

FOR RELEASE ON OR AFTER VALENTINE'S DAY: FEBRUARY 14, 2014

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*[THE COMPLETE LIST OF RECIPIENTS OF THE 26 AWARDS
WITH CITATIONS (REASON EACH RECIPIENT GOT AN AWARD)
BEGINS ON PAGE 6 OF THIS MEDIA RELEASE;*

RELATED VIDEO ANNOUNCEMENT AT www.RealisticRomance.com.]

**Media literacy advocate Dr. Mary-Lou Galician confers her 12th annual
Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance[®] Awards[™]
for the worst and best relational strategies
in 2013 mass media portrayals of sex, love, and romance**

***“Safe Haven” gets the 2014 overall Stupidest Cupid Award[™]
for perpetuating numerous unhealthy myths and stereotypes;***

***“The Hunger Games: Catching Fire” is honored
with the 2014 Realistic Romance[®] Grand Prize[™]***

for presenting multiple healthy relationship strategies;

and other popular films, TV shows, songs, and magazines receive additional 24 awards

February 14, 2014—“Safe Haven” and “The Hunger Games: Catching Fire”—two thematically opposite films about self-preservation in a dangerous environment and its impact of romantic relationships—were named the past year’s worst and best mass media portrayals of sex, love & romance in the 12th annual *Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance*[®] Awards[™]. The awards are announced each year on Valentine’s Day.

“Safe Haven” got the *Stupidest Cupid Award*[™] for perpetuating numerous unhealthy myths and stereotypes of sex, love, and romance that abound in the mass media, while “The Hunger Games: Catching Fire” was honored with the *Realistic Romance*[®] *Grand Prize*[™] for presenting multiple healthy relationship strategies, which are rarely demonstrated in the entertainment and advertising media (or even the news).

Recipients of all 26 awards—which include 2013 blockbuster films, top-rated TV shows, popular songs, and major magazines—are detailed below and at www.RealisticRomance.com.

The awards are an annual educational service to the public established by media literacy advocate Dr. Mary-Lou Galician, creator of *REALISTIC ROMANCE*[®]: *The Thinking Person's Relationship Remedy*[™] and founding head of media analysis and criticism in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication at Arizona State University, as part of her media literacy mission to focus public attention on unhealthy, dangerous media myths and stereotypes and to honor the rarer portrayals that provide healthy models of coupleship that can help media consumers “get real about romance.”

Galician, who is affectionately known 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 is the author of the textbooks *Sex, Love, and Romance in the Mass Media: Analysis and Criticism of Unrealistic Portrayals and Their Influence* (2004) and *Critical Thinking About Sex, Love, and Romance in the Mass Media: Media Literacy Applications* (2007). Her new book for the general public—*Dr. Galician's Prescriptions*[®] *for Realistic Romance*[®]: *The 7-Step Reality Check-Up*[®] *to Bust Media Myths that Ruin Real-life Relationships*—will be out soon.

—MORE—

“Worst” and “best” refer to relationship strategies, not to artistic merit, Galician notes. And the demonstration of healthy relationship strategies is the criterion for “realistic”—not dramatic realism or naturalism—so even some fantasies and animated features have earned *Realistic Romance® Awards™*.

How the award recipients are chosen

The 12 Stupid Cupid Awards™—one for each of the 12 major myths and stereotypes that Galician's research has identified as affecting real-life romance and that comprise her *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz®* (online at www.RealisticRomance.com)—are bestowed on the past year's portrayals that most clearly perpetuate these unhealthy messages. These awards focus attention on media portrayals that Galician says people should never use as models for their own lives. A 13th overall award—the *Stupidest Cupid Award™*—goes to the portrayal with the most myths and stereotypes.

The 12 Realistic Romance® Awards™—one for each of *Dr. Galician's Prescriptions® (Rx's) for Getting Real About Romance* (“antidotes” to the 12 myths and stereotypes)—honor the rarer media portrayals of healthy coupleship. The *Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™* is awarded to the overall best example.

Each year, more than 1,000 nominations come from the public and students in Galician's university media literacy classes as well as other classes and groups around the country and around the world that use Galician's books and website, www.RealisticRomance.com.

Assisting Galician to narrow the field of nominations each year is a panel of judges that includes Galician's own husband, Dr. David Natharius, a gender communication expert. The final decision about each award is made by solely Galician, who personally writes each citation that explains the reason for each recipient's award. (*Recipients of all 26 awards for are listed with the reasons for their awards beginning on Page 6, below.*)

A mysterious woman with a secret seeks privacy and protection in the melodramatic “Safe Haven”—this year's overall Stupidest Cupid Awardee™—and finds love that seems cosmically pre-destined.

The secret she's hiding from her new community is one the audience knows from the start: She's on the run from her abusive husband.

Despite its absolutely absurd plot twists, it's incredibly predictable. The despicably abusive husband is presented as a villain who'd be right at home twirling his moustaches in a 19th century melodrama. And, sadly, Galician explains, that actually diminishes the seriousness of this very serious and very real issue of spousal abuse.

Of course, when this victim arrives in her new town and alights from the bus she's been riding all night after running and running and running (in the rain!)—she's neat and clean and gorgeous, and even the hair she'd hastily chopped up and colored the night before(to disguise herself) is perfectly arranged. (That's Dr. FUN's Myth #5: A leading lady must look like a model or centerfold).

Within moments of her arrival, she gets a job at the local café (despite her lack of experience and her suspicious behavior)—and a handsome and kindly storeowner (Josh Duhamel)—a father of two little ones whose wife died of cancer a few years ago (This is Nicholas Sparks, remember!)—falls instantly in love with her (Myth #2).

She's slow to allow him into her life, but once she does she's quick to allow him into her bed, where they discover they're meant to be (Myth #4).

The tall, strong, courageous hero does indeed rescue his damsel in distress (Myth #6)—while the villain is conveniently disposed of (literally). And then it turns out that the equally mysterious local woman who immediately befriended the heroine...is actually the hero's dead wife—or ghost thereof—and she graciously gives her blessing to the new couple, who are apparently cosmically predestined (Myth #1), completing each other (Myth #10).

The complete citation is on Page 6, along with the full listing with citations of the recipients of *Stupid Cupid* awardees for each of the 12 individual myths and stereotypes of *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz*® including the following portrayals, several of which were finalists for the overall *Stupidest Cupid* awarded to "Safe Haven":

- (films); "Beautiful Creatures," "Before Midnight," "Iron Man 3," "Man of Steel," "Oz the Great and Powerful," "The Host," "Warm Bodies," "We're the Millers," and "The Wolverine";
- (television) "Once Upon a Time," "Pretty Little Liars," "The Bachelor," "The Bachelorette" and "The Vampire Diaries";
- (magazines) "Cosmo," "Maxim," and "Playboy";
- (songs and/or music videos) "Baby I," "Gone, Gone, Gone," "I Wish," "Mirrors," "My Eyes," "Nuclear," "Pretty Brown Eyes," "Suit & Tie," "The One," "The Other Side," and "True Love."

Stupid Cupids were also given to Valentine's Day advertising, to pop culture fans who confuse performers' real lives with "reel" roles, and to media critics who describe mythic and stereotypic portrayals as "completely harmless" along with schools that don't provide media literacy education.

Media portrayals of healthy sex, love, and romance are hard to find.

"Although *Stupid Cupid* nominees abound in the media," Galician explains, "it's much more difficult to find examples of healthy models of sex, love, and romance that are entertaining and appealing." Nevertheless, she was able to identify worthy candidates for her awards.

"The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" tops the chart of nation's top blockbusters while demonstrating a number of healthy relational strategies the popular media rarely showcase.

In comparison with this year's Stupidest Cupid Award™ recipient ("Safe Haven"), it's ironic that in the dystopian future world of the second installment of "The Hunger Games" trilogy there's no idealized small town "safe haven" to which to escape from violence—although there is fire...and fantasy.

The Realistic Romance Grand Prize™-winner is frequently an independent film (or song or off-beat TV show) that doesn't follow the typical Hollywood formula and might have a smaller audience. So Galicia is thrilled that this year is an exception—because this winner is also the number one movie box-office hit of 2013. That means lots of people—including many young media consumers—experienced its healthier role models of sex, love, and romance.

You probably know the story: A strong and caring young woman—"Katniss Everdeen" (played by Academy Award™-winner Jennifer Lawrence) is forced to participate in national last-person-standing (alive) games. In the first installment, she not only wins but also manages to enable her local partner Peter Mellark to survive with her. In this second film, their victory tour suddenly leads to a second games into which they are both forced by a nasty but powerful villain—the nation's president, who fears Katniss' courage, charisma, and revolutionary spirit.

In this film you see nearly all Dr. Galician's Prescriptions®. Katniss has two boy-friends—Peeta and Gale—who are her long-time good friends. And she's upfront and honest with them about not being ready for a serious relationship (Rx # 1 and Rx #2).

As has been widely (and unfairly) discussed, the talented star is not your typical Hollywood leading lady (Rx #5--though she is very attractive), and rather than me-Tarzan/you-Jane stereotypes that hurt men as well as women, this story's heroine teams with strong males who appreciate a romantic interest who shares power as a peer (Rx #6). So it's no wonder that for the most part she and her two boy-friends avoid bickering and fighting because they share values (Rx #8 and Rx #9) and work together for the common good and for a peaceful life.

The complete citation is in the full listing of recipients, beginning on Page 6.

Galician cautions that although even healthier portrayals usually include one or more unhealthy myths or stereotypes (because media narrative typically relies on these techniques), the dominant themes of *Realistic Romance® Award™* winners strongly reflect Prescriptions that are research-based relational strategies for successful coupleship that benefit both women and men.

In addition to the overall *Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™* winner, Galician found worthy 2013 portrayals to honor with her 12 individual *Realistic Romance® Awards™* for healthier portrayals that exemplify one of her 12 *Prescriptions®*:

- (films) "About Time," "Beautiful Creatures," "Despicable Me 2," "Don Jon," "Frozen," "Gatsby," "Her," "How I Met Your Mother," "Iron Man 3," "Jack the Giant Slayer," "Man of Steel," "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire," "The World's End," "Tyler Perry's Temptation: Confessions of a Marriage Counselor," and "The Wolverine";
- (television) "Castle," "Mom," "New Girl," "Parks & Rec," "Super Fun Date Night," and "White Collar";
- (songs) "Brave," "Chloe," and "Wrecking Ball."

Also honored with *Realistic Romance® Awards™* were media literacy resources that foster critical thinking and consumers who utilize them.

***How media consumers can better understand
important media literacy tenets that underlie the awards***

"The many examples from various media help you more easily and fully discover how to identify dysfunctional *Stupid Cupid* portrayals that could affect you, as well as to appreciate the far better role models in the *Realistic Romance®* portrayals," Galician explains.

"It's also best to consider the 12 media myths in terms of their corresponding 12 Prescriptions—and vice versa. Accordingly, it's also best to compare the awardees on 'both sides,'" she added. "That's

why I list the corresponding awards side-by-side; for example, the recipient of the *Stupid Cupid Award™* for Myth #1 with the recipient of the *Realistic Romance® Award™* for Rx #1.”

***Reminders for really great sex, love, and romance:
Media portrayals of sex, love, and romance affect nearly all of us
— even though we might not realize it.***

Galician’s research examines how mass media portrayals of sex, love, and romance affect nearly all of us — men and women, young children and seniors, singles and couples — even though we might not realize it. “People in my studies with unrealistic expectations are less satisfied in their own romantic relationships,” says Galician, who has been called the nation’s *Realistic Romance®* Guru, “and many of these unrealistic expectations come from media we enjoy without fully considering how they influence us at a subconscious level.

“It’s also important to remember that when I say ‘realistic’ I don’t mean ‘naturalistic’ or ‘normal,’” she adds, “I mean ‘healthy’. I don’t want you to lower your standards: I actually want you to raise your standards (because you’re worth it) but lower your mythic and stereotypic expectations, which are unhealthy.”

Galician insists that her work “is *not* about censorship or avoiding media. It’s all about being a wise media consumer, about using the media instead of the letting media use you, and about ‘getting real about romance’ to be more successful and happier.”

She notes, “It’s important to take time to consider how mass media portrayals at the least reinforce — if not create — unrealistic expectations that most of us can’t dismiss completely. First we have to understand where they come from. Then we must learn how to analyze and critique them and, most important, how to reframe them more constructively.

Galician’s books and programs offer her *7-Step Reality Check-Up®* for analyzing and criticizing unrealistic portrayals. She even includes suggestions about how parents should debrief their children after they view animated feature film classics like “Beauty and the Beast,” “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” and “Lady and the Tramp”—and even more recent hits such as “The Incredibles,” “Wall-E,” “Cars,” “Tangled,” and “Rio”—which are seemingly harmless but actually perpetuate counterproductive myths and stereotypes that can be easily and unconsciously adopted as counterproductive beliefs and actual behaviors.

***Galician’s ultimate advice:
“Get real about romance!”***

“We can still enjoy the ‘escape’ that unrealistic romantic media portrayals offer us,” Galician says, “but it’s not wise to use them — 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.”

Her ultimate advice for Valentine’s Day — and every day: “Get real about romance!”

For more information about Galician's *Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance® Awards™*

or to arrange a print or broadcast interview with "Dr. FUN"

(who IS indeed a very FUN interview!),

please contact Dr. Mary-Lou Galician directly:

DrFUN@RealisticRomance.com

A complete listing of this year's 26 awards with the citations that explain why the award was made appears on the following pages of this release as well as on Dr. Galician's web site

PLUS VIDEO of Dr. Galician's announcement of the awards:

www.RealisticRomance.com.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Do NOT edit the wording of the 12 numbered one-sentence copyrighted Quiz Myths or the 12 numbered one-sentence copyrighted Prescriptions (Rx).

<p style="text-align: center;">The 12th Annual Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid Awards™</p> <p style="text-align: center;">conferred on 2013 mass media portrayals that perpetuate one or more of the 12 Myths & Stereotypes of Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The 12th Annual Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Awards™</p> <p style="text-align: center;">honoring 2013 mass media portrayals that model one or more of the 12 Prescriptions© [Rx] of Dr. Galician's Prescriptions© for Getting Real About Romance</p>
<p><i>These mass media portrayals that appeared in 2013 illustrate and perpetuate the 12 unhealthy and harmful media myths and stereotypes of Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©.</i></p> <p><i>There's a separate award for each of the 12 myths. Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™—the overall award—goes to a 2013 portrayal with the most myths.</i></p> <p><i>It's OK to enjoy these portrayals (well some of them!), but make sure you're aware of the unhealthy beliefs and models they promote.</i></p> <p><i>For each of the 12 myths, see its "antidote"—the corresponding Dr. Galician Prescription© (Rx) in the listing of the 12 Realistic Romance® Awards™ (column at right).</i></p>	<p><i>These mass media portrayals that appeared in 2013 illustrate and offer good models for successful, healthy relationships—the 12 Dr. Galician's Prescriptions (Rx)</i></p> <p><i>There's a separate award for each of the 12 Prescriptions.</i></p> <p><i>The Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™—the overall award—is awarded to a 2013 portrayal with the most Rx.</i></p> <p><i>The Rx are harder to find in the mass media, which are loaded with myths and stereotypes of sex, love, and romance.</i></p> <p><i>Each Rx is the "antidote" to the comparable Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz© myth or stereotype in the listing of the 12 Stupid Cupid Awards™ (column at left).</i></p>

RECIPIENTS OF ALL 26 AWARDS

Recipients of the overall awards—the Stupidest Cupid Award™ & the Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™ — and their citations (the reason for their awards) are presented first.

Awards for the individual 12 Myths and 12 Prescriptions are listed below these overall award recipients, including the statement of the Myth or Prescription.

<p style="text-align: center;">OVERALL AWARD Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™ "Safe Haven" (film)</p> <p>The title this film—which was released on Valentine's Day 2013—refers to the small photogenic seaside town where a so-called "mysterious" woman (played by Julianne Huff) with a secret, a fake name, and a gorgeous body has arrived looking for work and privacy.</p> <p>The secret she's hiding from her new community is one the audience knows from the start: She's on the run from her abusive husband.</p> <p>Now it's almost like shooting fish in a barrel to discuss the problems with this film (based on a Nicholas Sparks book)—and nearly every critic has already done that. But its impressionable audience liked it.</p> <p>Despite its absolutely absurd plot twists, it's incredibly predictable. The despicably abusive husband is presented as a villain who'd be right at home twirling his moustaches in a 19th century melodrama. And, sadly, that actually diminishes the seriousness of this very serious and very real issue of spousal abuse.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">OVERALL AWARD Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™ "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" (film)</p> <p>In comparison with this year's Stupidest Cupid Award™ recipient, it's ironic that in the dystopian future world of the second installment of "The Hunger Games" trilogy there's no idealized small town "safe haven" to which to escape from violence—although there is fire...and fantasy.</p> <p>As those of you who follow my annual awards know: the Realistic Romance Grand Prize™-winner is frequently an independent film (or song or off-beat TV show) that doesn't follow the typical Hollywood formula and might have a smaller audience. So I'm thrilled that this year is an exception—because this winner (a personal favorite of mine: I'm a fan of the books and the films) is also the number one movie box-office hit of 2013. That means lots of people—including many young media consumers—experienced its healthier role models of sex, love, and romance.</p> <p>You probably know the story: a strong and caring young woman—"Katniss Everdeen" (played by Academy Award™-winner Jennifer Lawrence) is forced to</p>
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<p>Of course, when this victim arrives in her new town and alights from the bus she's been riding all night after running and running and running (in the rain!)—she's neat and clean and gorgeous, and even the hair she'd hastily chopped up and colored the night before (to disguise herself) is perfectly arranged. (That's my Myth #5: A leading lady must look like a model or centerfold).</p> <p>Within moments of her arrival, she gets a job at the local café (despite her lack of experience and her suspicious behavior)—and a handsome, kindly storeowner (Josh Duhamel)—a father of two little ones whose wife died of cancer a few years ago (This is Nicholas Sparks, remember!)—falls instantly in love with her (Myth #2).</p> <p>She's slow to allow him into her life, but once she does she's quick to allow him into her bed, where they discover they're meant to be (Myth #4).</p> <p>Please understand: It's certainly commendable that the heroine finally made her escape (although she did stay with her husband until he practically killed her), but there are better exit and recovery strategies than those presented here—as even the movie bears out—because the crazed husband rather easily does find her and nearly burns down the whole picturesque town while also nearly killing the hero's little girl.</p> <p>But our tall, strong, courageous hero does indeed rescue his daughter and his damsel in distress (Myth #6)—while the villain is conveniently disposed of (literally). And then it turns out (Can you believe it?) that the equally mysterious local woman who immediately befriended the heroine...is actually the hero's dead wife—or ghost thereof—and she graciously gives her blessing to the new couple, who are apparently cosmically predestined (Myth #1), completing each other (Myth #10). (I did mention this is Nicholas Sparks.)</p>	<p>participate in national last-person-standing (alive) games. In the first installment, she not only wins but also manages to enable her local partner Peeta Mellark to survive with her. In this second film, their victory tour suddenly leads to a second games into which they are both forced by a nasty but powerful villain—the nation's president, who fears Katniss' courage, charisma, and revolutionary spirit.</p> <p>In this film (which is quite faithful to the book), you see nearly all my Dr. Galician's Prescriptions®. Katniss has two boy-friends—Peeta and Gale Hawthorne—who are her long-time good friends. And she's upfront and honest with them about not being ready for a serious relationship (Rx # 1 and Rx #2).</p> <p>As has been widely (and unfairly) discussed, the talented star is not your typical Hollywood leading lady (Rx #5--though she is very attractive), and rather than me-Tarzan/you-Jane stereotypes that hurt men as well as women, this story's heroine teams with strong males who appreciate a romantic interest who shares power as a peer (RX #6).</p> <p>So it's no wonder that for the most part she and her two boy-friends avoid bickering and fighting because they share values (Rx #8 and Rx #9) and work together for the common good and for a peaceful life.</p> <p>As a side note about the graphic violence, which includes the murder of children by children in the survival games: the author of "The Hunger Games" trilogy—which was initially targeted to so-called "young adult" readers—has explained that her goal is to show the consequences of violence rather than to glorify it. Thus, her heroine does not rejoice when rivals die. But we rejoice at such an admirable and interesting role model.</p>
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RECIPIENTS OF THE AWARDS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL 12 MYTHS & 12 RXs

STUPID CUPID AWARDS™ (Myths)

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDS™ (RxS)

<p>Myth #1: Your perfect partner is cosmically predestined, so nothing/nobody can ultimately separate you.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: (Tie): "Beautiful Creatures" (film); "Once Upon A Time" (TV)</p> <p>"Beautiful Creatures"—Although their families try to stop the friendship and budding romance of a pair of admirable high school students (albeit to protect them from dangerous mysterious evil forces and deadly curses), even a memory wipe can't keep these likable, well-suited youngsters apart, which—ironically—might be OK. (See this portrayal's awards for Rx #8 and Rx #9.)</p> <p>"Once Upon a Time"—Another memory wipe (by the evil queen) can't separate fated lovers in this updated re-imagining of several fairy tales, including the traditionally comatose Snow White and her Prince (who has inconveniently acquired a wife in the meantime).</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: "Safe Haven" (film); "The Host" (film)</p>	<p>Rx #1: Consider countless candidates.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: "The Wolverine" (film)</p> <p>Although this film's primary themes are myths and stereotypes (See the citations for Myth #2, #5, #6. & #7.), we do see that the haunted X-Man can finally move on the tragic ending of his love affair with the woman (Jean) had to destroy (in the public interest). Caution: This Rx is not an encouragement promiscuity.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: "How I Met Your Mother" (TV); "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" (film)</p>
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<p>Myth #2: There's such a thing as "love at first sight."</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: (Tie): "Safe Haven" (film); "Warm Bodies" (film)</p> <p>"Safe Haven"—See citation for this portrayal's overall Stupidest Cupid Award™.</p> <p>"Warm Bodies"—The Zombie narrator of this comedic and somewhat tongue-in-cheek tale (no pun intended—though he does eat humans), which spoofs several genres, spares an attractive young Zombie-hunter with whom he instantly falls in love (in slow motion), which speeds his ultimate return to humanity. The forbidden love of "R" (as much of his name as he can manage) and his "Julie" ends more happily than their namesakes—and actually presents an uplifting message about tolerance.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: "Beautiful Creatures (film); "The Wolverine" (film)</p>	<p>Rx #2: Consult your calendar and count carefully.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: (Tie): "Despicable Me 2" (animated film); "Frozen" (animated film)</p> <p>"Despicable Me 2"—Working together as a team on behalf of the Anti-Villain League, reformed villain Dru (voiced by Steve Carell) and agent Lucy Wild (Kristen Wiig) gradually get to know each other (and spend time with Dru's three adopted young daughters) and allow their romantic relationship to develop. The title card that opens the finale's wedding says it all: "147 dates later..."</p> <p>"Frozen"—Although the first half of this delightful musical version of Hans Christian Anderson's "Snow Queen" got me worried that it was a candidate for a Myth #2 Stupid Cupid, once in a while Disney gets an award on this side of the listings. Princess Anna's love-at-first-sight engagement on the day she meets Prince Hans is quickly debunked as "crazy" by local boy (and more appropriate candidate) Kristoff—and by his "love expert" trolls, who offer wisdom without pedantic preaching.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: "Mom" ["A Small Nervous Breakdown and a Misplaced Fork"] (TV); "New Girl" (TV); "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" (film)</p>
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<p>Myth #3: Your true soul mate should know what you're thinking or feeling (without your having to tell).</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: "Ariana Grande's "Baby I" (song)</p> <p>The singer does express her problem of her inability to express how she feels about her lover (aka "Baby"): "When I try to explain it, I be [<i>sic.</i>] sounding insane. The words don't ever come out right."—so rather than attempting to communicate articulately (See Rx #3.), she debases the process: "Words: They only complicate it. It's better not explaining." In her case, that might be wise—given her contradictory lyric: "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, no, no..."</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: "Before Midnight" (film)</p>	<p>Rx #3: Communicate courageously.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: "Her" (film)</p> <p>Writer-Director Spike Jonze provides an engaging and moving textbook example of this Prescription via the unusual relationship of a lonely man in the throes of divorce (Joaquin Phoenix) and an understanding and exciting operating system (voiced by Scarlett Johansson), with whom he falls in love and from whom he learns a lot.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: Sara Bareilles' "Brave" (song)</p>
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<p>Myth #4: If your partner is truly meant for you, sex is easy and wonderful.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: Justin Timberlake's "Suit & Tie" (song)</p> <p>Despite Justin's grown-up look (courtesy of a Tom Ford product placement) for a night on the town in this Grammy nomination filled with rather obvious double-entendres, that tux will soon be "on the floor tonight" when he shows "a few things" to his date who "ain't nothin' but a little doozie when she does it"—with the result that "love is swinging in the air" as he shows her "a few things about love."</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: "Safe Haven" (film); Jason Derulo's "The Other Side"</p>	<p>Rx #4: Concentrate on commitment and constancy.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: (Tie): "About Time" (film); "Iron Man 3" (film)</p> <p>"About Time"—This quirky, humorous, and touching independent-style British film by Writer-Director Richard Curtis demonstrates that good behavior can be compelling when you have a brilliant script and great actors. At 21 a young man from a loving family learns he can travel back in time and correct mistakes—including in love. You want to stand up and applaud when he has a chance to really wow the sexpot who's seduced his mind, but he turns away to remain faithful to his girlfriend who's a bit less flashy but far more classy.</p> <p>"Iron Man 3"—Despite the Stupid Cupid for Myth #6, this franchise has finally reach the point where our hero (Robert Downey, Jr.) can tell a hottie that he's not</p>
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	<p>interested because he's in a "committed relationship."</p> <p><i>Note: This Prescription, like all Rx's, should be viewed in terms of the corresponding Myth of the same number to which it serves as an antidote.</i></p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: "Parks and Recreation" (TV); "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" (film)</p>
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<p>Myth #5: To attract and keep a man, a woman should look like a model or a centerfold.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: Cody Simpson's "Pretty Brown Eyes" (song)</p> <p>As he explains about "This girl, she was a lil hottie": "This girl she came 'round the corner, looking like a model: Magazine figure, she was shaped like a bottle. Long straight hair, she was fly as a bird. First time ever I was lost for words. Felt so right, it just couldn't be wrong. Love at first sight if that exists at all."</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: "Cosmo" (magazine); Cher Lloyd's "I Wish" (song); "Maxim" (magazine); Blake Shelton's "My Eyes" (song); "Playboy" (magazine); "Safe Haven" (film); "The Bachelor" and "The Bachelorette" (TV); "The Wolverine" (film)</p>	<p>Rx #5: Cherish completeness in companions (not just the cover).</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: "Super Fun Date Night" (TV)</p> <p>It's unusual to see a leading lady who is plus-sized, and it's especially unusual—if not unique—for a television sit-com with such a leading lady to be beautiful, sweet, smart—and attractive to several men, including the show's most desirable one. The lady is multi-talented Australian comedian Rebel Wilson ("Bridesmaids" and "Pitch Perfect"), who has a depth that a lot of models and centerfolds would do well to emulate.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: Embem3's "Chloe" (song); "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" (film)</p>
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<p>Myth #6: The man should not be shorter, weaker, younger, poorer, or less successful than the woman.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: (Tie): "Safe Haven" (film); "The Wolverine" (film)</p> <p>"Safe Haven"—See citation for this portrayal's overall Stupidest Cupid Award™.</p> <p>"The Wolverine"—The X-Man (Hugh Jackman) instantly and willingly becomes a powerful protector/knight in shining armor to the beautiful damsel-in-distress Mariko, with whom is has fallen in love (though at 45, he is 17 years her senior) and for whom he must battle many ninjas. (See also the Rx #1 citation.)</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: "Iron Man 3" (film); "Man of Steel" (film); "Vampire Diaries" (TV)</p>	<p>Rx #6: Create coequality; cooperate.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: (Tie): "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" (film); "White Collar" (TV)</p> <p>"The Hunger Games: Catching Fire"—See citation for this portrayal's overall Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™.</p> <p>"White Collar"—Peter Burke (Tim McKay)—a hard-working, decent FBI agent who manages a white collar crime group in Manhattan—enjoys a healthy and happy peer relationship with his wife Elizabeth (Tiffani Thiessen), who also works long hours in her event-planning business. They admire and respect each other.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: "Despicable Me 2" (animated film)</p>
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<p>Myth #7: The love of a good and faithful true woman can change a man from a "beast" into a "prince."</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: (tie): "Once Upon a Time" (TV); "Oz the Great and Powerful" (film)</p> <p>"Once Upon a Time"—Among the various "Storybrooke" re-tellings in this Disney TV series is its "tale as old as time"—the Beauty and the Beast 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 series is not</p>	<p>Rx #7: Cease correcting and controlling; you can't change others (only yourself!).</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: (tie): "Frozen" (animated feature); "Tyler Perry's Temptation: Confessions of a Marriage Counselor" (film)</p> <p>"Frozen"—Amazingly, the Disney machine that is the primary purveyor of the "Beauty and the Beast" mythology (See the citation for this year's two Disney Stupid Cupid Award recipients for Myth #7.) nevertheless got it so right in this marvelous musical. The "love expert" trolls brilliantly explain the nuance of this Prescription (Rx) and the corresponding Myth to which it is the</p>
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for children—but viewers of all ages should be media literate enough to know that Belle's naïve attempts to reform the beastly Rumpelstiltskin would be dangerous in real life. (This myth is better understood as metaphor about our own good side overcoming our own bad side!)

"Oz the Great and Powerful"—The excellent 3-D provides the only "dimension" in Disney's unsuccessful attempt to present a prequel to the beloved Judy Garland classic. James Franco phones it in as a jaded carny con-man who remorselessly objectifies, uses, and discards women he seduces—yet he suddenly turns over a new leaf and saves all of Oz (thereby becoming the local wizard) as soon as he meets beautiful Glinda the Good witch (Michelle Williams), who's a little too goody-goody.

DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: "The Wolverine" (film); Justin Timberlake's "Mirrors" (song)

antidote: You can't change someone but you *can* bring out the in someone you love.

"Tyler Perry's Temptation: Confessions of a Marriage Counselor"—This Tyler Perry film is a heavy-handed, preachy, and violent "lesson" about the emotional and physical dangers of trying to mold a rogue (a billionaire who first appears as a gracious and exciting alternate to a young woman's boring but dependable husband) into a romantic partner. It's a valuable message but the (over-)acting and the graphic violence make it doubly cringe-worthy. And we can see from the first scene that the marital therapist who's dying of HIV isn't telling her client about "a sister." (Moreover, the demonstration that a woman's "no" really means "yes" counteracts the "sermon" of this cautionary tale.)

HONORABLE MENTION: "Gatsby" (film); "The World's End" (film)

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

STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:

(Tie): "Before Midnight" (film); "We're the Millers" (film); Pink's "True Love" (song)

"Before Midnight"—Although the final "act" of the Julie Delpy-Ethan Hawke trilogy has fine performances, the horribly dysfunctional relationship portrayed is painful to watch. The last hour is an extended vicious verbal brawl that demonstrates this couple's utter lack of respect, understanding, and communication in a partnership that has no basis in shared values or goals. "You set me up to fail," he whines—while she unilaterally blames all males for her lack of self-confidence. The pathetic unmotivated smiles at the end should not fool us into cheering for them to remain in battle mode so they can poison their children's lives and well as their own—or kill each other? If this resonates with real-life couples (as some critics suggest), more's the pity! Battles of the sexes produce no winners. Love is about peace, not war.

"We're the Millers"—Why do we laugh at this car-wreck of an unmotivated relationship between a drug dealer (Jason Sudeikis)—who hastily puts together a fake family in hopes of slipping past Mexican border officials—and the "mom" to be played by his continually disapproving and disdainful apartment neighbor and low-income stripper (Jennifer Aniston) who needs cash to pay her rent. The theme (this myth) is capsulized by the drug-dealer's response to the concern of his innocent fake 18-year-old "son" regarding the fighting between "mom" and "dad": "It's called 'flirting'. You'll learn all about it in college."

"True Love"—A musical version of "Before Midnight," in which Pink announces, "Sometimes I hate every single stupid word you say. Sometimes I wanna slap you in your whole face. I hate you, I really hate you, so much, I think it must True Love, true love." Huh? Perhaps the singer has been exposed to too many media portrayals of this dangerous Myth.

DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: "The Host" (film); "Girls" (TV); "Newsroom" (TV)

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

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:

(Tie): "Jack the Giant Slayer" (film); "Beautiful Creatures" (film)

"Jack the Giant Slayer"—The homage to "The Princess Bride" is evident in this re-telling of the "farm-boy" who saves a princess as well as climbing the beanstalk of an army of giants. But instead of the rude princess, we get a polite one who's an appropriate match for the well-mannered Jack.

"Beautiful Creatures"—Like "Jack," the 16-year-old high school boy in this film based on the Young Adult "Caster Chronicles" series is polite. In fact, he's a regular Southern gentleman who (like Jack and his Princess) shares a love of books with the new girl in his class, who is actually a witch—though she and her family prefer the term "caster." (See its Stupid Cupid citation for Myth #1.)

HONORABLE MENTION: "About Time" (film); "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" (film); "White Collar" (TV); Miley Cyrus' "Wrecking Ball" (song)

<p>Myth #9: All you really need is love, so it doesn't matter if you and your lover have very different values.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: "We're the Millers" (film)</p> <p>With the 180-degree differences of values held by the supposed romantic couple (See this portrayals award for Myth #8.), it's no wonder they spend the entire film bickering and fighting. But what <i>is</i> a wonder is how they suddenly wind up together at the end and discover they're in love.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: "Before Midnight" (film); "Pretty Little Liars" (TV)</p>	<p>Rx #9: Crave common core-values.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" (film)</p> <p><i>See citation for this portrayal's overall Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™.</i></p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: "Beautiful Creatures" (film); "Despicable Me 2" (animated film); "Jack the Giant Slayer" (film); "Man of Steel" (film); "Parks & Rec" (TV)</p>
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<p>Myth #10: The right mate "completes you"—filling your needs and making your dreams come true.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: (Tie): Justin Timberlake's "Mirrors" (song); Valentine's Day advertising</p> <p>"Mirrors"— In what is both complimentary and highly egocentric, the singer presents himself and his love as only half a person each: "Cause I don't wanna lose you now. I'm lookin' right at the other half of me. The vacancy that sat in my heart is a space that now you hold."</p> <p>Valentine's Day advertising—Candy in heart-shaped boxes, dinner at fancy restaurants, sparkly jewelry, red or pink cards with soulful messages, and long-stemmed roses.... Right after Christmas, the ads begin bombarding women who expect to get some of this stuff from men who are expected to get it. It can make singles and couples experience a range of emotions from good to bad and happy to sad. It's important not to be influenced by these marketers. (And I say this as someone whose thoughtful husband had a 15 pink and red tulips delivered to me early in this V-day week! But he and I have Valentine's Day just about every day. Truly.) Yes—it's grand to have an <i>appropriate</i> partner, but please remember: You're not incomplete without one.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: Phillip Phillips' "Gone, Gone, Gone" (song); Destiny's Child's "Nuclear" (song); "Once Upon a Time" (TV); "The Host" (film); Tamar Braxton's "The One" (song)</p>	<p>Rx #10: Cultivate your own completeness.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: "Frozen" (animated film)</p> <p>This Prescription isn't about counter-dependence, but it is about being able to be independent at times and to focus on your own growth—so this Disney animated film deserves recognition for getting the Prescription right (rather than Disney's more usual Myth-earning Stupid Cupid Awards). Although Princess Anna has found an appropriate partner by the end of the movie, her sister (now-Queen Elsa) doesn't follow the "imperative" of so many fairy tales. She's had a difficult childhood and a big job to do, so she's concentrating on her own completeness to be a worthy candidate for a romantic relationship.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: "Castle" (TV); "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" (film); "Tyler Perry's Temptation: Confessions of a Marriage Counselor" (film)</p>
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Myth #11: In real life, actors and actresses are often very much like the romantic characters they portray.

STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:

Fans Who Confuse Performers' "Reel" Roles & Real Life

Do fans of the movie franchise really know what it's like to be media idols or what they're really like? Do these fans realize that they're objectifying the very icons they idolize? Can we admire artists' work without invading their private lives? Discuss with your fan club. And while you're at it: Make *yourself* the star of your *own* real-life love story.

Rx #11: (De-)Construct celebrities.

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:

"The Simpsons" (TV)

For more than 20 years, this pop culture legend continues to cleverly skewer and satirize 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™ AWARDEE:

(tie): Media critics Who Describe Mythic and Stereotypic Portrayals as "Completely Harmless"; Schools That Don't Provide Media Literacy Education

Critics—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 all these portrayals as completely harmless simply because they're fluffy and vacuous.

Schools—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.

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:

Media Literacy Resources That Foster Critical Thinking—and Consumers Who Utilize Them; Special Award: "Don Jon" (film)

Resources—Remember: We can and should still enjoy the media, but it's important to learn how to "dis-illusion" ourselves and mythic/stereotypic media portrayals of sex, love, and romance. 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 Person's Relationship Remedy™—RealisticRomance.com.

"Don Jon"—Definitely not for children, this story about a popular porn-addicted New Jersey young man (Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who also directed and wrote the laugh-out-loud funny and also touching screenplay) is a media literacy lesson about the impact of porn on all of us who pass by magazine covers in grocery stores and watch hamburger ads that gratuitously objectify women and men.

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