

MOVIES

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He initially feels guilty and then begins to fall in love with the girl he scorned. The fact that she is not easily wooed by him adds character to a fresh and funny movie.

•**My Bloody Valentine**: This is the same old psychopath-who-kills-every-year-on-the-day-he-was-scorned plot. A highlight is a human heart found inside a washing machine. It's as romantic as Mantovani.

•**Beauty and the Beast**: A tried-and-true formula story with fabulous animation, fantastic songs and some of the more romantic images of any movie in the past decade. Although I'm speaking of the Disney version, this story has been used in any number of other movies that are appropriate for this list.

•**Fatal Attraction**: If this reminds you of any dates, I suggest a plutonic lifestyle from now on. This should teach you to remain true to your one love and realize that a healthy monogamous relationship will keep you and your pets from harm.

•**Wings of Desire**: Though, strictly speaking, not a couples film, this is a good litmus test to see if your partner has a heart. If there is no reaction to this incredibly romantic view of people and their inherent goodness, then you may want to think about another lover.

•**Frankie and Johnny**: No, not the Elvis movie. This stars Al Pacino as a recently released ex-con who yearns to make up for his past life by living well. He starts by trying to convince Michelle Pfeiffer, who works at a greasy spoon with him, that he is the man of her dreams. It's the tried-and-true, boy-chases-girl story, but it's done with charm and loads of laughs. From the director of *Pretty Woman*, it's about 10 times better than that inferior movie.

•**Cool As Ice**: The ultra-hip, ultra-cool Vanilla Ice

rides into town with his entourage only to have his motorcycle break down. He has just enough time to steal the heart of a good girl who knows she shouldn't hang with the Iceman, who woos her with the immortal line, "Lose the zero and get wit' the hero." Ice is about as cool as a sky blue tux with a dickie.

•**Mississippi Masala**: Similar to *Cool As Ice* in the sense that, in both movies, the parents don't

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approve of the couple's relationship. On the other hand, this is a quality movie with poignancy and some important things to say. It's the movie *Jungle Fever* might have been if Spike Lee could settle down and concentrate on relationships rather than political agendas.

•**Cross My Heart**: Martin Short and Annette O'Toole are

a couple of people sick of the dating merry-go-round and are on their third date when all their lies come home to roost. It is hilarious without ever losing sight of the relationship between the two. This is probably the best "date" movie on the list.

Whether you are celebrating Valentine's Day alone or with someone you care about, there should be some movies on this list that hold relevance to the day.

—Lucas Gutman

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ORIGIN

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names out of a box by young men. The men were then supposed to accompany the woman whose name they drew to the feast.

The early Christian clergy supposedly objected to this practice and substituted the names of saints to be emulated for those of young women, causing one historian to remark: "To expect a woman and to draw a saint is ever a disappointment to mortal man."

The origins of Valentine's Day cards are similarly cloudy. One legend gives credit for inventing the cards to a French nobleman held prisoner in the tower of London who called the letters he sent to his wife "valentines."

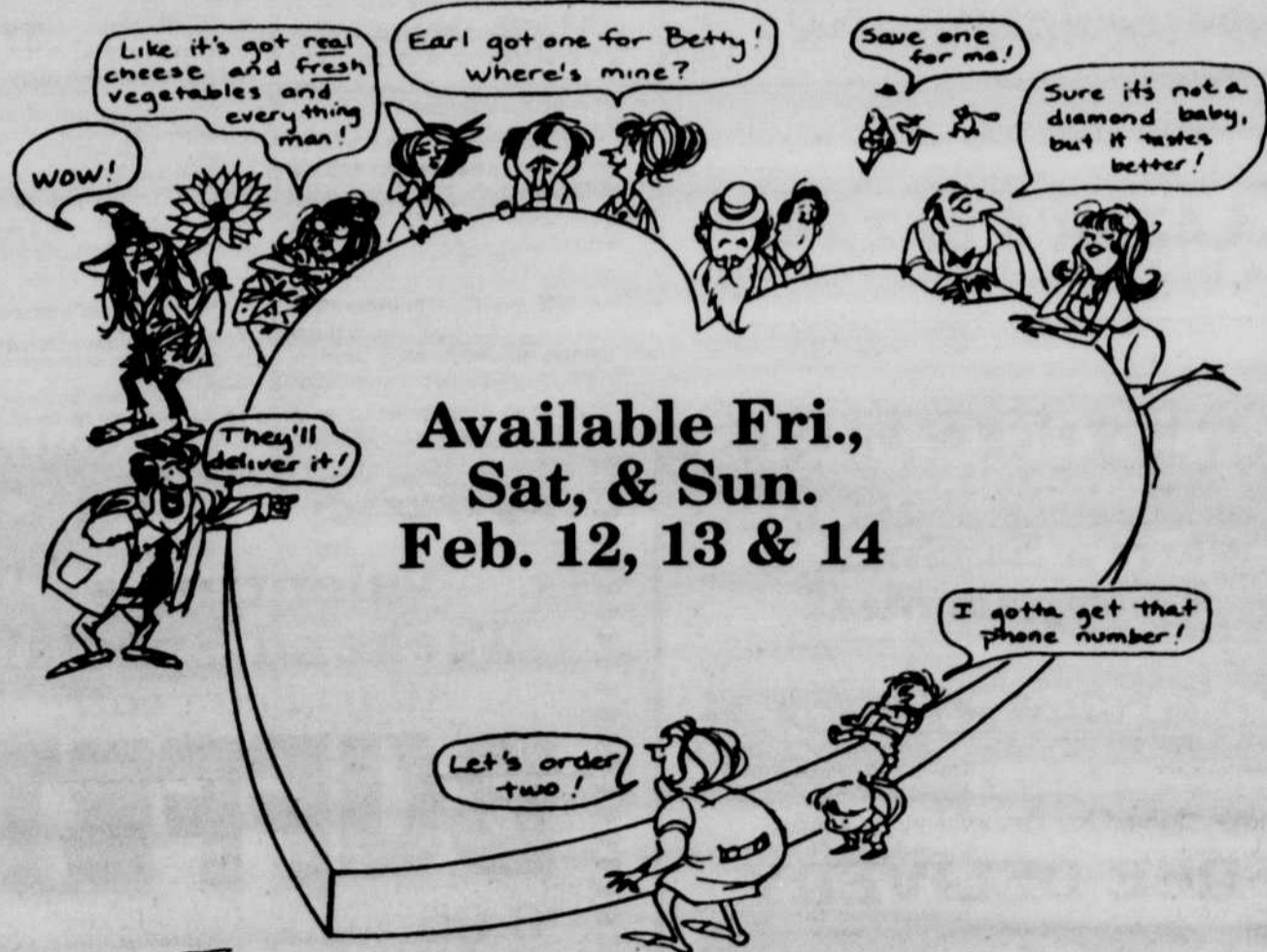
Another story, probably apocryphal, traces the origins of the often heart-shaped card to sixth century Mongol ruler Kubla Khan. It is said the great Khan would sometimes tear the still-beating heart out of a vanquished opponent with his bare hands and present it to a particularly favored concubine.

The first commercially produced Valentine's Day cards appeared in the early 1800s. Often elaborately decorated with silk and lace, cards from this era are collector's items and can fetch up to several hundred dollars at an auction.

Valentine's Day is celebrated chiefly in the United States, Canada, England, France and Japan, where candy manufacturers imported the holiday in 1936. In Japan, women give presents to men Feb. 14. On March 14, White Day, men are expected to present candy, lingerie or other gifts in direct proportion to the generosity they received. Wacoal Corp., Japan's biggest underwear manufacturer, sells about 360,000 pairs of panties near White Day each year. To prevent embarrassment, many outlets install vending machines that discreetly dispense women's underwear.

—Chris Loughner

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