

Fun Fact, February 16, 2022

Question: A poet may have invented the romantic revelries of St. Valentine's Day. No record exists of such celebrations on Valentine's Day prior to a poem written by which poet in which poem?

Clue: Almost two thousand English words are first attested to this poet's manuscripts.

Answer: The medieval English poet [Geoffrey Chaucer](#) often took liberties with history, placing his poetic characters into fictitious historical contexts that he represented as real. No record exists of romantic celebrations on Valentine's Day prior to a poem Chaucer wrote around 1375. In his work "Parliament of Foules," he links a tradition of courtly love with the celebration of St. Valentine's feast day—an association that didn't exist until after his poem received widespread attention. The poem refers to February 14 as the day birds (and humans) come together to find a mate. When Chaucer wrote, "For this was sent on Seynt Valentyne's day / Whan every foul cometh ther to choose his mate," he may have invented the holiday we know today.



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