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**[THE COMPLETE LIST OF RECIPIENTS OF THE 26 AWARDS
WITH CITATIONS (REASON EACH RECIPIENT GOT AN AWARD)
BEGINS ON PAGE 2 OF THIS MEDIA RELEASE;
RELATED VIDEO ANNOUNCEMENT AT RealisticRomance.com.]**

**Media literacy expert Dr. Mary-Lou Galician confers her 14th annual
Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance[®] Awards[™]
for the worst and best relationship strategies
in 2015 mass media portrayals of sex, love, and romance**

**“Cinderella” gets the 2016 over-all Stupidest Cupid Award[™]
for perpetuating numerous unhealthy myths and stereotypes;**

**“Brooklyn” is honored with the 2016 Realistic Romance[®] Grand Prize[™]
for presenting multiple healthy relationship strategies;**

and 24 additional awards are conferred on popular films, TV shows, songs, and magazines

February 14, 2016—“Cinderella” and “Brooklyn”—two movies with diametrically different conceptions of “courage,” “home,” and mate-selection for happily-ever-afters—were named the worst and best portrayals of sex, love & romance in the 14th annual *Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance*[®] Awards[™] announced on Valentine's Day by Dr. Mary-Lou Galician, creator of *REALISTIC ROMANCE*[®]: *The Thinking Person's Relationship Remedy*[™] and author of the pioneering textbook *Sex, Love, and Romance in the Mass Media: Analysis and Criticism of Unrealistic Portrayals and Their Influence*.

Disney's “Cinderella” (a lavish production directed by Kenneth Branagh with Lily James in the title role) got *Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award*[™] for perpetuating numerous unhealthy, potentially dangerous myths and stereotypes of sex, love, and romance (specifically, the *12 Myths of Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz*[®]—online at RealisticRomance.com). Galician acknowledges that these counterproductive strategies, which abound in the media, might make interesting media narrative, but her award-winning academic research suggests they can actually “ruin real-life relationships.”

In contrast, “Brooklyn” (an Oscar[®]-nominee, as is its star, Saoirse Ronan) was honored with the *Realistic Romance*[®] *Grand Prize*[™] for presenting multiple research-based strategies for successful coupleship that benefit both women and men (encapsulated as the *12 Dr. Galician's Prescriptions*[®] [Rx] for Getting Real About Romance), which the media rarely depict.

The awards are part of Galician's media literacy mission to “create awareness beyond academia to the general public about what we learn from media portrayals and how they influence us—even if we think they don't.” She adds: “You can enjoy all kinds of media portrayals, but just make sure you're aware of the beliefs and behaviors they subconsciously promote.”

Galician also notes, “This year's two top awardees offer an especially instructive comparison, because the *12 Myths* are best understood in terms of their corresponding ‘antidotal’ *12 Prescriptions*—and vice versa.”

She cautions that even portrayals with Rx usually include one or more *Myths*, because most media narrative relies on them. However, *Prescriptions* are the dominant themes of *Realistic Romance*[®] *Grand Prize*[™] winners. In fact, thematic emphasis on *Prescriptions* (rather than *Myths*) is the criterion for “realistic” in Galician's work—not dramatic realism or naturalism, so even fantasies and animated features have earned *Realistic Romance*[®] Awards[™] over the years. And “worst” and “best” refer to bad or good relationship strategies (*Myths* or *Rxs*, respectively), not to artistic merit.

All the Valentine's Day 2016 recipients—blockbuster films, top-rated TV shows, popular songs, and major magazines—in 26 award categories (one for each of the *12 Myths* and *12 Rxs*, in addition to the two over-all awards) are listed below. Some portrayals earned multiple awards, and this year's listing includes a total of nearly 80 separate awardee citations explaining the reason each recipient earned its award. And in her announcement video at RealisticRomance.com, Galician details and compares the thematic differences in “Cinderella” and “Brooklyn.”

Galician—who is known affectionately as “Dr. FUN” because of her musical motivation program *FUN-dynamics!*[®] *The FUN-damentals of DYNAMIC Living*—is an expert on the influence of mass media portrayals on real-life relationships. She enjoyed a successful career in the media and later on the full-time faculty of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication at Arizona State University, where she also served as founding head of media analysis & criticism and created the media literacy course *Sex, Love, and Romance in the Mass Media*, reaching thousands of students worldwide.

**THE 14th ANNUAL DR. FUN'S STUPID CUPID & REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDS™
FOR MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF SEX, LOVE, & ROMANCE**

RECIPIENTS OF ALL 26 AWARDS ANNOUNCED ON VALENTINE'S DAY 2016
by Dr. Mary-Lou Galician
(The Original "Dr. FUN")

- 1 *Stupidest Cupid Award*™ & 1 *Realistic Romance® Grand Prize*™ (Top Over-all Awards)
- 12 individual *Stupid Cupid Awards*™ & 12 individual *Realistic Romance® Awards*™

Each individual award category has multiple recipients—in addition to the two over-all recipients, so this year's listing offers nearly 80 citations with the reason each portrayal earned its award(s).

DR. FUN'S TOP 2 OVER-ALL AWARD RECIPIENTS

14th ANNUAL STUPIDEST CUPID AWARD™

for the 2015 portrayal with the most *Myths & Stereotypes* of all the Valentine's Day 2016 Awardees

Cinderella (movie) . . . because it perpetuates unhealthy, harmful *Myths* 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 10.

14th ANNUAL REALISTIC ROMANCE® GRAND PRIZE™

for the 2015 portrayal with the most *Prescriptions (Rxs)* of all the Valentine's Day 2016 Awardees

Brooklyn (movie) . . . because it offers models of successful healthy *Rxs* 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10.

In her Valentine's Day 2016 announcement video at RealisticRomance.com, Dr. Galician compares these two movies' diametrically different conceptions of "courage," "home," and mate-selection for happily-ever-afters. Check it out!

Myth #1. Your perfect partner is cosmically predestined, so nothing/nobody can ultimately separate you.

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Cinderella (movie) . . . because not even being detained from going to the ball (until rescued by a fairy-godmother) and being locked in an attic by her cruel stepmother (Cate Blanchett)—or leaving the ball without telling the Prince (Richard Madden) her name—can prevent Cinderella (Lily James) from a royal marriage and happily-ever-after (though a cosmic amount of magic is required). *This portrayal earned this year's over-all Stupidest Cupid Award™.*

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Once Upon a Time (TV) . . . because it's literally another Cinderella with her Prince Charming (in two different worlds). See also *Myth* 7.

Rx #1: Consider countless candidates.

[This doesn't mean all at once! And it doesn't recommend promiscuity. The point is: There's more than one appropriate partner in the world, but we often overlook potential candidates while seeking the "perfect" one—who's not always so perfect anyway.]

NOTE about the movie *Trainwreck*:

Although it received a great number of nominations for this *Rx*, the above details about what this *Rx* means should clarify why this portrayal doesn't fit *Rx* 1. However, this movie does fit *Rx* 3, 4, and 5 (as cited, below.)

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Brooklyn (movie) . . . because rather than leaving it to fate, Irish immigrant Ellis Lacey (Saoirse Ronan) makes her own thoughtfully considered difficult choice between two worthy and appropriate suitors: Italian-American Tony (Emory Cohen) in her new 1950s U.S. homeland—and countryman Jim (Domhnall Gleeson) back in her hometown. *This portrayal earned this year's over-all Realistic Romance® Grand Prize.™*

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

The Age of Adaline (movie) . . . because the long-lived, ageless widow of the title (Blake Lively) finally realizes that there can be another appropriate candidate. See also Rx 9.

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 2 (movie) . . . because Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence) has two appropriate, though quite different, longtime candidates to consider—Gale (Liam Hemsworth) and Peeta (Josh Hutcherson)—and a final decision to make in the finale of the blockbuster series. See also Rx 7 and 9.

Myth #2. There's such a thing as "love at first sight."

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

The Longest Ride (movie) . . . because of the cliché-ridden (Nicholas Sparks) parks that fly between ranch-owner/bull-rider (no pun intended?) Luke (Scott Eastwood) and college sorority girl/art gallery intern Sophia (Britt Robertson) the moment they clap eyes on each other. See also Myth 4, 5, 9, and 10.

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Cinderella (movie) . . . because after just one chance forest meeting of only a few minutes, both Cinderella and (obsessive?) Prince "Kit" are madly in love (hence the open ball and the slipper-fitting hunt). *This portrayal earned this year's over-all Stupidest Cupid Award™.*

Fifty Shades of Grey (movie) . . . because just one look is all it took for Christian (Jamie Dornan) and Anastasia (Dakota Johnson) in this R-rated movie—whose two lead actors ironically lack chemistry, so maybe the R is for ridiculous? See also Myth 4, 6, and 9.

Rx #2: Consult your calendar and count carefully.

[In other words, take time to really get to know a romantic partner.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Master of None (TV) . . . because, as Dev (comedian Aziz Ansari, co-creator/co-writer of this entertaining and co-incidentally educational Netflix comedy series about New York *30-somethings*) discovers, "People aren't always magical right away. Sometimes they become magical"—a mantra that becomes a reality when he takes time to get to know Rachel (Nöel Wells), who becomes his romantic partner over time. See also Rx 3, 4, and 8.

Sleeping with Other People (movie) . . . because after many years of close platonic BFF-ship, Lainey (Alison Brie) and Jake (Jason Sudeikis) outgrow their inappropriate and disappointing dating strategies with other partners and realize that their long-term friendship has matured to the point of an appropriate marriage to each other. See also Rx 4.

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

The Avengers: Age of Ultron (movie) . . . because the budding romantic relationship between Bruce Banner/Incredible Hulk (Mark Ruffalo) and Natasha Romanoff/Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson) has been evolving over several installments of the Marvel blockbuster series. See also Rx 3—and Myth 7.

Myth #3. Your true soul mate should know what you're thinking or feeling (without your having to tell).

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Insurgent (movie) . . . because as designated "Divergents" (one of five personality "factions" in a bleak futuristic world into which all about-to-be-adults are sorted in a fashion not unlike Hogwarts students to their

school houses, though a fearsome test rather than a frumpy hat is involved), heroine Tris (Shailene Woodley) and hero “Four”/Tobias (Theo James) seamlessly fight side-by-side with minimal conversation. See also Rx 6 and 9.

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Cinderella (movie) . . . because Cinderella and Prince “Kit” *must* be reading each other’s minds— given that they exchanged only a few words in the forest at their first meeting and hardly speak to each other during their brief time at the ball before their third meeting, when they are ready to commit to be married and rule an entire country together as King and Queen. *This portrayal earned this year’s over-all Stupidest Cupid Award™.*

Rx #3: Communicate courageously.

[Don’t expect mind-reading from partners. If you can’t talk openly, safely, and courteously, it’s not an intimate relationship.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Believe (song) . . . because Mumford and Sons aptly note: “This is never gonna go our way/If I’m gonna have to guess what’s on your mind.”

Trainwreck (movie) . . . because communication is a key theme: Amy (raunchy comedian Amy Schumer, who also wrote the R-rated script) is honest to a fault (and often ingenuously brutal) about candidly expressing her thoughts and feelings, and her new beau Dr. Aaron Connors (Bill Hader) more graciously but no less relentlessly articulates what must be clearly stated—no matter how long it takes (of if it finally puts him to sleep). See also Rx 4 and 5.

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

Master of None (TV) . . . because at every step from the very beginning of their relationship (including an earlier one-night stand), Dev and Rachel have openly shared their thoughts and feelings without playing coy games. See also Rx 2, 4, and 8.

The Avengers: Age of Ultron (movie) . . . because Clint Barton/Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner) and his wife Laura (Linda Cardellini) courageously, civilly, and lovingly discuss her concerns about his dangerous line of work as a super-hero. See also Rx 2—and Myth 7.

Myth #4. If your partner is truly meant for you, sex is easy and wonderful.

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Fifty Shades of Grey (movie) . . . because sadistic and masochistic sex that’s portrayed as erotically exciting and ecstatic is what binds (Sorry!) this couple. See also Myth 2, 6, and 9.

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Men’s and Women’s Magazine (such as Maxim and Cosmo) (magazines) . . . because their cover-lines and suggestive (if not explicit!) photos scream that sex is the most important and affirming aspect of a relationship rather than just one component.

The Longest Ride (movie) . . . because schmaltzy (and seemingly unsafe!) sex in a shower stall with nothing but a musical accompaniment underscores the message that Luke and Sophia are meant to be. See also Myth 2, 5, 9, 10.

Rx #4: Concentrate on commitment and constancy.

[“Easy, wonderful” sex is not always instant—and it’s not the only thing to consider.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Sleeping with Other People (movie) . . . because although they had a one-night stand in their college days, when they meet again in their adult life, Jake and Lainey gradually become constant best (platonic) friends

while they struggle through disastrous and unsatisfying affairs with others, until they help each other realize the folly of this behavior and come to appreciate a loving, committed marriage—to each other. Thus, despite its title, this R-rated film actually promotes committed monogamy. See also Rx 2.

Trainwreck (movie) . . . because after years of avoiding monogamy (a mantra from her deadbeat father's lectures since her childhood) via promiscuity that doesn't bring her joy (though it's comedic), Amy gets an opportunity to experience the value of a committed relationship with an appropriate partner, Dr. Aaron Connors. As such, despite its R-rating, this movie presents a convincing argument for this Prescription. See also Rx 3 and 5.

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

Brooklyn (movie) . . . because Ellis is considering the serious commitments in the marriage proposals of her two suitors, each of whom promise a life-long relationship (a sample of which she has already experienced in Tony's faithful attention and respectfulness to her). *This portrayal earned this year's over-all Realistic Romance® Grand Prize.*™

Master of None (TV) . . . because Dev and Rachel make a determined effort to maintain a committed relationship that also maintains satisfying sex. And props for this sweet but raunchy Netflix series' frequent non-preachy but pertinent reminders about the importance of condom use. See also Rx 2, 3, and 8

Pitch Perfect 2 (movie) . . . because about-to-graduate lead characters Beca (Anna Kendrick) and Jesse (Skylar Astin)—leaders, respectively, of Barden University's all-female and all-male nationally competitive a cappella groups—have been a couple since their first year at BU. See also Rx 4, 5, and 9.

Myth #5. To attract and keep a man, a woman should look like a model or a centerfold.

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Cheerleader (music video) . . . because Omi's award-winning worldwide hit promotes an objectifying criterion: "She walks like a model/She grants my wishes like a genie in a bottle" and "You gotta know how to walk like a model, talk like a model"—with visuals that enhance the lyric with unrealistic, one-sided, shallow standards. See also Myth 10.

Cinderella (movie) . . . because although Cinderella is beautiful in her "natural" state, when she is fairy-godmothered up in that dazzling blue gown she's a knockout with a waist the size of her neck (as in Disney's totally animated cartoon version). In fact, the already-slim actress has explained in interviews that she had to nearly starve herself on a liquid diet and was corseted within an inch of her life to fit into it. And in some scenes you can detect further CGI shrinkage. (Also, how did her cinder-foot appear so milky white when she put it into the slipper the Prince was holding?) *This portrayal earned this year's over-all Stupidest Cupid Award.*™

Spy (movie) . . . because despite being highly intelligent, efficient, gracious, devoted, and attractive, Susan (Melissa McCarthy) isn't even considered as a candidate for romance simply because she is full-figured (and made to look ridiculously unattractive when she goes on a CIA mission, where her out-of-character slapstick antics are sometimes comic but too often cringe-worthy). The movie is billed as a comedy, but it's a tragedy that the star's romantic longings are portrayed as laughable.

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Focus (movie) . . . because of the two-level portrayal of this Myth in this convoluted story about a big-time con man (Will Smith) (1) who falls in love with a gorgeous wanna-be "student" con artist (Margot Robbie) who (2) uses her spectacular looks to captivate the wealthy males targeted by this criminal duo.

Good for You (song) . . . because Selena Gomez objectifies herself by focusing on externals to keep a man: "I just wanna look good . . . Gonna wear that dress you like, skin tight/Do my hair up real, real nice"—with or without *the dress*: "Leave this dress a mess on the floor/And still look good for you."

The Longest Ride (movie) . . . because Sophia is as picture-perfect as an underwear model (as is Luke!). And, although Luke discovers that Sophia is a lovely person, it's her physical appearance that makes him fall for her (as hard as he falls from the bulls he rides at the rodeo) before he knows anything about her. See also Myth 2, 4, 9, and 10.

Rx #5: Cherish completeness in companions (not just the cover).

[Impossible-to-attain looks are a foolish criterion, especially if the person inside is not attractive.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Pitch Perfect 2 (movie) . . . because beautiful plus-size, self-dubbed “Fat Amy” (comedian Rebel Wilson) attracts boyfriends who admire and appreciate her over-the-top, cheeky self-confidence and sense of her own worth (though Wilson’s own delightful, but sadly short-lived TV series—*Super Fun Night*—was even better because she always got the hunks and her size wasn’t even mentioned). See also Rx 4, 8, and 10.

Trainwreck (movie) . . . because even though she’s an attractive and fit woman, this movie’s Amy doesn’t conform to the requirements of the typical romantic leading lady. Nevertheless, she does appeal to a wide variety of handsome men who see more than simply the outer package—and it’s because of her intelligence and humor that she first charms Aaron, who has more than superficial standards. See also Rx 3 and 4.

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

Brooklyn (movie) . . . because as she gains self-confidence through her courageous, independent immigration to the United States and her hard work in her new homeland, she actually radiates her inner beauty, shedding her former mousier appearance for a more classically beautiful though quietly elegant exterior—and her suitors cherish her complete character. *This portrayal earned this year’s over-all Realistic Romance® Grand Prize.*™

Mike & Molly (TV) . . . because in the title role of her own long-running TV sit-com (unlike in her portrayal of Myth 5 in *Spy*), Melissa McCarthy is less of a joke, and Mike (Billy Gardell) is a true gentleman who loves her for the total person she is, including her inner and unconventional outer beauty (although her own mother and sister are less than kind about her appearance—and Mike is not a hunk).

The DUFF (movie) . . . because this teen movie’s theme about a “Designated Ugly Fat Friend” literally reiterates this Prescription (perhaps too ham-handedly for some) in a high school setting that can resonate and provide hope for many in its target audience.

Myth #6. The man should not be shorter, weaker, younger, poorer, or less successful than the woman.

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Fifty Shades of Grey (movie) . . . because Christian Grey is ALL of that—outrageously successful (CEO of his own company) and fabulously wealthy as well as taller, stronger, and older than college student Anastasia—his literal “submissive” (socially as well as sexually). See also Myth 2, 4, and 9.

Spectre (movie) . . . because in this more than usually cartoonish installment of the James Bond franchise, 007 (Daniel Craig) is 17 years older as well as stronger and more powerful than his romantic interest Madeleine (Léa Seydoux). What’s especially Mad-denying is that the movie’s publicity promised Bond would have a more age-appropriate partner (Monica Bellucci)—a stunning beauty who is actually 4 years older than the actor but who actually appears for only about five minutes at the beginning of the movie (*period!*)—as have most opening bedroom-scene “Bond girls.” It’s Seydoux as Madeleine who is at Bond’s side for the majority of this escapade. So what was all the PR about? (What I also want to know is: How one gets from Morocco to London without a passport or wallet or mobile phone?)

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Cinderella (movie) . . . because Cinderella is a poor role model for 21st century girls and women: a passive victim (even the mice are more powerful)—totally abrogating all responsibility for herself and totally dependent on a rich and powerful male to rescue her. Although she kept her promise to her dying mother to “show kindness to everyone,” she failed to honor the second part: “and be courageous.” *This portrayal earned this year’s over-all Stupidest Cupid Award.*™

Rx #6: Create coequality; cooperate.

[This does NOT mean the woman should be superior! That's just a countertype, which is merely another stereotype. Peer coupleship—in which power is balanced and shared—is the most healthy and beneficial for both partners.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Parks & Recreation (TV) . . . because Leslie Knope (Amy Poehler) and Ben Wyatt (Adam Scott) are true colleagues in every sense of the word in this charmingly quirky series that ended its 7-year run in 2015. See also *Myth 8*.

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

Brooklyn (movie) . . . because she ultimately rejects an unequal partnership with her wealthy patriarchal fiancé Jim back in “the old country” and chooses a peer marriage with blue-collar Tony in the “land of opportunity,” where they both have plans for advancement together. *This portrayal earned this year's over-all Realistic Romance® Grand Prize.*™

Insurgent (movie) . . . because Tris and “Four”/Tobias are both heroic “Divergents” who bravely and effectively fight as side-by-side leaders in the quest for a better, freer life in a despotic futuristic world. See also *Rx 9—and Myth 3*.

Myth #7. The love of a good and faithful true woman can change a man from a “beast” into a “prince.”

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Aloha (movie) . . . because at the very last moment, Brian Gilcrest (Bradley Cooper)—a former military pilot turned defense contractor who is seriously flawed, burned-out, and troubled physically, mentally, and spiritually—suddenly decides to sabotage his employer's nefarious plans so he can avoid losing the highly moral and mystical (and relentlessly wide-eyed and upbeat) USAF Captain Alison Ng (Emma Stone), his Hawaiian base escort, whom he's known for only a few days and has rudely ignored for the majority of their brief acquaintance, and suddenly realizes (!) he's in love with her (primarily when it's clear that the original love of his life, who also works on this base, won't leave her husband). See also *Myth 9*.

The Avengers: Age of Ultron (movie) . . . because Natasha Romanoff/Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson) has been faithfully helping Bruce Banner/Incredible Hulk (Mark Ruffalo) take better charge of his mega-beastly transformations. Sometimes it works. (Note: In fairness, it should be pointed out that it's more a needed therapeutic plan than a change *simply* because of this good woman's goodness.) See also *Rx 2 and 3*.

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Jurassic World (movie) . . . because in this gender reversal, a genuinely good *man* Owen (Chris Pratt)—a *bona fide* expert trainer of genetically engineered dinosaurs at the theme park—transforms the park's rude, workaholic senior manager Claire (Bryce Dallas Howard) from a word that rhymes with “witch” into a princess, or, at least, a nicer person. And he does it within a few hours, while also spearheading rescues during the park's major dino-disaster! See also *Myth 8 and 9*.

Once Upon a Time (TV) . . . because the cast of characters includes the *original* Beauty and her Beast. This “tale as old as time” is the archetype of dysfunctional codependency that can lead to emotional and physical abuse. While we can and should support those attempting to change themselves, “good” women (and men) can't be expected to magically transform the bad behavior of others. (This myth is better understood as a metaphor about our own good side overcoming our own bad side.) See also *Myth 1*.

Rx #7: Cease correcting and controlling; you can't change others (only yourself!).

[Stay away from "bad" partners. Instead, seek one who doesn't need to be changed by you.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Love Yourself (song) . . . because Justin Bieber admits he can't change the qualities he dislikes in a former parter (primarily, her obsession with—*ahem!*—*looking good for her man*; HINT: See Myth 5), which is why this (*ahem! unnamed*) partner is "former." Additional deal-breakers: "You told me you hated my friends," " You told me my opinion was wrong," "You tried to make me forget where I came from," and, basically, "You rain on my parade." Therefore, even though "I never like to admit that I was wrong, . . . now I know I'm better sleeping alone."

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 2 (movie) . . . because even though Gale is Katniss's longtime best friend and sometime beau, when she discovers he's joined the more pro-war faction that has resulted in her beloved sister's death, she bids him farewell. See also Rx 1 and 9.

Myth #8. Bickering and fighting a lot mean that a man and a woman really love each other passionately.

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Jurassic World (movie) . . . because throughout the majority of this dino-disaster movie, Owen and Claire bicker and fight about their past (romantic) relationship, their current (work) relationship, and any future relationship of any kind. Yet at the end, they appear to be a couple again. See also Myth 7 and 9.

Vicious Long (song) . . . because New Found Glory's lyrics describe "a vicious love/We mix our tears with blood . . . We fight as hard as we love." The unfortunate explanation is: "Living in tension with you still feels better than I've ever known."

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Long Stretch of Love (song) . . . because, as explained by Lady Antebellum: "We kiss we fight/Make up all night. You're the blessing and the curse . . . You lift me up/You bring me down." Sadly, this couple doesn't realize that love is about peace (not war), so "Over and over and over we say that we're through, but I come right back to you"—despite what sounds like an demeaning, abusive relationship.

Rx #8: Courtesy counts; constant conflicts create chaos.

[Respectful disagreement is healthy, but bickering and fighting—and lack of respect—are signs that the partners are simply not truly suited to each other.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Brooklyn (movie) . . . because of the sweetness and respectfulness exhibited in the interactions of Eilis and her two love interests: her Italian-American Tony (Emory Cohen) in her new American homeland and her countryman Jim (Domhnall Gleeson) back home in Ireland. Bonus: This moving movie doesn't sink to creating ethnic conflict between Eilis and Tony (or his family). *This portrayal earned this year's over-all Realistic Romance® Grand Prize.*™

The Grinder (TV) . . . because although their wimpy parenting skills leave much to be desired, the "Grinder"'s brother Stewart (Fred Savage) and Stewart's wife Debbie (Mary Elizabeth Ellis) consistently portray a delightful rarity in sit-com TV: a couple who never bicker and fight.

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

Bad Blood (song) . . . because Taylor Swift's lyrics acknowledge that "Band-Aids don't fix bullet holes/You say you're sorry just for show," resulting in the healthy realization that "Now we've got problems/And I don't think we can solve 'em."

Master of None (TV) . . . because Dev and Rachel exemplify this Prescription via their courteous communication with each other that's a model of how to air your thoughts with your romantic partner. See also Rx 2, 3, and 4.

Parks & Recreation (TV) . . . because Leslie and Ben display admirable respect and courtesy for each other, even when problems arise. See also Rx 6.

Pitch Perfect 2 (movie) . . . because Beca and Jesse support each other respectfully and communicate courteously, as does newcomer Emily (Hailee Steinfeld) with her budding love interest Benji (Ben Platt). See also Rx 4, 5, and 10.

Myth #9. All you really need is love, so it doesn't matter if you and your lover have very different values.

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

The Longest Ride (movie) . . . because ranch-owner/bull-rider Luke and college sorority girl/art gallery intern Sophia have totally different values and goals. In fact, at a modern art show that is very important to Sophia, Luke shocks her by telling her gallery mentor that there's "more B.S." on display here than in *his* workplace! Similarly, Sophia is adamant that Luke should give up his dangerous passion. The only thing they have in common is rescuing and befriending an elderly car accident victim—Ira (Alan Alda). See also Myth 2, 4, 5, and 10.

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Aloha (movie) . . . because world-weary, troubled Brian (who is in a downward spiral and has no problem ignoring moral codes) and upbeat, decent Alison (who is in line for promotions and success) are worlds apart—as evidenced by his constant attempts to shut her up or avoid/escape her—until he suddenly makes a U-ey. See also Myth 7.

Fifty Shades of Grey (movie) . . . because an innocent virgin "bottom" and an experienced BDSM "top" have little in common on which to base a relationship. See also Myth 2, 4, and 6.

Jurassic World (movie) . . . because Owen and Claire's constant bickering and fighting are symptomatic of their totally different values and belief systems. Where's the "love"? See also Myth 7 and 8.

Rx #9: Crave common core-values.

[Partners from different cultures, ethnicities, and races can have successful relationships if they share values, but partners with totally different values cannot. When romantic partners share values, mutual respect naturally flows—and they can be themselves, rather than walking on eggs and wearing masks.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

The Age of Adaline (movie) . . . because Adaline (aka "Jenny"), who has avoided romantic relationships for decades, finally is able to place trust in her future with a gracious and loving philanthropist who shares her passions and high-minded values. See also Rx 1.

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 2 (movie) . . . because Katniss chooses a life of peace (represented by Peeta) rather than war (represented by Gale). (Note: This coupling can also be viewed as pre-destined, but the fact is that Katniss has always preferred peace—and this book-and-movie series is based on the author's anti-war theme.) See also Rx 1 and 7.

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

Brooklyn (movie) . . . because in this parable of the old world vs. the new, the past vs. the future, an evolved and courageous Ellis chooses a genuine future of expansive potential with Tony—the man with whom she shares her dreams and goals and core-values, even though they come from difference backgrounds. *This portrayal earned this year's over-all Realistic Romance® Grand Prize.*™

Insurgent (movie) . . . because as Divergents, Tris and "Four"/Tobias share values and goals, so they operate as a well-matched team. See also Rx 6—and Myth 3.

Myth #10. The right mate “completes you”—filling your needs and making your dreams come true.

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Cinderella (movie) . . . because a thoughtful viewer might wonder how Cinderella can know if Prince (now King) “Kit” is an appropriate life partner, when she’s never even had a date with another man (or a real date with “Kit,” for that matter). On the other hand, “Kit” does get her out of that attic and those rags and away from the unkindness of the strangers who took over her home. *This portrayal earned this year’s over-all Stupidest Cupid Award™.*

Cheerleader (music video) . . . because Omi’s title is the clue: She’s there to make *him* happy, as the lyrics make clear: “She’s always right there when I need her; When I need motivation, my one solution is my queen She’s always in my corner [NOTE: Not “by his side”!] right there when I want her. . . . I’m empty when you’re gone.” See also Myth 5.

STUPID CUPID DIS-HONORABLE MENTION™

Die a Happy Man (song) . . . because, according to Thomas Rhett, “All I need in this life is your crazy love”—and nothing else; specifically: no travels, vacations, mansion, sports car, etc. Doesn’t that suggest he *does* dream of those things, so the pressure’s on his partner to make up for everything else the singer valued?

The Longest Ride (movie) . . . because this movie makes it seem as if two people with totally different values and goals (although they both seem like nice individuals) can easily be perfectly happy together. However, a closer study shows that it’s only because a multimillion (if not billion!) legacy from Ira enables the separated couple to reunite—now that Luke can pay off his farm and leave the dangerous rodeo, and Sophia can establish her own art gallery. Now *that’s* a fairy godfather! Thoughtful audiences might wonder what these two talk about when he picks her up at the gallery to head back to the farm (and audiences might also wonder why there is no security at this glass-wall mini-museum of art treasures). See also Myth 2, 4, 5, and 9.

Rx #10: Cultivate your own completeness.

[This Prescription does NOT advocate counter-dependence or avoiding coupleship, but it’s a reminder that no one else can complete you or make your dreams come true. It commends the importance of realizing that you are not incomplete if you don’t have partner and of being able to be independent at times and to focus on your own growth, whether or not you have a partner. “Wanting” an appropriate partner is normal and healthy, but “needing” one indicates you are not a good candidate. Two half-persons cannot constitute a healthy consummate relationship.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Brooklyn (movie) . . . because before Eilis chooses between her two potential marriage partners, she has grown from a submissive young girl in her Irish hometown into an independent woman in America, where she excels in a good job with promotions ahead, in addition to which she has attended night school to become an accountant. Her choice of blue-collar Italian-American Tony—a faithful emotional supporter of her achievements and sharer of a realistic plan for an even better future (in contrast to her wealthy hometown suitor Jim, who offers her a more traditional sheltered, but stifling, role)—further demonstrates this Prescription for a happy, healthy relationship. *This portrayal earned this year’s over-all Realistic Romance® Grand Prize.™*

REALISTIC ROMANCE® HONORABLE MENTION™

Pitch Perfect 2 (movie) . . . because although Beca enjoys a healthy and happy personal relationship with Jesse, as a soon-to-graduate-college senior, she’s also taking proactive steps toward her desired professional future by interning at a music company. See also Rx 4, 5, and 8.

Myth #11. In real life, actors and actresses are often very much like the romantic characters they portray.

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Fans who confuse and conflate performers’ “reel” roles & real lives (and this applies to performers in *all* media—not just movies and TV) . . . because these fans too often don’t really know what it’s like to actually

be a media idol or what these idols are really like. Do these fans realize that they're objectifying the very icons they idolize? Can we admire media artists' professional work without invading their private lives? Discuss with your fan club.

Rx #11: (De-)Construct celebrities.

[Realize that celebrities are NOT necessarily what you might think, even if you think you "know" them. Appreciate their professional performance—but don't use them as role models for your personal life unless their personal lives have been consistently documented as ethically worthy over the years. Even better: Make yourself the star of your own real-life love story.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

The Simpsons (TV) . . . because for more than 20 years, this pop-culture legend consistently and cleverly satirizes our conflation of media celebrities' reel-lives and real-lives, as well as the related fanatical feelings and behavior of fans—reminding us to apply this *Prescription*.

Myth #12. Since mass media portrayals of romance aren't "real," they don't really affect you.

STUPID CUPID AWARD™

Media critics who describe myths and stereotypic portrayals as "harmless" . . . because although we can still enjoy mythic portrayals of sex, love, and romance in the mass media, research shows they can lead to harmful unrealistic expectations and behaviors. Therefore, it's irresponsible to label these portrayals as completely harmless simply because they're fluffy and vacuous. And stereotypes are *always* damaging to the targets and to the believers.

Schools that don't provide media literacy education . . . because media literacy offers foundational concepts and applicable strategies for helping media consumers of all ages to stay in control of the media they use and enjoy—rather than allowing the media to control them. We can and should still enjoy the media, but it's important to learn how to "dis-illusion" ourselves and our media! Media literacy education in other English-speaking nations is far ahead of the United States. It's high time for us to catch up.

Rx #12: Calculate the very real consequences of unreal media.

[Don't be fooled into thinking you're never influenced by media portrayals—and be media literate about the media you use. Through media literacy strategies and skills, we can become more aware and pro-active, thereby increasing our own chances of enjoying satisfying and successful real-life close relationships. We can still enjoy the metaphoric meanings and pure "escape" that romantic media myths offer us (though stereotypes are always harmful to us and others), but it's not wise to use media myths—or media celebrities—as models in our real lives. It's much healthier and smarter to make yourself the hero or heroine of your own true love story.]

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARD™

Media literacy resources that foster critical thinking—and consumers who utilize them . . . because although we can and should still enjoy the media, it's important to learn how to "dis-illusion" ourselves—and "dis-illusion" mythic/stereotypic media portrayals of sex, love, and romance. (Note: *Dis-illusion* is definitely not a bad thing: Who wants to live in illusions?) The core of media literacy is critical thinking, and its strategies and skills can be learned and adopted by utilizing a variety of excellent media resources, such as the Center for Media Literacy (CML)—MediaLit.org, the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE, formerly AMLA, the Alliance for a Media Literate America)—Namele.net, and, of course, my own media literacy contributions via Realistic Romance®—The Thinking Person's Relationship Remedy™—RealisticRomance.com.

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