should be able to convey that in writing. Even if you're not a poetic person, it's the thought that counts. In a world consumed by social media and electronics, your partner will surely appreciate the effort it takes to write a letter. The cherry on top is that it's free. So get to writing, fellas.

### 3. Edible arrangements

Edible arrangements are usually very expensive, but ediblearrangements.com offers a Valentine's Day sale, during which you can receive 15% off your order. Edible arrangements are fancier than your standard chocolate and will show that you put some thought into your gift. The Valentine's Day Trio Gift Set is \$52.97 and comes

with a preserved rose, a strawberry cheesecake, marbled brownies and a balloon with a sweet message. You can find chocolate-covered strawberries and balloons at Target for cheaper, but it'll be on you to build the presentation.

### 4. Dance greeting

The first time I thought about this idea, I was scrolling through TikTok and saw a group of African men dancing to music with a picture of a woman and a poster that said, "Will you be my valentine?" After researching, I learned that you can purchase a dance greeting from third-world countries in just two days. The proceeds go directly to helping the men, and they ask for permission before posting on TikTok. If you order right now, you can receive the video before Friday, which is only \$35.

### 5. Zimeo product

Zimeo is a brand that makes personalized posters, canvases and blankets that allow you to use photos of yourself and your significant other. For Valentine's Day, Zimeo is currently having a sale with pieces \$30-\$40 off. If you order soon, the gift could arrive before Friday, but if not, it's still a great gift because it can last forever.





## The Voyeur

# Come here often?: Love or leave these common pickup lines

**Madalyn Mirallegro**

*Co-Editor-in-Chief*

Valentine's Day, or the day singles are subjected to the worst pickup lines on planet Earth, is here. Thankfully, I have been in a relationship for the past three Valentine's Days and have not been on the receiving end of this torture for a while.

But trust me, I've been there, rolled my eyes at that and can confidently rate the top five overused romantic remarks. Hold on tight. This will get cringey.

### 1. If you were a fruit, you'd be a fine-apple.

The only reason this pickup line is at the top of my list is because of the song "Fine Apple" by Bryce Vine and Nic D. It's cute, simple and straight to the point. I would be a fine-apple if I was a fruit — despite being allergic to pineapples.

### 2. Come here often?

Come, lol. Real talk, though, this one isn't that bad. What if you do actually go to that place often? The person telling you this might genuinely see you there often and want to see you there more. Maybe after a while, you'll see each other in more private locations.

### 3. Do you have a name, or can I call you mine?

So, actually, I do have a name, and I feel insulted that you don't even want to know it. This pickup line makes me angry because of how rude it is. If you want to date or at least get to know someone, the decent thing to do is to learn their name first.

### 4. Can you lend me a kiss? I promise I'll give it back.

Don't even think about coming near my face if that is the first thing that you say to me. In what world would anyone give consent to being kissed by a random stranger? If anything, this pickup line feels like harassment, and I don't like it at all.

### 5. Can I follow you home? Because my parents always told me to follow my dreams.

No. No, you may not follow me home. I'm actually crushing your dreams, and you can start all over again. This pickup line annoys me because it feels more like a threat than something cute to say. It won't get anyone a relationship, but it will get you a restraining order.

If you are looking to earn a date on Valentine's Day, take it from me that none of these cliché pickup lines will work. What will work is getting to know the person that you meet. Ask for their name, talk about their hobbies and yours.

Don't automatically assume that the person you are talking to owes you anything, and consider the implications behind a sentence that is uninspired and potentially creepy. A meaningful relationship takes time, and a one-liner that has no substance to it might not get you off on the right foot.



Huh?

Come here often?



# The Voyeur

## Staff Picks: The Scout staff's hear me out cake

In the second half of 2024, a trend emerged on TikTok in which users created “hear me out” cakes. Participants took turns placing sticks with pictures of fictional characters, animated and live-action versions, celebrities and even their friends’ parents that they found attractive on their desserts.

The phrase “hear me out” connects to the idea that the person’s pick is wild, mildly outrageous and must be explained to be understood.

In the spirit of Valentine’s Day, The Scout staff has assembled a list of its very own picks that make up its hear me out cake.

### Johnny Depp as Barnabas Collins — Rome Tews

Is he undead? Yes. Does he have the manners of an 18th-century gentleman? Also yes. And you know what? That’s hot. Something about awkward, pale Easterners with immaculate wardrobes sets off my love chemicals. His desire to find and reunite with Josette, while procuring some fresh blood in the process, is visceral and downright aspirational. Also, Johnny Depp is just that attractive, regardless of what he’s playing. Maybe in another 100 years, this sultry vampire will come suck on my neck.

### Sofina from “Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves” — Paul Swartz

Sofina is a textbook villain, and her character functions perfectly for the fantasy world this movie is set in. She is so obviously evil from the beginning that it seems odd the characters would ever trust her, but I honestly get it. There are plenty of moments where she’s supposed to look creepy, but the entire time, I just think, “Wow, her eyes are really pretty.” I don’t know why, but in a movie with no shortage of attractive people — Chris Pine, Michelle Rodriguez and Regé-Jean Page, to name a few — Sofina stands out the most. Plus, it gives me a chance to plug the “Dungeons & Dragons” movie.

### Nicholas Hoult as Lex Luthor — Madalyn Mirallegro

Now normally I am not into bald people, but for some reason, Nicholas Hoult pulls it off. When the first look of him as Lex Luthor hit the internet, lives were changed, mine most importantly. As he exited the plane with the shades and the popped-collar coat, I knew that I would be hooked long after the new “Superman” movie comes out this July.

### Ghostface — Emily Scumaci

I don’t mean Billy Loomis, Stu Macher or any of the subsequent characters who dared don the mask. I mean Ghostface. I never considered the killer physically appealing until the Halloween trend emerged when couples started buying the mask. My whole thought process changed. I still can’t explain what it is about him, and I know I would be terrified if he were real. But since he’s not, I can continue to find him attractive.

### Max Goof from “Mickey’s Twice Upon a Christmas” — Scarlett Rose Binder

Listen, if I could rationalize choosing Flynn Rider, I would. But that’s “not a real hear me out,” or so I’ve been told. So here we are. No offense to Max, because I really do love this guy. “Mickey’s Twice Upon a Christmas” is a classic in my home. I could blame this on my many younger siblings, but honestly, I love it, and that’s largely because I get to see a college-age Max Goof on my screen. Despite technically being an animated dog with no more than two teeth, he walks, talks and has all the angst of your average teenage boy. Well . . . above average, if you ask me. Hear me out: there’s something so adorable about the way he wears that turtleneck.

### William from “Don’t Starve Together” — Cassie Maxwell

I put six options before my friends and asked them to choose the character they would find hardest to “hear me out” about. Between literal monsters, robots and demons, they chose this perfectly normal man. Now look, I know this guy sucks — I mean, he pretty much puts a bunch of people in hell for the fun of it — but that doesn’t deter me. He has style and power. Do you see his dapper little suit and his smug grin? His voice is a harmonium, and he experiments in dark magic. What else could you want in a man, if not someone that sends you to a culmination of all your worst nightmares?

