## The Reason for the Season



By Anna Hanks

FEBRUARY 8, 1999: In this season of true love and cheap chocolate, it seems uncharitable to point out how all this glorification of love can't help but contribute to rising divorce rates.

Essentially, it is because the Valentine's season isn't about love, it is about the act of falling in love -- about the meeting of the special someone, the popping of the question, the first purchasing of risqué lingerie, the hot 'n' heavy first date. What goes uncelebrated is the aftermath of all this ardor -- the wedded bliss, the contented living in sin.

It is the passion, not the pedestrian, that is celebrated. And, after all, why not? That is the exciting part ... especially for the advertisers. After all, it is easier to

convince the uncoupled and unsettled man that buying chocolates will provide true love. However, most coupled men realize that chocolate buying doesn't provide them eternal happiness -- it only provides that their significant other will allow them to live past the holiday.

Of course, the celebration of courtship is nothing new. Both Jane Austen and Shakespeare addressed love and courtship, not marriage and procreation. But then again, before the development of modern antibiotics, people tended to live much shorter lives. Women died in childbirth, and men died from having dirty swords poked into vital organs. Chances are that either you or your spouse would shuffle off this mortal coil before boredom set in. But with the advent of judiciously applied soap and penicillin, people tended to live a lot longer. There became more divorcees than widows among the fertile females. So nowadays, depending on the health and occupation of your spouse, you may be married three or four times during your reproductive years.

Yet, despite the fact that we live a whole lot longer these days, movies, plays, and banal rock lyrics still celebrate the act of falling in love -- a celebration that leads to unrealistic expectations and almost inevitable disappointment. Of course, many more banal rock lyrics seem to celebrate only the act of love, and at least one rock band celebrates the Courtney Love -- but these are only the ugly outgrowths of the love fever gripping our society.

Personally, I've been living in sin -- or at least in





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Despite my domestic bliss, I find myself envying my single girlfriends around this time of year. They have dates with men they hardly know! They have excitement and adventure! And all I have is a steady date for "Buffy Night." If the WB network ever cancels the *Slayer* series, I'm clueless as to what we'll do for excitement.

So as you venture out into the wilds of commercialized lust this Valentine's Day, remember that no matter what happens, you can't help but be disappointed. And that the half-price chocolate available on February 15 helps to ease the pain.

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