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## THE DARKNESS OF VALENTINE'S DAY AND ITS PAGAN ORIGINS

 11 FEB 2016  POSTED BY KELLY FRAZIER



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# EXPLORING THE PAGAN ROOTS OF THE VALENTINE'S DAY HOLIDAY.

Regardless of race and religion, almost every couple in the world celebrates Valentine's Day. In fact, it is considered the second widely celebrated event after the Christmas or Yuletide Season. Only a few people know that Valentine's Day is originally a Catholic celebration. But there are even fewer individuals who know its earlier pagan roots.

## The Darkness of Valentine's Day and its Pagan Origins

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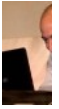
Valentine's Day **originated from the pagan** festival [Lupercalia](#) which is a celebration of fertility and purification. Lupercalia is named after Lupercus, the god of fertility and hunter of wolves in Roman mythology. It's a 3-day event that runs from the 13th to 15th of February. But before our current Gregorian calendar, the festivity usually falls on spring season.

The month of February is also associated with Lupercalia. Part of the rituals held during the festivities is the [Februa](#), Februatio or Februare **which literally means** purification. Februa is a purification ritual performed to drive away evil spirits in the entire city or community and to ensure fertility for the spring or planting season.

An old Roman and pagan activity observed during Lupercalia **is the love lottery**. In this tradition, young men are paired with women through a simple lottery system. Names of all participating females shall be placed in a jar after which, each male shall draw or pick a name that will be temporarily paired with him. The pairs will act as lovers or partners for the entire duration of the festival. This tradition was carried by the ancient Romans overseas as their empire grew.

Another notable activity is the gathering of ancient Luperci priests at Palatine Hills or the boundaries of the ancient city of Rome. This tradition persisted up to the time of Julius Caesar wherein the Master of the Luperci College of Priest during that period was Mark Anthony.

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During the 1st and 2nd century, the Christian or Catholic religion started to grow. Much of the Pagan cultures and traditions were also **assimilated and reinvented** to fit the Catholic tradition and to attract early pagans to become Christians. In 496 A.D., then Pope Gelasius declared the Lupercalia traditions particularly the love lottery as immoral. The Pope changed the love lottery tradition into a saint lottery where each young boy tries to mimic the qualities of the saint he picks all throughout the year. Pope Gelasius also declared February 14 as the feast of Saint Valentine, the patron of lovers.



**Zach Goldrosen**  
@goldjaboytellem

[#FunFact](#) Valentine's Day originated as an ancient Roman pagan holiday that required animal sacrifices and year-long blind dates. Enjoy!

2 8:27 AM - Feb 11, 2016

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## THE STORY OF SAINT VALENTINE

Valentine was a young priest that lived during Emperor Claudius' reign. In his desire to perform his Christian duties of administering wedding ceremonies and aiding prisoners, he disobeyed the orders of the emperor. For Claudius, **men should serve the** Roman army first before getting married. For this reason, Valentine was incarcerated and sentenced to death. Based on historical accounts, Valentine was regularly visited by his jailer's blind daughter whom he later fell in love with. Before Valentine's execution, he wrote her a note and ending it with the phrase "From Your Valentine."

One of the miracles of Saint Valentine was the healing of that girl's eyesight. This has also resulted to his jailer's change of faith. Valentine's letter to his beloved girl is considered to be the earliest Valentine's Day card. And it's only during the 17th century when Valentine's Day cards were commercialized, mass produced and prefabricated.

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