

Dr. FUN!'s Stupid Cupid Awards

**are given to draw attention to mass media portrayals of sex, love, & romance
that exemplify the 12 Myths and Stereotypes
from *Dr. FUN!'s Mass Media Love Quiz*©**

**Stupid Cupid Awardees are listed below — under the Myth they most closely model
and with the full citation explaining WHY they were selected.**

**“Dis-honorable” Mentions are also listed.
(Unless otherwise noted, awardees are movies.)**

Myth #1. YOUR PERFECT PARTNER IS COSMICALLY PREDESTINED, SO NOTHING/NOBODY CAN ULTIMATELY SEPARATE YOU.

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *Serendipity*

. . . because there's nothing decent or attractive in the relationship of this couple, who know nothing about each other but nevertheless without a thought or apology dump their decent and attractive fiancées for someone magically “meant to be.”

Dis-honorable Mention: *Kate & Leopold*

. . . because to unite with her soulmate from the New York of 1876, present-day Kate must jump from the Brooklyn Bridge into a time warp — a suicidal gesture that is glamorized as heroic in this dangerous model for young women similarly dissatisfied with the men available in the 21st century.

Myth #2. THERE'S SUCH A THING AS “LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.”

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *Romeo & Juliet (any version)*

. . . because Romeo's already in love with love (and pining Rosaline) when he goes to ball. But the minute he sees Juliet he completely forgets his former love, unleashing a series of tragedies on behalf of mere physical attraction.

Myth #3. YOUR TRUE SOUL MATE SHOULD KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING OR FEELING (WITHOUT YOUR HAVING TO TELL).

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *The Princess Bride*

. . . because the eyes have it — and narrator Peter Falk actually tells us what the lovers just “know” is the meaning behind their looks and laconic dialogue.

Dis-honorable Mention: (song) *Not a Word Need Be Spoken (in our Language of Love)*

. . . because mind-reading usually leads to misunderstanding.

Myth #4. IF YOUR PARTNER IS TRULY MEANT FOR YOU, SEX IS EASY AND WONDERFUL.

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *Television soap operas*

. . . because too often, these daily dramas depict sex as the fundamental and most important element of coupleship that are also too often devoid of friendship or commitment.

**Myth #5. TO ATTRACT AND KEEP A MAN,
A WOMAN SHOULD LOOK LIKE A MODEL OR A CENTERFOLD.**

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *Playboy, Maxim, Cosmo, Seventeen, and other similar magazines*

. . . because the photos and headlines alone on covers of these magazines are enough to make women without surgical enhancements and digital dimensions feel less than desirable and to make men expect something that doesn't exist.

Dis-honorable Mention: *Most Disney heroines*

. . . because even though parents feel they can "trust Disney," they'd be wise to evaluate more closely the long-term impact of the visual images of the women who get the men in these fantasies that seem real to little girls and even to little boys.

**Myth #6. THE MAN SHOULD NOT BE SHORTER, WEAKER, YOUNGER, POORER,
OR LESS SUCCESSFUL THAN THE WOMAN.**

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *Entrapment*

. . . because Sean Connery is old enough not only to be the father of his love interest, Catherine Zeta-Jones, but also her grandfather. While May-December pairings happen in the real world, it's the cinematic norm.

Dis-honorable Mention: *Most TV talkshow and news anchor "couples"*

. . . because most of the co-hosts lack the "co" — resembling father-daughter duos (and all their related power imbalances) and, therefore, suggesting that women and men can't be equals.

**Myth #7. THE LOVE OF A GOOD AND FAITHFUL TRUE WOMAN
CAN CHANGE A MAN FROM A "BEAST" INTO A "PRINCE."**

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *As Good As It Gets*

. . . because it erroneously demonstrates that all it takes is an understanding woman (and a cute dog) to make a mean obsessive-compulsive man "want to be a better man" — a loving adequate romantic partner for a harried single mother who has completely different values from the man (Myth #9) who is also twice her age and who rescues her financially (Myth #6).

Dis-honorable Mention: (song) *As Long as He Needs Me* (from the musical "Oliver")

. . . because this abused woman is eventually killed by the man who "needs" her — so she "clings on steadfastly," hoping to change him through her goodness. What the Dickens kind of model is this?

**Myth #8. BICKERING AND FIGHTING A LOT MEAN THAT A MAN AND A WOMAN REALLY
LOVE EACH OTHER PASSIONATELY.**

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *The Mexican*

. . . because the sudden "happy ending" of this movie makes no sense in light of the non-stop bickering, blaming, name-calling, and even physical violence exhibited by the mis-matched couple played by Julia Roberts and Brad Pitt. "When do you get to that point of 'enough is enough'?" she asks him at the end of the movie. His answer: "Never."

Dis-honorable Mention: *When Harry Met Sally*

. . . because the constant bickering and total disrespect exhibited by these two make even their "friendship" suspect. And Sally's New Year's Eve slapping of Harry presents a dangerous, widely imitated media model of how to respond in an argument.

Dis-honorable Mention: *You've Got Mail*

. . . because these two people hate each other until the last minute of the movie, but we're supposed to believe that the arguing symbolizes their attraction for each other.

**Myth #9. ALL YOU REALLY NEED IS LOVE,
SO IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU AND YOUR LOVER HAVE VERY DIFFERENT VALUES.**

(TIE: Two Winners)**

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *Pretty Woman*

. . . because no genuine transformation takes place in either character at the end of this movie, yet we're supposed to believe that these lovers' vastly different lifestyles and goals — and their vastly different friends — will seamlessly blend. Of course, we never see them living that life together because the movie ends right after step one in the courtship.

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *Maid in Manhattan*

. . . because we're supposed to believe that a woman who genuinely cares about social issues and her job and her coworkers will be happy with a man who seems to care about nothing — not his job (to which he attends only superficially and without the passion needed to run for public office), not his staffers (whom he treats with rude disdain), not even his dog (whom he sloughs off on his campaign manager and a professional dog-walker), and not even the Cinderella who too quickly sleeps with him before he knows her name — and who makes no effort thereafter to find her. (At least the Prince immediately searched door-to-door with the glass slipper!)

Dis-honorable Mention: *The Breakfast Club*

. . . because each detainee suddenly winds up with the most unlikely candidate for a successful relationship.

Dis-honorable Mention: Disney's *The Lady & the Tramp*

. . . because their values and lifestyles are 180 degrees apart. Under his bad influence, she even gets sent to jail. But her good influence has supposedly transformed him (Myth #7). How would they really raise their children? Will his new life as a house-dog be too confining? Will he long for the good old days on the street? The songs are great, but children should be debriefed after exposure to this irrational ideology.

Dis-honorable Mention: (song) *All You Need is Love*

. . . because in real life, love has more aspects that this song implies.

**Myth #10. THE RIGHT MATE “COMPLETES YOU” —
FILLING YOUR NEEDS AND MAKING YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.**

Stupid Cupid Awardee: *Jerry McGuire*

. . . because this exemplification of the codependency model's dysfunction is pathetic in its suggestion that two incomplete individuals are “eligible” for a romantic relationship. They cling to each other like two drunks clinging to a lamppost. Renee Zellweger's desperation and easy availability no matter how badly Tom Cruise's “Jerry” treats her is painful to watch and useful only as a model of what *not* to do.

Dis-honorable Mention: *Cinderella, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty*

. . . because these women can't escape their environment without being rescued by a prince they don't even know. What an intolerable burden on these poor men to say nothing of the total abrogation of responsibility by the women!

**Myth #11. IN REAL LIFE, ACTORS AND ACTRESSES
ARE OFTEN VERY MUCH LIKE THE ROMANTIC CHARACTERS THEY PORTRAY.**

Stupid Cupid Awardee: Irrational fans of Meg Ryan and Hugh Grant who confuse these stars' reel lives with their real lives.

. . . because many fans become disappointed when their superstar idols resemble fallible human beings.

**Myth #12. SINCE MASS MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF ROMANCE AREN'T "REAL,"
THEY DON'T REALLY AFFECT YOU.**

**Stupid Cupid Awardee: Media critics who describe mythic and stereotypic portrayals as
"completely harmless."**

. . . because although we can still enjoy mythic portrayals of sex, love, and romance, we shouldn't forget that many people (ourselves included, if we're honest) develop harmful unrealistic expectations from their media usage. To label all these portrayals as completely harmless simply because they're fluffy and vacuous is irresponsible. Critics should know better. (The latest "harmless fluff" is *Just Married*, a top-grosser in more way than one that offers as an example of motivated honeymoon behavior the bride's throwing an ashtray at her new husband's head — a potentially deadly action that signifies anything but passion and love.

***Dr. FUN!'s Stupid Cupid*
OVERALL STUPIDEST CUPID WINNER**

Sweet Home Alabama

. . . because this mean-spirited movie promoted just about every myth in my *Mass Media Love Quiz*® — from the notion that your perfect partner is pre-destined and nobody can separate you to the dangerous belief that bickering and fighting mean that you're really passionate about each other. The only decent lover in this movie is the groom-to-be who is rudely jilted at the altar. (Perhaps this worthy gentleman should link up with the similarly jilted and also charming bride-to-be in *Serendipity* — my Stupid Cupid Award Winner for Myth #1.)

Quiz © 1995, 2000 by Dr. Mary-Lou Galician. All Rights Reserved.
Awards © 2003 by Dr. Mary-Lou Galician. All Rights Reserved.

**SEE THE COMPLEMENTARY LISTING OF
DR. FUN!'S REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD WINNERS!**