

A Celebration of  
*Love* for Couples

# EVERYTHING *Romance*

INCLUDING:

- Creative tips for romancing the love of your life
- Gift ideas for anniversaries and special occasions
- Inspiration for memorable romantic dates
- Love letters to warm your heart
- Special recipes for special times



EVERYTHING ROMANCE  
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EVERYTHING  
*Romance*



WATERBROOK  
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*All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.*

HELEN KELLER





## A Marriage Blessing

Most gracious God, we give You thanks for Your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life.

We thank You, also, for consecrating the union of man and woman in His name. By the power of Your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of Your blessing upon this man and this woman. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death. Finally, in Your mercy, bring them to that table where Your saints feast forever in Your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

*from The Book of Common Prayer*



## PERFECT PAIR PIZZA-PITA SNACKS

- 2 whole-wheat pita breads
- 4 teaspoons basil pesto
- 1 cup cottage cheese
- 2 tablespoons Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 2 teaspoons fresh basil, chopped
- Fresh Parmesan cheese (optional)

Toast pita breads until they are crispy and firm. Spread half of the pesto on each pita. Next, spread half of the cottage cheese on each pita. Top with chopped tomato and fresh basil. If desired, sprinkle with fresh grated parmesan cheese. Slice each pita into two or four wedges and enjoy!



### *Romance Trivia*

A team of medical experts in Virginia contends that you're more likely to catch the common cold virus by shaking hands than by kissing.

## TRADITIONAL WEDDING ANNIVERSARY GIFTS BY YEAR

According to tradition, there are specific kinds of gifts you should give your spouse each year. Start with the traditional gift, and give it a creative touch to make it your own. The key word when it comes to anniversary gifts is *thoughtful* rather than *extravagant*.

**First Anniversary** The traditional gift for the first year is paper. Consider a homemade card, a photo, or even a framed copy of your marriage certificate.

**Second Anniversary** The traditional gift for the second year is cotton. Choose a set of Egyptian cotton sheets that you can both enjoy or a cotton rope hammock you can both relax in on a lazy afternoon. Or buy each other a luxurious cotton robe.

**Fifth Anniversary** The traditional gift for the fifth year is wood. A wooden plaque, jewelry box, cigar box, or piece of furniture are popular choices.

**Tenth Anniversary** The traditional gift for ten years is tin or aluminum. Choose jewelry or a decorative object, such as a photo album. If you're in a more creative mood, plan a trip or getaway and travel by boat or plane (both made partially of aluminum and tin).

**Twentieth Anniversary** The traditional gift for year twenty is china. Get a commemorative china plate with your wedding date on it or a china figurine.

**Thirtieth Anniversary** The traditional gift for year thirty is pearl. This can be anything from a lovely strand of pearls to a night together at an oyster bar.

**Fortieth Anniversary** The traditional gift for year forty is ruby. Not only would jewelry be appropriate, but also any type of ruby-colored clothing.

**Fiftieth Anniversary** The traditional gift for year fifty is gold. Gold-plated home accents, jewelry, or memory keepsakes are all popular choices.

**Sixtieth Anniversary** The traditional gift for year sixty is the most prized of all—diamonds. A diamond-studded watch, diamond-encrusted picture frame, or piece of diamond jewelry are all great choices. Be creative and choose something that fits your own personal style.



## A Prayer of Thanks for Our Marriage

Dear Loving Creator,

Thank You for our marriage, a unique relationship in the entire world—and for loving us personally. May we sense Your love and acceptance every day. Yes, we are a work in progress—that's for sure. But we are *your* work in progress.

Amen.



# The Blue Dress

BY BEATRICE FISHBACK

The blue dress fluttered. I saw her move toward the boardwalk and hasten to the water's edge. I followed close behind. The waves licked her bare feet and kissed her toes as the blue dress wrapped around her hips and waist. I watched the back of her shoulders heave with gut-wrenching sobs. It was as if the waves had traveled over her feet, up her legs, through her body, and pushed their way out her throat. The strength and depth of her sorrow matched the water's power. The folds of the blue dress flapped up and down in the wind, but she seemed oblivious to it all.

He had loved that dress. I had overheard him tell her that many times. She would giggle and slide her arm into his, and they would dance around the kitchen to music only they could hear. Then she would rise on her toes like a ballerina and kiss his chin and cheek.

The beautiful blue dress. She wore it to meet him when he came home from the war on terror. Dressed in his uniform, he looked above the crowd to catch a glimpse of her. Was he worried she wouldn't be there? He should have known better. She pressed past the banners, pushed others aside, raced to his arms, and jumped into his embrace. She clung to him as if she would never let go. Finally, she released her embrace, and they held each other's hands and gazed into each other's eyes as if no one else were alive. They were afloat on a sea of love, and they would travel together to worlds known only to them. I stood by and watched.

But then he went away again. The war continued, and our country needed him as much as the woman he loved. She took him to the

airport and waved as his figure disappeared into the cave of the aircraft. The door closed, and he sat at the window and placed a hand on the windowpane. I saw his lips form the words “I love you.”

The plane lifted, and he was gone. She never saw him again. They said he died a hero.

She slipped the blue dress on. She combed her hair and brushed a dash of color onto her lips. I didn’t really understand what was going on. What happened to the dancing in the kitchen? What happened to their warm embraces? We walked together down the long aisle of the church, and many people gathered around us. Some hugged and cried; others sat in stillness.

Later we stood at the water’s edge. Her shoulders lifted up with her sorrow, and tears streamed down her clear pale skin. She peered and strained to look past the water, as if searching the sky for him to appear. Perhaps she expected him to walk toward her. Perhaps it had all just been a terrible dream. Finally, she took my hand. As we walked away, she said, “Your daddy is not coming home anymore, and I know you will miss him just as much as I do.”

Later, her blue dress lay folded on the bed. She would never wear it again. Many years have passed, but I will always remember the love of my father and how he spoke of his love to my mother. I can still see him dancing with her to the music in the kitchen. Music only they could hear. And I can still see his face when his eyes found her in the crowd. And, oh, how he loved her beautiful blue dress.<sup>1</sup>



## PERFECT PAIR ROBERT BROWNING AND ELIZABETH BARRETT

Prior to their marriage, Victorian poets Robert and Elizabeth Browning courted via letters—because Elizabeth’s father disapproved of Robert, whom he regarded as too poor and low class for his daughter. In fact, he vowed to cut off all communication with his daughter if their romance continued.

The duo’s letters, written over a courtship of almost two years, number almost six hundred and are among the world’s most famous love letters. These letters reflect a love that wouldn’t be denied: Even though Elizabeth’s family eventually disowned her, she would go on to marry Robert, her true love. The marriage lasted for fifteen years, until the day Elizabeth died, cradled in Robert’s arms.



## From “The Love Chapter”

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-8, NRSV



## You “Compete” Me!

Assuming that “friendly competition” is NOT an oxymoron for you and your beloved, a good-natured contest can be a lot of fun. You can pick an activity that both of you are skilled in, or see who is top dog at a new and unfamiliar competition for the both of you. (In fact, if you are both ultracompetitive, it might be wise to opt for a sport or activity that neither of you has done before—or at least not in a long while. For example, if you are both competitive tennis players, stay off the court and opt for a round of miniature golf.)

You can raise the stakes a bit by agreeing on a prize for the winner: the loser buys dessert, the winner gets to pick the next movie you see together, the winner gets a massage, and so on.

**Cost:** This is a great date for the budget conscious. A tennis match at a local park or a game of H-O-R-S-E on an outdoor basketball court at a nearby school costs you nothing. The same with a mile race at a track or on a park path. You might even be able to walk to your competition site. Low-cost options include a game of miniature golf, an informal video-game tournament at a nearby arcade, or a couple of rounds in a batting cage.

**Make the Date Deluxe:** You might want to add an element of “officiality” to your competition. For example, you can both sign up for a local five-kilometer road race. Train together and see who ends up being fastest on race day. If one of you is a clearly superior runner, add a “time handicap” to the faster runner’s finishing time. Or, base the competition on who finishes higher among one’s gender and/or age group. Or, sign up for a coed softball league and determine a winner based on highest batting average for the season.

**Resources:** Your local Parks and Recreation department’s website should provide a wide range of options. And check out the calendar and sports sections of your local paper.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1903

*As I tell you repeatedly, you cannot possibly know what you mean to me. The days I do not see you are merely so many obstacles to be got over somehow before I see you. Each night as I go to bed, I sigh with relief because I am one day nearer to you. So it has been this week, and it is only Monday that I was with you. Today I am jubilant, and my work goes well. And I am saying to myself all the time, "Tonight I shall see her! Tonight I shall see her!"*

FROM AUTHOR JACK LONDON  
TO HIS WIFE, CHARMIAN KITTREDGE



## WEDDING PROJECTILES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

American weddings feature the tossing of rice or birdseed, but here are the projectiles of choice for weddings in other parts of the world:

Turkey: candy

North Africa: figs and dates

France: wheat

Italy: coins, candy, and dried fruit

Greece: candied almonds

Former Czech Republic: dried peas

Mexico: red beads

Korea: nuts and dates

India: flower petals and puffed rice

*The greatest happiness in life is the conviction  
that we are loved—loved for ourselves,  
or rather, loved in spite of ourselves.*

VICTOR HUGO



## Summum Bonum

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee:

All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem:

In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea:

Breath and bloom, shade and shine—wonder, wealth,

and—how far above them—

Truth, that's brighter than gem,

Trust, that's purer than pearl—

Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me

In the kiss of one girl.

ROBERT BROWNING



**Did You Know?** Frances Cleveland was the first bride of a U.S. president to be married in the White House. Additionally, the twenty-one-year-old's marriage to Grover Cleveland made her the youngest-ever First Lady. Seven years later, Frances gave birth to Esther Cleveland, the only child ever born to a First Lady in the White House.

Be patient with each other, making allowance for  
each other's faults because of your love.

EPHESIANS 4:2, NLT



May your unfailing love rest upon us,  
O LORD, even as we put our hope in you.

PSALM 33:22, NIV



Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law is going back home to live with her own people and gods; go with her." But Ruth said, "Don't force me to leave you; don't make me go home. Where you go, I go; and where you live, I'll live. Your people are my people, your God is my god; where you die, I'll die, and that's where I'll be buried, so help me God—not even death itself is going to come between us!" When Naomi saw that Ruth had her heart set on going with her, she gave in. And so the two of them traveled on together to Bethlehem.

RUTH 1:15-18



## How to Love for a Lifetime

Say “I love you” every day.  
For best results, repeat yourself.

Treat each other with respect.

Keep confidences.

Know when to keep your mouth shut.

Look for the best in each other.

Laugh together. Private jokes are encouraged.

Find at least one common interest.

Be honest about your feelings.

When you’re being honest, also be kind.

Have eyes only for each other.

One word: patience.

A little loyalty goes a long way.

Understand that the feelings  
of love ebb and flow.

Never give up on the two of you.

Always give the benefit of the doubt.

Don’t keep secrets—unless they’re surprises!

Affection is not a personal choice;  
it's a marriage must.

Be quick to forgive.

Leave the past in the past.

Avoid assumptions.

Eat at least one meal together every day.

Treat each other like special guests  
in your home.

Put God first and each other second.

Be willing to learn from each other.

Pray together every day.



## *Anniversary Trivia*

Even though there is no record of anyone ever celebrating  
their one hundredth anniversary, it is listed on the  
Anniversary Gift List as a ten-carat diamond.

## Special Occasion Gift Idea

Every year, men and women buy jewelry for anniversaries, birthdays, and Valentine's Day. Then they present their sweethearts with overpriced rings, necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. Instead, shop antique stores and look for pieces with classic style and character. The only caveat is that your piece should have gold-plated or silver mountings. Odds are good you'll come away with something really beautiful without emptying your checking account or overloading your charge card.



## *Romance Trivia*

Studies indicate that a man who kisses his wife good-bye when he leaves for work every morning averages a higher income than those who don't. Husbands who exercise the rituals of affection tend to be more painstaking, more stable, more methodical, and thus, higher earners. Studies also show that men who kiss their wives before leaving in the morning live five years longer than those who don't.

*Put your hand on a hot stove for a minute  
and it seems like an hour; sit with  
a pretty woman for an hour and it  
seems like a minute. That's relativity.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN



## Ten Things a Couple Can Make, Besides Money

1. Time
2. Merry
3. Do
4. Up
5. Sense
6. Peace
7. Room
8. Waves
9. Love
10. Believe

## COUPLES LOOK GOOD IN GREEN!

More and more of today's couples are becoming environmentally conscious. They want to care for the planet, and couples with children want to set a good example of environmental stewardship. But did you know that "being green" can also help you keep out of the red? And it's a great way to save money for more romantic things, like dates, vacations, and gifts. Here are some tips on how you and your family can be green *and* save some green at the same time!

**Wash clothes in cold water.** Doing a load of laundry via a hot-water wash and warm rinse costs five to ten times more than a cold wash and rinse. And you can be even greener by reducing the amount of detergent you use in each load. (Use three-fourths or two-thirds of a cup instead of a full cup.) You'll save money and reduce the pollution of fresh water.

**Recycle.** Recycling reduces the amount of garbage that is burned or discarded to landfills. Don't think that one couple or family can make a difference here? Think again. Recycling just *one* aluminum can saves enough electricity to light a 100-watt bulb for 3.5 hours. And you save a pound of carbon for every ten glass bottles you recycle. By the way, if you don't see enough (or any) recycling bins around your town, make some noise about it.

**Use a double-sided printer.** This move, of course, means buying half as much paper. (And even if your personal printer isn't double-sided, there's a good chance the one at work—or the kids' school—could be.) Another tip: Use a printer's "draft" setting whenever possible. In one test, a typical inkjet printed twelve pages per minute in regular mode, but thirty-six ppm on the draft setting.

### Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.

The new compact bulbs help fight climate change by reducing the fossil fuels that are burned. Over the life of just one bulb, you save one hundred pounds of carbon—for each incandescent bulb that is replaced by a compact fluorescent. These bulbs are more expensive than the traditional ones, of course, but they last longer, so you save on replacement costs—and maybe reduce trips to the store to boot.

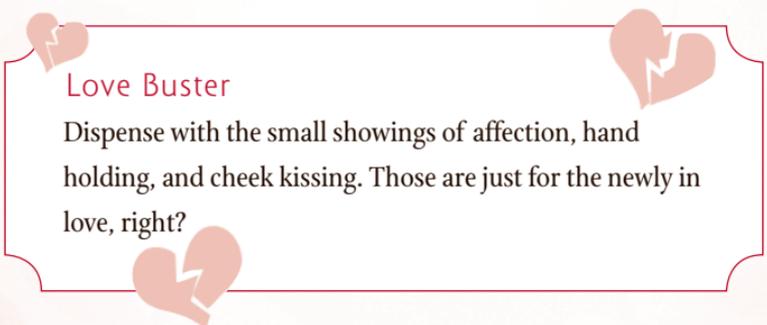
**BYOC (Bring Your Own Cup).** Bring your own drinking cup or mug to work or meetings at the coffee shop. Doing this every day saves about twenty-three pounds of waste annually.

**Skimp your ride.** If possible, ride a bike, walk, or take public transportation to work, the store, etc. You'll save about \$1,400 a year in gas (plus even more in oil and other “vital fluids”). You'll extend the life of your vehicle because you're putting less wear and tear on it, and you may reduce your time on the road with all those crazy drivers. The type of public-transportation vehicles used varies from city to city, but this mode of transportation typically produces between 50 and 95 percent fewer emissions per mile than private vehicles. Public transportation also frees you up to (safely!) read, make phone calls, catch up on e-mail, text message, or eat. So you can be more efficient while you help the environment.

**Drive smart.** There are a host of things you can do here. Obeying the speed limit conserves your gas—your expensive gas. For example, for every mile-per-hour you exceed 55 mph, you decrease your fuel economy by 1 percent. Want to improve your miles-per-gallon even more? Drive smoothly. Strive for easy acceleration and braking—look ahead to anticipate turns, hills, and stoplights. This style of driving is safer, and it reduces wear on your engine, transmission, and brakes. Speaking of wear, you can protect your tires by inflating them to the proper psi. Your car will

handle better, and your mileage will improve, too. And don't let your car idle unnecessarily. Kill the engine while you're waiting in a friend's driveway, a parking lot, or your bank's drive-up window or ATM. When your car is idling, your mpg's drop to zero, but your car continues to generate greenhouse gases.

If you need a little incentive to adopt the above habits, consider this: If you can improve your car's mpg from fifteen to twenty, you'll save two hundred gallons of gas a year (based on twelve thousand miles driven). If gas is three bucks a gallon, that's an extra six hundred dollars in your pocket every year.

A decorative rectangular frame with rounded corners, outlined in a dark red color. Inside the frame, there are three stylized red hearts. Two of the hearts are broken, with a white lightning bolt striking through them. One broken heart is in the top-left corner, one is in the top-right corner, and one is in the bottom-center. The text is centered within the frame.

### Love Buster

Dispense with the small showings of affection, hand holding, and cheek kissing. Those are just for the newly in love, right?

*The woman's vision is deep reaching,  
the man's far reaching. With the man  
the world is his heart, with the woman  
the heart is her world.*

BETTY GRABLE



*The slowest kiss makes too much haste.*

THOMAS MIDDLETON



*The quarrels of lovers are the renewal of love.*

TERENCE



*My husband and I have figured out a  
really good system about the housework:  
Neither one of us does it.*

DOTTIE ARCHIBALD





## Prayer of Any Husband

Lord, may there be no moment in her life  
When she regrets that she became my wife,  
And keep her dear eyes just a trifle blind  
To my defects, and to my failings kind!

Help me to do the utmost that I can  
To prove myself her measure of a man,  
But, if I often fail as mortals may,  
Grant that she never sees my feet of clay!

And let her make allowance now and then—  
That we are only grown-up boys, we men,  
So, loving all our children, she will see,  
Sometimes, a remnant of the child in me!

Since years must bring to all their load of care,  
Let us together every burden bear,  
And when Death beckons one its path along,  
May not the two of us be parted long!

MAZIE V. CARUTHERS





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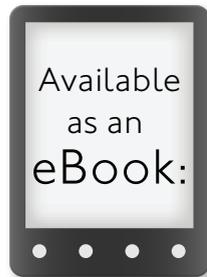
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