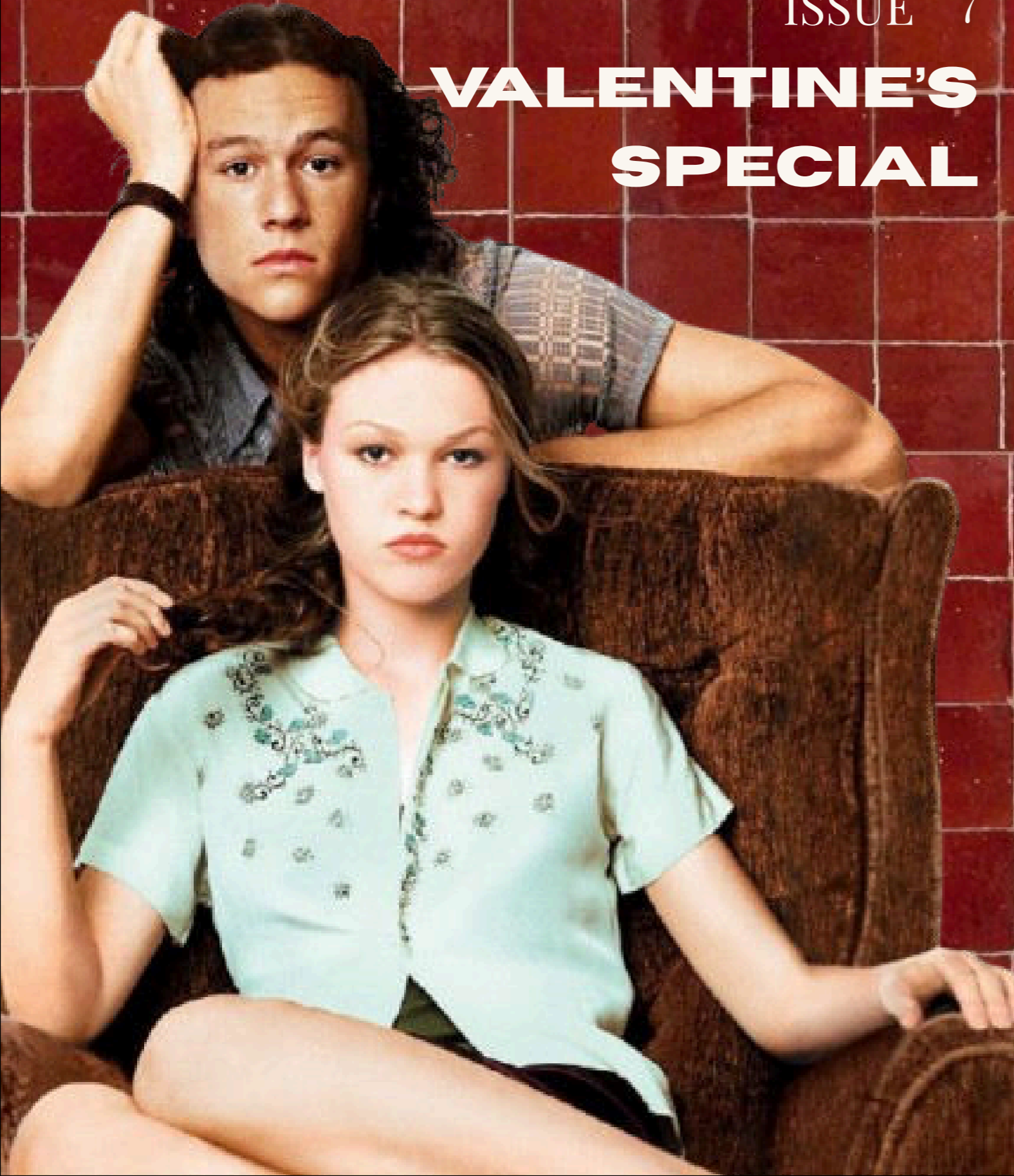


# THE **D**OZEN

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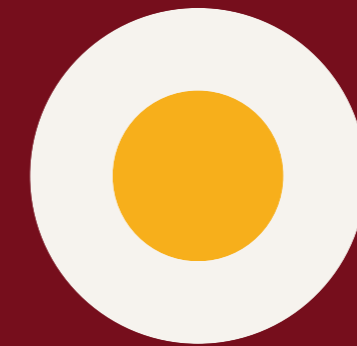
ISSUE 7

**VALENTINE'S  
SPECIAL**



# THE **D**OZEN

CULTURAL MAGAZINE



Valentine's day

Issue 7: February 2026

# ABOUT THE DOZEN

Welcome to the DOZEN, a monthly issue magazine by the student body, for the student body. We were tired of reading the same magazines and newspapers, regurgitating the same information with little to no change so we thought that we would give it a go! Enclosed you will discover a range of articles covering both culture, current events and academic coverage, ensuring that there is at least something here for you.

The famous bear Winnie the Pooh once said “If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day so I never have to live without you.” You don’t have to love honey to understand what Winnie is trying to say. Just like Winnie almost everyone in this world will have a special someone that they love and cherish, be it a platonic and familial love, or a great romance the like of which are only found in the movies. Valentine’s Day isn’t just about flowers and confectionary, but rather stopping to take a moment’s break from our busy lives to remind those we cherish of how much we love them. This Valentine’s day I implore to reach out to someone you cherish and let them know how much you love them, and as always ‘Happy reading’!  
**EDITOR IN CHIEF, DANIEL NENGUKE**

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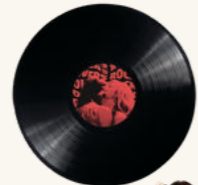
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# LOVE AND MUSIC



Love is the cornerstone of music, just because it's universally relatable: 97 songs that have "love" in the title have reached the No.1 spot in the UK charts (96 if you don't count "I Love Sausage Rolls" by Ladbaby) since they started in 1954. You could even say that societal ideas of "acceptable dating" have shaped music throughout the decades. For example, modern hookup culture could be why explicit lyrics are generally much more common in music than they were. This definitely doesn't mean that modern music has no depth to it. If you look closely, you'll find that modern music shares plenty of themes with older music, showing that old music isn't inherently better, which is an unfair assumption that many make.

Using snippets of other songs, or "sampling", became massively popular in the 90s, particularly in the genres of rap and rave music. Rave music tends not to be based around romance, because the fast-paced tempo and rave atmosphere are unsuitable. Rap music, on the other hand, tends to revolve around flirting in songs, such as "Promiscuous" by Nelly Furtado and Timbaland. In terms of sampling, "Cupid's Chokehold" by Gym Class Heroes famously samples the chorus of "Breakfast In America" by Supertramp, from 1979, and is dedicated to Katy Perry, who Travie McCoy was dating at the time. The sample is infamous for objectifying women, but McCoy makes sure to counter this view in his lyrics. Old music isn't inherently better after all...

I've said before how powerful of a tool music is, and expressing love is no exception. Take "Layla" by Derek and The Dominoes as an example. Their lead singer and guitarist, the famous Eric Clapton, wrote this about his secret love for George Harrison's wife, Pattie Boyd. 9 years later, she married him after getting a divorce with The Beatles' lead guitarist, after he had an affair with the wife of his bandmate (Ringo Starr). I wouldn't recommend looking into the personal lives of many "big names" from the 60s-80s - sure, culture has changed, but some of the things that went on behind the record hits were more than questionable.

If I asked you to explain the concepts behind each genre, you'd probably mention how rap focuses on fast-paced lyrics with thought behind them, whereas EDM is all about beat drops, and how pop is all about matching lyrics to a catchy melody. You wouldn't say that house music repeats a love lyric to get that beat drop, or how, as I said before, rap lyrics are fast and flirty, or how pop lyrics often revolve around relationships (20 out of 28 of Olivia Rodrigo's songs in her albums "SOUR" and "Guts (spilled)" are about relationships). You wouldn't mention these, because all of them centre on love. Love somehow manages to transcend the extraordinary variety of musical genres in the modern world. Yes, Dave's lyrics are very different to Taylor Swift's, but the themes behind "Raindance" and "Enchanted" are inseparable. It doesn't matter which/how many genres you listen to, because you'll find romantic songs everywhere.

# ARE ROM-COMS HARMFUL?

Romantic comedies: they can make love look effortless and only ninety minutes away: From coincidental meet cutes to last-minute confessions that fix everything, rom-com tropes have shaped how relationships are viewed in our modern world and how we imagine romance should look and feel. So, it's worth asking whether these beloved films are harmless and entertaining escapism or have quietly rewired our expectations in reality? There's no doubt that many romcoms are enjoyable but are they leaving us with blurred boundaries and an unrealistic, warped idea of love?

Often, they rely on established tropes that could normalize some dodgy and possibly dangerous behaviours in real-life. These storylines commonly promote the idea that grand gestures and persistence are signs of true love, rather than emphasizing healthier things such as good communication and mutual respect.



Here are some key rom-com tropes acting as harmful myths:

#### Persistence or Stalking/Harassment?

**The Trope:** The protagonist relentlessly pursues a love interest who has said no, resulting in the person realizing they loved them all along.

**The Harmful Myth:** This normalises stalking behaviour and encroaches personal boundaries. Ignoring "no" is harassment, not romance. It teaches that "no" just means "try harder," which can lead to unsafe situations.

#### Grand Gesture or Spectacle?

**The Trope:** Making a massive, public declaration of love (like running through an airport or interrupting a wedding) is the ultimate proof of commitment.

**The Harmful Myth:** This sets unrealistic, high-pressure expectations for relationships. It frames love as a dramatic spectacle rather than daily and consistent effort.

#### Can You Really Fix Him/Her?

**The Trope:** A "good" character falls for a "bad boy" or someone with toxic, emotionally unavailable traits, believing they can change them, and things turn out well in the end.

**The Harmful Myth:** This promotes unbalanced power dynamics and suggests that it is your responsibility to fix a partner. It encourages settling for toxic behaviour in the hope of potential future change.

#### Is Destiny/a Soulmate Real?

**The Trope:** "Love at first sight" or the belief that two people are "meant to be," often overcoming red flags to be together.

**The Harmful Myth:** This suggests that relationships should be perfect from the start, causing people to overlook compatibility issues and overlook the fact that lasting love is built on through work and compromise.

#### Does Love Conquer All?

**The Trope:** Significant, sometimes abusive, breaches of trust are forgiven because of "true love".

**The Harmful Myth:** This teaches that love excuses lying or manipulation (e.g., lying about identity). This if not all the above tropes should remain as fantasy.

#### Miscommunication is Dramatic?

**The Trope:** The entire plot hinges on a simple misunderstanding that could have been resolved in 30 seconds if the characters just spoke to each other.

**The Harmful Myth:** This romanticizes unhealthy communication patterns. It implies that withholding information or avoiding hard conversations is normal or exciting, rather than destructive.

#### The Makeover

**The Trope:** The protagonist is only seen as worthy of love or "beautiful" after a physical change (e.g., removing glasses, changing hair).

**The Harmful Myth:** This reinforces superficiality and suggests that your value is tied to your physical appearance, rather than your character.

#### Happily Ever After

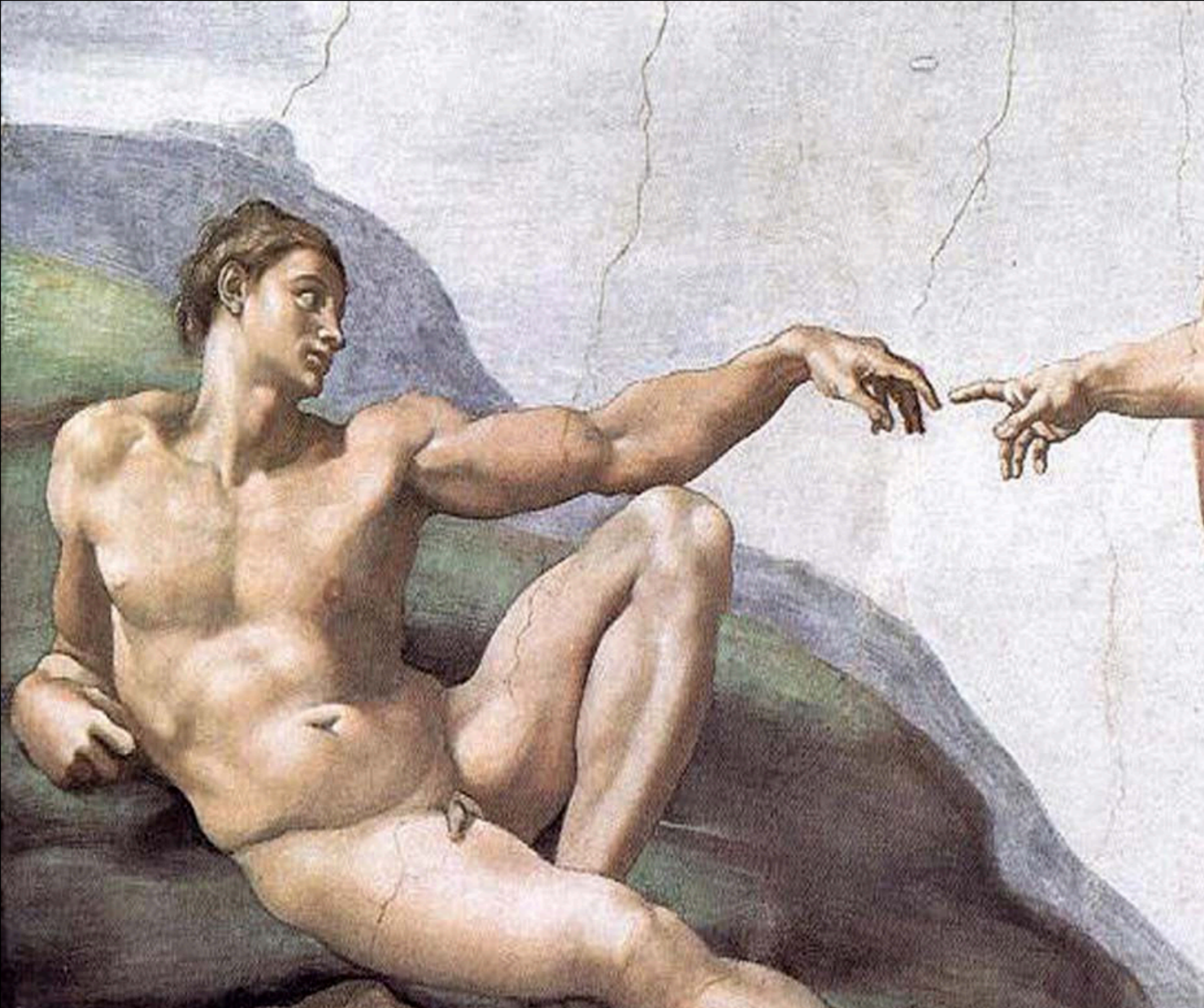
**The Trope:** The movie ends at the wedding or the first big kiss, implying that all problems are solved once the couple is together.

**The Harmful Myth:** This masks the reality that the real work of a relationship begins after the initial, exciting phase. It sets up disappointment when real-life partnerships require ongoing compromise and struggle over the challenges life faces us with.

These narratives could lead to high relationship dissatisfaction in real life, as they have the storytelling power to imprint an, "if it's not like the movies, it's not real love" mindset onto its viewers. Many classic and modern rom-coms normalise toxic behaviour and outdated stereotypes such as traditional, rigid gender roles. But of course, as a mostly light-hearted and predictable genre, rom-coms serve as a "comfort watch" that can help reduce stress and provide a temporary escape from daily struggles while providing a sense of hope and belief in finding love.

In conclusion, rom-coms are generally viewed as harmless entertainment, but they can become problematic if they are used as a strict blueprint for real-life relationships. The harm often depends on the viewer's awareness of the tropes and the quality of the specific film, with many arguing that modern, more diverse, and self-aware rom-coms are less damaging than those from the past.





# P A S S I O N

Love is the abstract property that many would point to as proof that humanity is more than just biology. As such a fundamental part of the human experience, love is near universal, though it may come in different forms. Time and time again we explore stories of interpersonal love, journeys of interaction between souls. Rarely, though, do we witness a pure love for a craft. Seldom do humans devote themselves to perfection as if it were their sole purpose. Though many people fit this bill in their own right, it is very clear that some hold this commitment much farther than others. Art is in some sense defined by its demand for dedication of some level. It does not, however, demand 4 years of work on one of the largest notable artworks in history.

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni cemented his love for art physically in the Sistine Chapel, to the point that we all commonly know him as the one and only Michelangelo. Such effort can seldom be seen today's pursuit of art, so it is ever more important to appreciate those instances where it does exist. Michelangelo started work on the Sistine Chapel in his early 30s where he painted swathes of religious images, most notably 'The Creation of Adam' which depicts God and Adam reaching towards each other. It sports one of the most iconic examples of symbolism in a painting in the tiny gap between the fingers of Adam and God,

# I N P A I N T

perhaps representing the insurmountable partition between mortal life and divine perfection (somewhat ironically, considering how near perfect the artwork is), and perhaps the immoral nature of man, as God seems stretched to reach Adam, who is in a more lax position. The piece has raised speculation for centuries to come about what other ideas may have been intended, such as a potential allusion to the structure of the brain in the formation of angels behind God. Michelangelo's true mastery over art (as opposed to just painting, the physical skill) has produced a piece that perfectly treads the line between discrete and identifiable imagery. He paints the ordeal as a truly dismal journey, contorting himself through the discomfort of painting upwards and tiring his muscles through the effort of constant work.

And yet, he endured this for four years. Perhaps the greatest pain he describes appears in the rainfall of paint upon his face, the worst consequence of painting a roof. For many disturbances to the face are a powerful source of uneasiness, but he persevered. This is not a testament to his determination. It is unlikely that Michelangelo could have taught mathematics for four years or composed hours of music over that time. Rather, it is proof of his love for art. There is some beauty in the idea of the "rich embroidery" of paint on his face, rather than begrudging distaste. It is this passion for one's endeavors that produces greatness in one's life. Only through love can any person become their best version.



1. Since an early age, most of my happiest and most treasured memories have been related to this silly game with a bouncy ball. Even from before I can remember, there are photos of me as a baby with a ball at my feet and the obsession has never left – just ask anyone who knows me...

2. It all began when I got into my first organised football aged 2 (Little Kickers, I hear you ask) and spiralled when I joined my first competitive team 3 years later, playing with boys who I had known my entire life and went to primary school with. This team, combined with World Cup 2014, the Euros in 2016, and the incredible Panini sticker books that I managed to complete, furthered my obsession with the game, with the incredible dazzle of these tournaments opening up new avenues of the game I didn't know existed.

3. It was around this time that I also began going to Swindon Town matches with my Dad (and sometimes my grandfather, both life-long fans), cheering on the team as we laboured through 4-0 losses to Barnet and Rochdale and began to slide down the divisions, to our current place in League 2 – although hopefully that will change by the end of the season. It was clear to see that I was something of a lucky charm to the team, who have only returned to League 1 (the 3rd tier) for one atrocious season in all my time following them, where we came 24th and were promptly re-relegated. After the pandemic in 2020 – a time I also left my first club to sign for local rivals, my own Figo moment (look it up) – amid the growing interest in the Women's game in England, my Dad and I decided to take ourselves down to the local team (Reading FC Women), who

4. were, at that time, in the WSL, the highest division of women's football in England, getting to watch teams like Arsenal, Manchester City and Chelsea play week-in –week-out. However, after my first season supporting them, they finished bottom of the league and were relegated (my luck again clearly helping) and began the 23-24 season in the Championship, this time with my friend Tom joining me to watch games. We finished the season 10th and above the relegation places, although we were to discover this hadn't mattered as we faced financial ruin and were demoted to the very much regionalised 5th division for the 24-25 season, now with the honour of playing teams as mighty as Badshot Lea (the clue is very much in the name) and Brackley Town, a far cry from our recent halcyon days.

5. Although the way in which I follow football has become different over time – making it more of a social thing to do with my friends that brightens my whole weekend rather than just following some results online – the same love remains and, if anything, the addiction has been growing stronger, not weaker, and never am I happier than when I'm with my friends with a ball at my feet; it's clear that football is here to stay for me.

**EVAN MARION**

# LOVE OF THE GAME

I've always loved the beautiful game – one of my most prized possessions is my 22/23 Burton Albion shirt, signed by the whole first team. You probably even see me and Evan knocking a ball about every break and lunch!

It all started when I joined a grassroots football group at the age of 6. I still go back there to coach every Saturday when I don't have a game on. My parents said it was a miracle that they even found that group, because football isn't their thing.

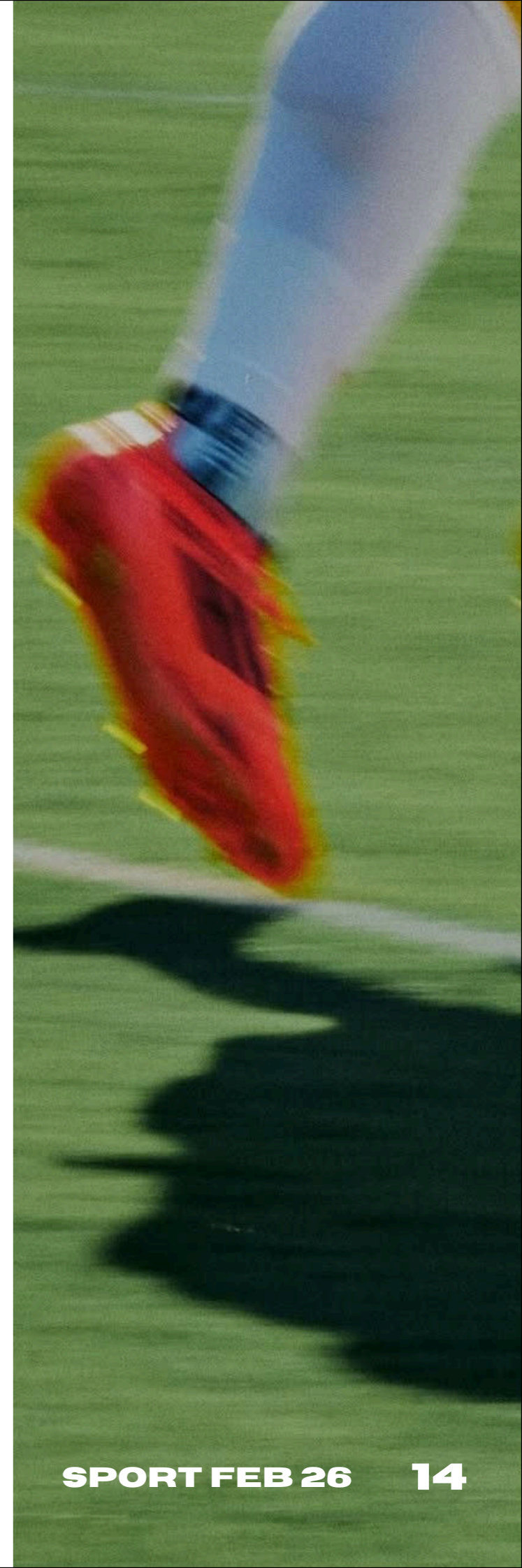
I think it was my uncle who fostered my love of football. He knows more about European football than anyone I know. Whenever we'd visit him, he'd always put on VHS tapes of every goal scored in a World Cup. I remember my favourite bit was in the '86 penalty shootout, when Bruno Bellone hit the post, but rebounded off the Brazilian keeper's head and went in, sending France to the semi-final.

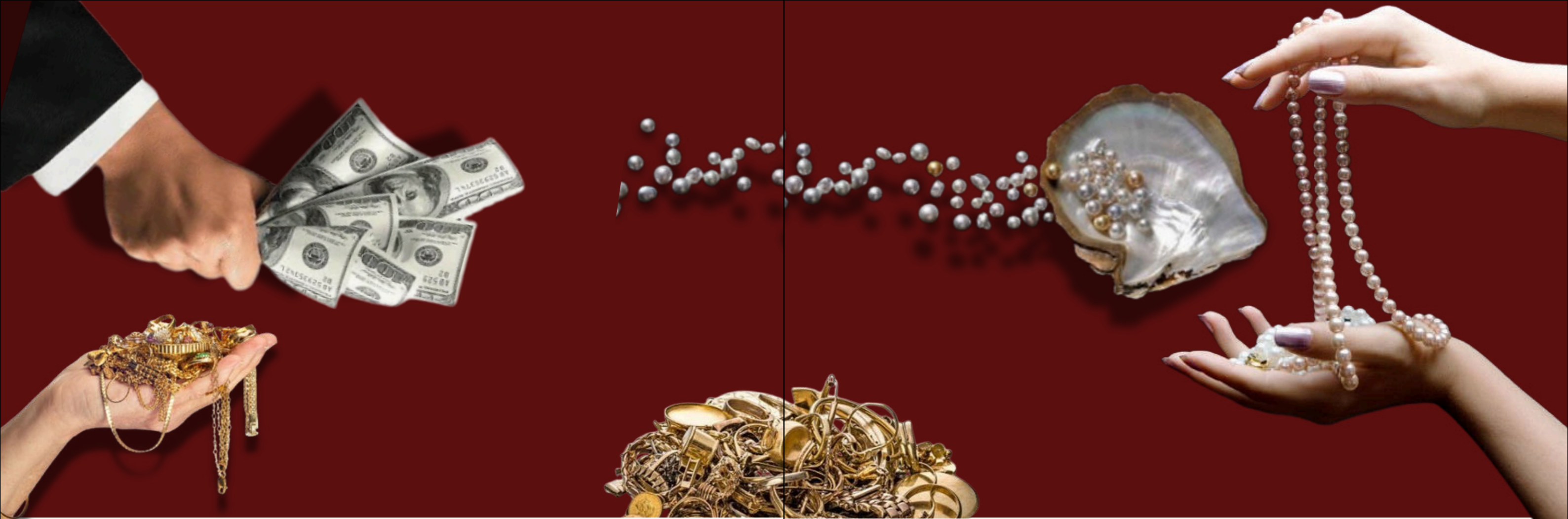
As I grew older, I started to get more involved. In 2023, I started going to Reading FC Ladies' matches every Sunday with Evan. Despite financial collapse and a triple relegation, we've stuck with the team, home and away where possible. My weekends would suck without Reading Ladies.

I joined my first club last year because some friends from school asked me, and I first played for the school at the start of Year 11 in a B team game against Bradfield. I started in midfield, but really got going up front as a pacy striker, scoring 20 goals in 15 games on my debut season.

In the future, I can definitely see myself staying involved in football. The dream is to play in the 8th tier, but I'd rather play regularly than bench warm. I'm also starting my FA coaching qualifications, and would love to help coach somewhere: grassroots, women's, men's, anywhere really! I'll never grow out of football, I'll just keep growing into it.

**TOM CAROLL**





# A MARITAL BARGAIN

Valentine's Day usually celebrates romance, grand gestures, and the idea that love is priceless (I'm sure some people have felt that more literally than they might admit!). In the early 1900s though, the father of a married daughter raised an interesting question: what if marriage came with terms and conditions? Imagine an early 1900s America; you're in the "Land of the Free", every street is a commercial hub, and toilet paper has just celebrated its 10th anniversary. What's more, your daughter is engaged to quite a decent fellow (he's rich). So, naturally, you approve of the marriage and promise to pay your daughter and her fiancée \$2,500 a year, which would be \$80,000 in today's money.

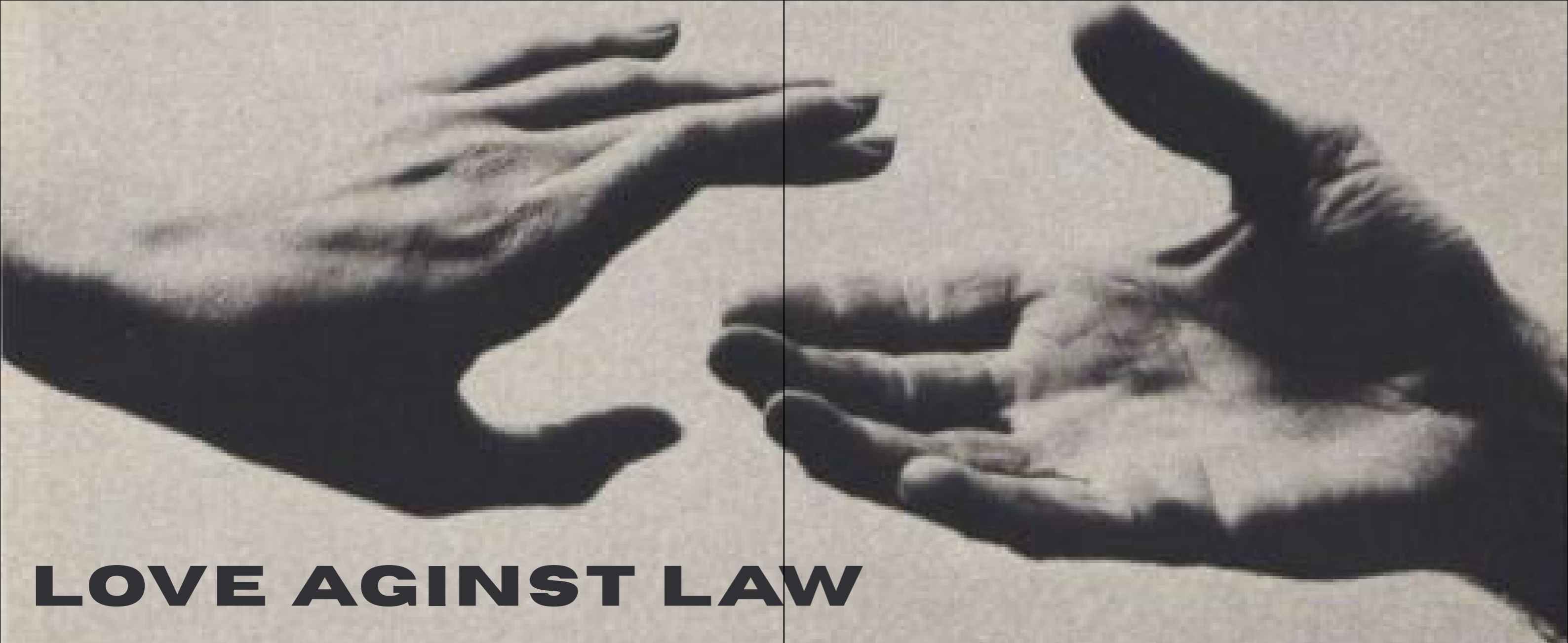
You also, as one does, enshrine this agreement in a written contract. Now cut to 1912: the marriage and the annual payments have been going strong for a decade. However, your pockets are running a little dry, so you don't feel like paying your daughter for her marriage anymore (I must note nobody actually knows why Joseph Schweizer stopped paying his daughter – perhaps for lack of funds, but there is no way of really knowing). Unsurprisingly, the married couple protest against such injustice. So now, out of a father's promise to support love, an issue in contract law has come about

The part of contract law in contention is the principle of sufficient consideration. To put it simply, this just means for a promise to be enforceable within a contract, both parties have to provide something sufficient in value. Initially, both parties agreed that Schweizer would provide his £2,500 per year, and Blanche and her fiancée would provide their marriage. Note that sufficient consideration doesn't mean that the two things should be of equal market value, only that they have to have some legal worth. A £1 coin, a promise to do something, or a promise avoid doing something, would all suffice.

However, Schweizer decided 10 years into the marriage that, since the couple were already engaged, there was not sufficient consideration; he argued that it became a social and moral duty for the pair to marry. The law, as it often does, reduced the long-standing tradition of marriage down to a transactional act. The judges ruled in favour of the couple, reasoning that agreeing to marry was agreeing to forbear from the act of breaking their engagement in return for the father's pecuniary pledge. While this case is, for the most part, light-hearted and admittedly, somewhat unimportant for both sides (after all,

neither party struggled financially by any means), a deeper message can be gathered.

Marriage is often understood as the most personal of promises, and a deeply emotional commitment which is shaped by affection, and a dedication to permanence through uncertainty and change. But, under the hammer of justice, we are reminded that love is only too easily deconstructed into legal reciprocities and incoming consequences. So, this Valentine's day, maybe keep this in mind: falling in love is free, but once it becomes permanent, it stops being weightless.



# LOVE AGAINST LAW

Civil rights were a major issue in 20th Century America. The “Jim Crow” laws, enforced following the Reconstruction period (“separate but equal”), enforced racial segregation in every sector of life, including education, voting, and the use of essential facilities like buses or water fountains. Perhaps the most invasive of these laws were the anti-miscegenation laws, which banned interracial marriages and remained active until the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It took a fierce fight from Richard and Mildred Loving, a couple criminalised by these laws, to finally repeal them in 1967.

Richard Loving (1933 - 1975) and Mildred Jeter (1939 - 2008) grew up in Central Point, Virginia. Uncommonly for the time, Central Point was known for its multiracial community. Richard was a white construction worker and avid drag racer. He had raced with Mildred’s brothers, whom he was close friends with, and met Mildred in 1950, when he came to her house to listen to her brothers’ music. While she disliked his personality at first, after becoming close friends and progressing to dating, they eventually married on June 2, 1958. Due to Mildred having African

American and Native American ancestry, their marriage would have been illegal in Virginia, and thus they married in Washington D.C. The law that prevented Mildred and Richard’s marriage was Virginia’s 1924 Racial Integrity Act. The act, instituted by Walter Plecker, defined “white” using the “one drop rule”— if you had any traceable relatives that were not of Caucasian origin, you were considered “coloured”. This information had to be present on birth certificates. The act also banned interracial marriages and led to the involuntary sterilisation of over 6,500 people under a eugenicist ideology.

The couple moved back to Central Point after the marriage, but an anonymous tip to a county sheriff led to their arrest at their house several weeks later. They were convicted in January 1959 and took a plea deal which forced them out of Virginia for 25 years. Effectively exiled from their home, the couple grew frustrated with social isolation, especially from their families. In 1964, after their youngest son was hit by a car in Washington, the two decided to return to their original home. Later that year, Mildred would write to Robert Kennedy, then attorney general, who would refer her to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

They then filed a motion in protest for the two, which would start a chain of lawsuits that eventually reached the Supreme Court. In October 1964, frustrated that the motion was going nowhere, the Lovings would file a class action lawsuit in the US District Court, as the anti-miscegenation laws violated the 14th Amendment of the Constitution. In 1965, the Virginia Supreme Court Justice told the couple that the ban on interracial marriages was legal and affirmed their convictions. This caused the Lovings and the ACLU to take the case to the Supreme Court, and in 1967, the court ruled unanimously that all anti-miscegenation laws

were unconstitutional. Finally, the Lovings could return to their hometown. After the ruling, the Lovings moved back to their hometown in Central Point, Virginia. They would lead quiet lives, and after Richard’s death in 1975 and Mildred’s in 2008, were survived by 3 children and 8 grandchildren. Richard and Mildred Loving’s fight for their right to marry represented a massive landmark in the fight for civil rights, showing love could triumph over decades of racist and eugenicist ideologies. Today, over 50 years after the SCOTUS ruling, 11% of Americans are in an interracial marriage, and owe their freedom to love to Richard and Mildred Loving.

# A PERFECT LOVE STORY?

Victoria and Albert's marriage is often seen as one of history's great love stories, an example of a perfect royal match. In public perception, they represent incredible devotion and love, both through their private love and in their public service. In the eyes of many, they are the model Victorian couple, seen as morally upright and committed to each other. However, as with many British monarchs, over time the myths of their marriage has become almost inseparable from the reality. So, to what extent was their union really about true love over political reasons, like stability and an international alliance?

When Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha arrived in England, he was not immediately popular among the British public, who saw him as a bit of a "nobody", coming from a small insignificant state. He was not perceived that well among the aristocracy either, who saw him as cold, still, and socially inferior to Victoria. However, while it was their uncle Leopold of Belgium (they were first cousins) who originally pushed for their engagement, it ended up being Victoria herself who became smitten with Albert upon his second visit in 1839. Just 5 days after his arrival, she proposed to him, writing in her journal that this was the "happiest brightest moment" of her life. Here, we can see clear proof of her love for him, as she decided not to follow the advice of those who didn't believe in the union, preferring to follow her heart.

Though Albert's love for Victoria isn't as well documented, as Victoria was a prolific writer in her diary, totalling 60 million words over her life, the Great Exhibition of 1851 is great evidence of his adoration. This globally renowned event inside the Crystal Palace (which the football club is named after) became a beacon of Britain's industrial power, attracting 6 million visitors over 6 months. Furthermore, since it was Albert himself who organised it, it served as a monumental expression of his love, both to Britain and Victoria herself, who was more than pleased.

The most famous example of their love though, came after Albert's death in 1861. His death, from typhoid fever, was a major shock; he was only 42, and even though he had been ill for two weeks, he was believed to be recovering right up until his demise. Victoria then began mourning, and she never stopped. From 1861 to 1901, she almost exclusively wore black, the colour of mourning, to show her devotion to her late husband. This act of incredible commitment in the face of unimaginable suffering is a beautiful, yet tragic symbol of her love. Victoria also started the construction of the still-in-use Royal Albert Hall in memorial of Albert, officially opened in 1871 to celebrate the arts and sciences.

It would be inaccurate to say that there weren't political reasons for their union as well. While Albert came from a minor state in Europe, he was quite well connected and was seen as a path to secure a Protestant alliance in Europe. Furthermore, a significant reason why monarchs get married at all is for the succession, and here was no different, so their marriage was inherently political. However, since he was neither the primary marital target of Victoria's advisor nor her father, it can be concluded that the reason she married him specifically was her infatuation for him, not political strategy.

Overall, while their marriage was a strategic alliance, their union definitely lives up to its hype as one of history's great love stories. Her unwavering commitment, coupled with his great acts of devotion, create a blend of love that is almost unmatched in any couple, dead or alive.



You're being played. Every single February 14th, like clockwork, millions of us march into shops and restaurants with our wallets wide open, ready to prove our love through the sacred ritual of overspending. It's not romance. It's an organised robbery dressed up with red roses and heart-shaped boxes.

Here's what the greeting card companies desperately don't want you to realise: those red roses sitting in Tesco for fifteen quid in January? Come mid-February, they'll set you back forty-five. Same flowers. Same suppliers. Same everything. Just a different price tag slapped on because the calendar hit the fourteenth. It's the most socially acceptable form of price gouging in existence, and somehow we've all collectively agreed to pretend it's romantic.

The really twisted bit is how retailers have weaponised basic psychology against us. There's this economic concept called signalling theory, which explains why we feel this overwhelming compulsion to waste money, just to prove we care. The logic goes like this: if you're willing to burn cash on overpriced chocolates and teddy bears clutching fabric hearts, you must genuinely love your partner. It's an economic hostage situation, plain and simple. Spend too little? You're a terrible partner. Spend too much? You've set impossible standards for next year. There's literally no winning move here. Only spending.

Restaurants have absolutely perfected this scam. Walk into any decent restaurant on Valentine's night and they'll present you with their 'special' fixed-price menu. Let me translate that for you: fewer options, identical food, massively inflated prices. They know full well that on this one specific night, you have zero negotiating power whatsoever. You're not actually paying for the meal. You're paying for the validation that yes, you are in fact a good boyfriend or girlfriend who did the right thing. That steak tastes exactly the same as it did last Tuesday when it cost twenty quid less, but tonight there are candles involved so naturally that justifies everything.

Chocolate manufacturers are somehow even worse. Heart-shaped Milk Tray boxes magically appear for exactly six weeks every year, creating a manufactured scarcity which even diamond companies envy. It's literally the same chocolate that sits on shelves year-round, just in different packaging. But stick a heart shape on the box and suddenly they're worth three times as much. The psychology is absolutely brutal. We're so utterly terrified of disappointing our partners that we'll pay pretty much anything to avoid that outcome. The retailers know this intimately. They're banking on it.

Of course, social media has only made everything exponentially worse. Now we're not just buying gifts for our partners, we're buying Instagram content. That elaborate bouquet isn't really for your girlfriend. It's for her five hundred followers who need visible proof that you're a 'good boyfriend'. The peer pressure has become digital and multiplied, and predictably spending has gone through the roof.

But here's where things get genuinely interesting from an economic perspective. Valentine's Day actually solves a real coordination problem in relationships. Without some designated day forcing the issue, couples would massively under-invest in relationship maintenance. Everyone's busy. People forget anniversaries constantly. We take each other for granted without even meaning to. Valentine's Day essentially forces everyone to synchronise and show appreciation at the exact same time. It's a market-based solution to a relationship problem, which is either absolutely genius or deeply depressing depending on how cynical you're feeling.

Even the wealth gap rears its head here. Richer couples inevitably spend more on Valentine's gifts, which sets the bar higher for everyone else trying to keep up. It's become this weird economic arms race where the cost of proving love keeps inflating year after year, with no end in sight.

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So what're we supposed to do? Boycott the whole thing entirely, and risk looking like some cheapskate who doesn't care? Or participate knowingly, accepting that you're being fleeced but deciding the emotional payoff is worth it? There's no straightforward answer here. The Valentine's Day industrial complex has positioned us exactly where they want us. Stuck between our wallets and our hearts, forced to choose which matters more in the moment.

Love itself might be priceless, but proving it to the satisfaction of society and your partner's Instagram followers? That'll cost you. The question you need to ask yourself is whether you're actually willing to keep paying this ransom every single year.

# ROMANCE FOR SALE



Love is something humans search for repeatedly, even when it hurts. Across history and cultures, people have shaped their lives around emotional bonds. From an anthropological perspective, love is not just a feeling, but a deep human need rooted in our evolution, biology, and shared past with other animals.

Long before modern society, early humans lived in small groups where survival depended on connection. Being alone was dangerous. To be loved guaranteed protection, food, and belonging. Romantic love encouraged long-term pair bonding, allowing parents to work together and raise children, who require years of care. Over time, love became linked with survival itself. This may explain why loss, rejection, and isolation can feel so painful — our minds still associate disconnection with danger.

Biology strengthens this emotional drive. When humans form close bonds, the brain releases chemicals such as oxytocin and dopamine, which create feelings of trust, pleasure, and attachment. These responses make love feel essential rather than optional. From an evolutionary perspective, this ensured that humans stayed connected, cooperative, and emotionally invested in one another.

The need to love begins at birth. Human infants are completely dependent on caregivers, not only for survival but for emotional security. Being held, comforted, and protected teaches the brain that closeness equals safety. Anthropology shows that these early attachments shape how humans connect with others throughout life. As people grow, this need does not disappear; it transforms into a longing for friendships, family bonds, and romantic relationships.

Love is not unique to humans. Many animals form strong emotional bonds that resemble human love in important ways. Wolves, gibbons, and swans often form long-term pair bonds, working together to raise offspring. Elephants comfort distressed members of their herd, and primates groom one another to keep close social ties. When animals lose companions, they may show signs of stress or mourning. These behaviours suggest that the roots of love existed long before humans did.

Neuroscience supports this idea. Animals crave the same bonding hormones, such as oxytocin, that humans do. The brain systems responsible for attachment are ancient, shared across many species.

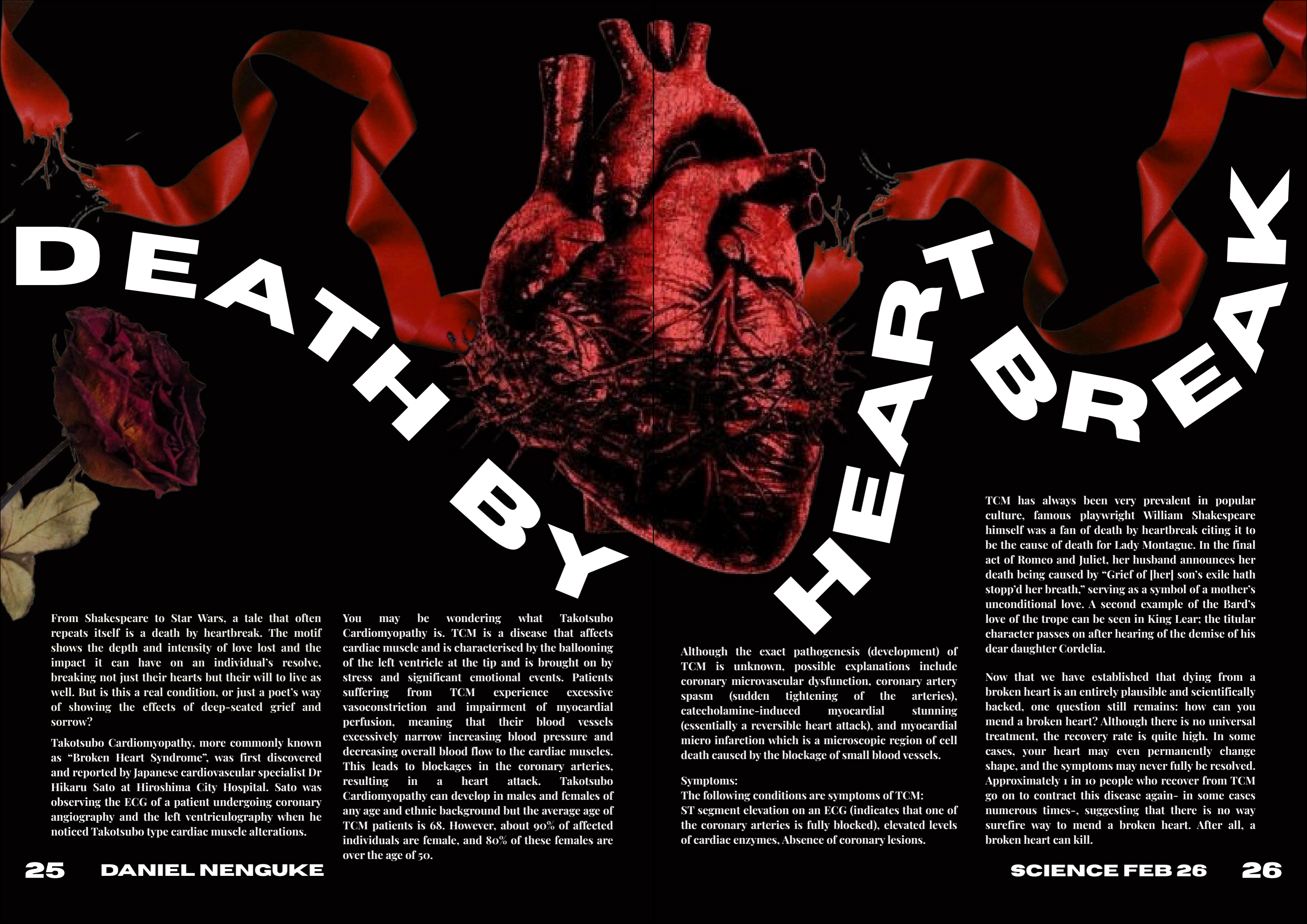
Anthropology reminds us however, to avoid assuming animals experience love precisely how humans do. Human love is shaped by language, culture, and self-awareness, while animal love is expressed through behaviour such as staying close, protecting one another, and forming lasting bonds.

Culture gives love its meaning and shape. In some societies, romantic love is central to marriage, while in others love grows through shared responsibility and time. Some cultures encourage open emotional expression; others value loyalty and commitment more highly. Despite these differences, the need for connection is universal.

In the end, humans love because connection gives life meaning. Love reassures us that we matter, that we belong, and that we are not alone. Anthropology shows us that this longing is ancient, shared with other animals and carried through generations, making love one of the most powerful forces in human life.

# THE NEED FOR LOVE





# DEATH BY HEARTBREAK

From Shakespeare to Star Wars, a tale that often repeats itself is a death by heartbreak. The motif shows the depth and intensity of love lost and the impact it can have on an individual's resolve, breaking not just their hearts but their will to live as well. But is this a real condition, or just a poet's way of showing the effects of deep-seated grief and sorrow?

Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy, more commonly known as "Broken Heart Syndrome", was first discovered and reported by Japanese cardiovascular specialist Dr Hikaru Sato at Hiroshima City Hospital. Sato was observing the ECG of a patient undergoing coronary angiography and the left ventriculography when he noticed Takotsubo type cardiac muscle alterations.

You may be wondering what Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy is. TCM is a disease that affects cardiac muscle and is characterised by the ballooning of the left ventricle at the tip and is brought on by stress and significant emotional events. Patients suffering from TCM experience excessive vasoconstriction and impairment of myocardial perfusion, meaning that their blood vessels excessively narrow increasing blood pressure and decreasing overall blood flow to the cardiac muscles. This leads to blockages in the coronary arteries, resulting in a heart attack. Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy can develop in males and females of any age and ethnic background but the average age of TCM patients is 68. However, about 90% of affected individuals are female, and 80% of these females are over the age of 50.

Although the exact pathogenesis (development) of TCM is unknown, possible explanations include coronary microvascular dysfunction, coronary artery spasm (sudden tightening of the arteries), catecholamine-induced myocardial stunning (essentially a reversible heart attack), and myocardial micro infarction which is a microscopic region of cell death caused by the blockage of small blood vessels.

#### Symptoms:

The following conditions are symptoms of TCM: ST segment elevation on an ECG (indicates that one of the coronary arteries is fully blocked), elevated levels of cardiac enzymes, Absence of coronary lesions.

TCM has always been very prevalent in popular culture, famous playwright William Shakespeare himself was a fan of death by heartbreak citing it to be the cause of death for Lady Montague. In the final act of Romeo and Juliet, her husband announces her death being caused by "Grief of [her] son's exile hath stopp'd her breath," serving as a symbol of a mother's unconditional love. A second example of the Bard's love of the trope can be seen in King Lear; the titular character passes on after hearing of the demise of his dear daughter Cordelia.

Now that we have established that dying from a broken heart is an entirely plausible and scientifically backed, one question still remains: how can you mend a broken heart? Although there is no universal treatment, the recovery rate is quite high. In some cases, your heart may even permanently change shape, and the symptoms may never fully be resolved. Approximately 1 in 10 people who recover from TCM go on to contract this disease again- in some cases numerous times-, suggesting that there is no way surefire way to mend a broken heart. After all, a broken heart can kill.

# IS CONFESSING ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA?

Mathematics is a powerful tool, able to transform expressions that can be quantified, and give meaning to unsolved questions. Despite having applications in every scientific field, mathematics is not limited to calculations. One of its core fields, logic, overlaps with philosophy; in fact, many philosophers of the past were also mathematicians, such as René Descartes (“I think therefore I am”), and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (known most notably for being one of the founders of calculus alongside Newton). Philosophers question reality and experience, and mathematics gives us the tools to explore these infinite realms.

Game Theory is an area of mathematics that focuses on given starting conditions and ideals and uses mathematics to tie those to outcomes. As a basic overview, I will cover the Prisoners’ Dilemma and explain how we can translate the tools used and apply them to a relationship situation.

You and your accomplice decide to steal from a small bookstore. You have both been suspected of stealing and will be individually interrogated by a detective who cannot prove either of you were the robbers without a confession. If you confess and your accomplice lies, then you walk free while they get 10 months in jail. Likewise, if your accomplice confesses and you lie, they walk free and you get 10 months. If you both confess then neither confession is as valuable, and so you both get 8 months. Finally, if both of you lie, then you both get 1 month as a small punishment.

Assuming we want to minimise the time in jail, we can represent the options in a grid shown below. You are Prisoner 1 and your accomplice is Prisoner 2. The first number shows the jail time Prisoner 1 gets, and the second is the time Prisoner 2 gets. The non-zero numbers are negative to show that we want to avoid those options.

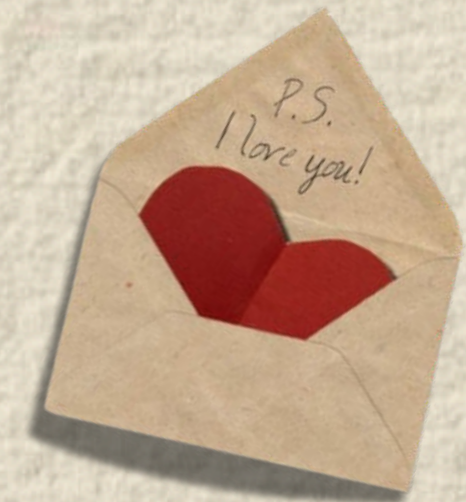
		PRISONER 2	
		CONFESS	LIE
PRISONER 1	CONFESS	-8, -8	0, -10
	LIE	-10, 0	-1, -1

The most ideal circumstance would be to cover for each other by both lying, yielding each of you 1 month. However, Game Theory focuses on individual motives, and we’ve set the goal to minimise jail time, so both prisoners aim to get the highest number possible. Now what would be the ideal choice to make?

If Prisoner 2 confesses, then the best choice is to confess,  $-8 > -10$ . Also, if Prisoner 2 lies, then the best choice is to, again, confess since  $0 < -1$ . We can see that confessing always wins for individual motives. This situation is symmetrical for Prisoner 2, so they will also always confess. Since players always want to make the best move, this gives us the outcome that both prisoners will always confess, so they each get 8 months in jail.

Let’s rewrite the grid to apply it to romance.

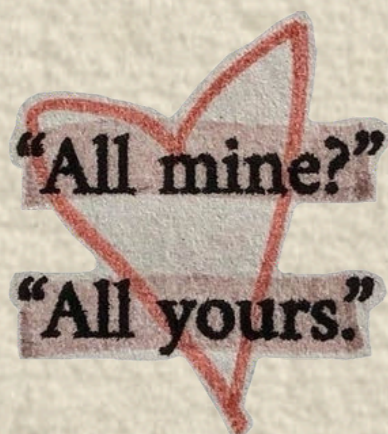
Using the skills learnt from the prisoners’ dilemma we can apply it to this new grid, where each player also wants to get the highest number. I have numbered mutual feelings as the best option and both people keeping quiet as the worst, and a lesser bad option if one person confesses and the other doesn’t. This assumes that you like each other but don’t know whether to confess.



		THEM	
		CONFESS	KEEP QUIET
YOU	CONFESS	2, 2	-1, -1
	KEEP QUIET	-1, -1	-2, -2

If Player 2 confesses, then Player 1 should as well,  $2 > -1$ . If Player 2 keeps quiet, then Player 1 should confess,  $-1 > -2$ , so confessing always wins.

The takeaway from this example is that if you like someone and think they like you back, confessing is always a better choice (if there are no drawbacks) and keeping quiet is the worst option. As the phrase goes, the worst they could say is no, right?





# NIPPAH FACTS OVER FEAR

Everyone remembers the empty classrooms, the masks, the isolation and fear that riddled the start of this decade. In recent weeks, headlines have begun to mention another virus, Nipah. For many, it sparks an uncomfortable feeling of déjà vu. Post COVID-19, any talk of a virus can feel alarming. But what is Nipah virus and is it really a cause for concern? Understanding the virus is the first step in separating true risk from instinctive fear.

So, what actually is the virus? Nipah virus is, like COVID-19, a zoonotic virus which means it originates in animals and can be spread to humans. Also, like the coronavirus, the virus is an RNA virus which means its genetic code is found in the form of a single stranded ribonucleic acid rather than DNA. It is usually found in its natural host, the fruit bat. Fruit bats do not seem to show symptoms when infected due to their unique resistant immune systems to the virus. However, the Nipah virus has also been found in other animals including pigs, dogs, cats, sheep and of course, humans. The virus was first identified in 1999 during an outbreak in Malaysia and Singapore with 200-300 cases reported and there have been many smaller outbreaks since including, but not limited to, India in 2001, Faridpur (Bangladesh) in 2004 and the Philippines in 2014. Currently, the news has taken a greater interest in the virus after two confirmed cases in India leading to 200 people in contact being quarantined and widespread concern.

If caught, the virus incubates in the human body for 5 to 14 days on average. Early symptoms can resemble a flu-like illness. Later, those with the virus can experience symptoms of severe headaches, confusion, and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), which may progress to comas in later stages. The biggest concern regarding Nipah virus is its extreme fatality rate of 40-75%. This high death rate stems from the absence of a confirmed treatment or vaccine, adding to the extreme stress and worry of the current outbreak.

Nipah virus infection can happen due to direct contact with infected animals. The largest source of human infection is from indirect contact with an infected fruit bat, for example by consuming fruits contaminated by the bat. This is especially worrying as it is hard to manage, track, and limit this kind of infection. Transmission between people can happen through contact with the infected person's bodily fluids including blood, urine or even saliva droplets from coughing.

Although Nipah virus is frightening, it is only concerning if it is caught. On the other hand, while COVID-19 is less extreme in its symptoms; its ease and speed of transmission were the biggest contributing factors to its catastrophic impact. This marks a key difference between Nipah and COVID-19. Nipah virus' lethality, while alarming, acts as a brake on transmission. Infected individuals typically become too ill to quickly facilitate transmission making the chance of a Nipah epidemic unlikely. Furthermore, Nipah virus has never been detected outside South/South-East Asia. This is mainly due to the lack of fruit bats outside this region to survive with the virus long enough to transmit. The  $R_0$  number (the "average number of cases of an infectious disease arising from transmission stemming from a single infected individual") of Nipah virus is less than one. This is a quantitative representation of the low transmission rate of the virus meaning each infected person, on average, spreads the virus to less than one person. This makes the possibility of a large-scale outbreak extremely improbable as the virus is likely to die out quickly.

In addition, countries have been quick to respond to the situation in India. Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal and Malaysia have increased airport screening for those coming from Nipah affected countries. For example, the Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok has installed thermal scanners to screen travellers for fever.

In conclusion, the virus is clearly deadly, and caution is essential. However, the combination of its high mortality rate, slow transmission, and restricted geographical area makes Nipah unlikely to have the same impact as COVID-19. COVID-19 has taught the world the necessity for quick and effective measures to prevent growth, which can be seen in the responses to this new outbreak as covered already. COVID-19 showed what happens when a virus spreads faster than information. Nipah shows what happens when information spreads faster than a virus.

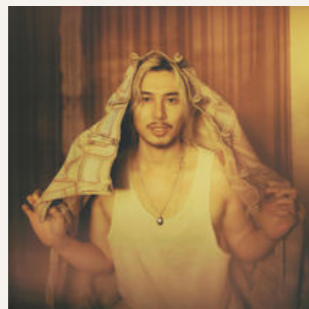
# LOVE

Love is in the air and this month the staff presents to you their favourite depictions of love in media! We'd love to hear your thoughts so feel free to send us a quick email at: [thedozen.publicity@gmail.com](mailto:thedozen.publicity@gmail.com)



**FLY ME TO THE MOON**

**THEODORE**



**PREMA - FUJII KAZE**

**ALI**



**DAKOTA - STEREOPHONICS**

**MOTHER, PRAY FOR ME - THE BETHS**

**EVAN**

# MEDIA



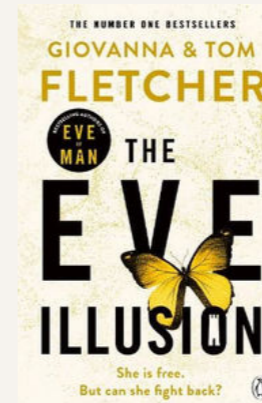
**JADEN**

**NANDAN**



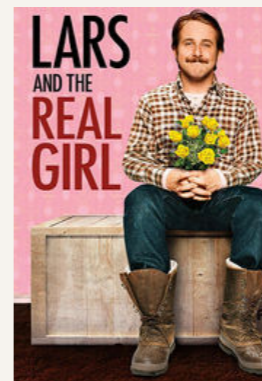
**GIL**

**MOJTABA**



**ABDUL**

**AMANUEL**



**JAMIN**

**ZONG**

