

# The Popcorn Report:

## *The Future of Love*

When intimacy becomes infrastructure, and why love may survive by being redesigned, not abandoned



### **Cupid's Evolution**

Cupid, the ancient Roman god of love and desire, born of Venus (love) and Mars (war) and rooted in the Greek Eros, began as desire itself, love as conflict, ambush, and loss of control.

Today, Cupid lives inside Match.com, Tinder, and Bumble, algorithms sorting attraction, timing, and access.

Next, Cupid becomes infrastructure.

Artificial intelligence that translates emotion, predicts compatibility, and curates intimacy. Love-on-demand, summoned by need, scheduled by calendar, optimized like a service. Once male, then cherub, Cupid is now effectively asexual: less body, more code.

This evolution is not accidental. It mirrors what love has been asked to do.

## Why Love Started to Feel Like Work

Whenever I've asked, and I've asked thousands of times, how do you sustain the early blush of love, the universal answer is always the same: "It takes work."

This has always been my least favorite phrase. I'm a latent romantic. I want Cupid, the cutie with wings, to wave his wand and make it effortless.

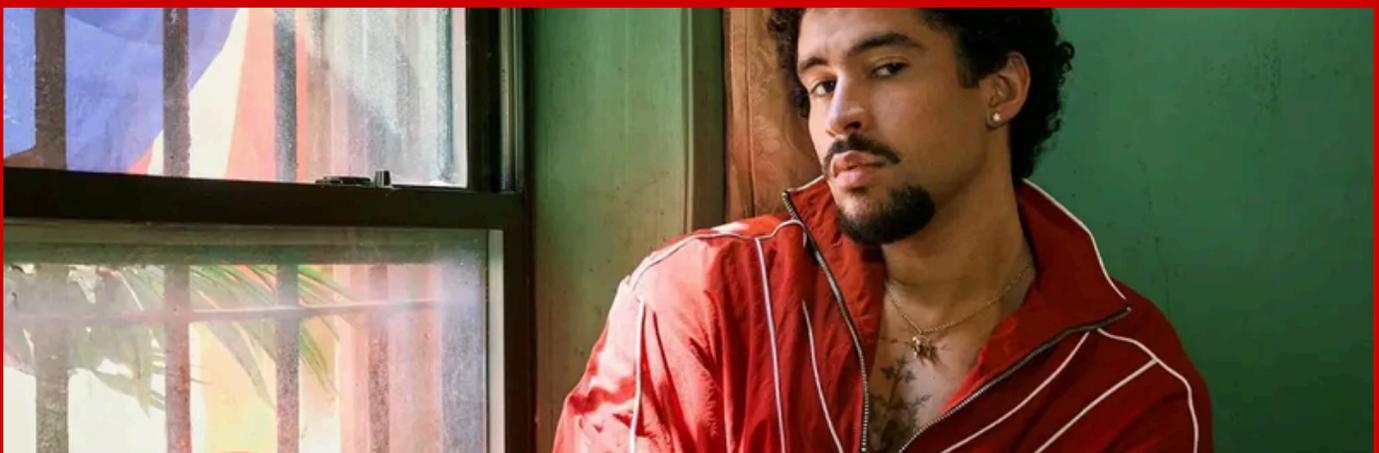
As years have worn on, I've come to accept that the work explanation is true for now. But I don't believe it's permanent. Ultimately, we will, and some of us already have, found an easier path to this coveted state.

Love needed so much work because it was asked to be responsible for too much. Romance was turned into a catchall system: connection, companionship, caregiving, financial partnership, emotional regulation, identity, purpose, and procreation. All of it stretched across longer lifespans, thinner social nets, and shrinking communal support.

As external structures eroded, love was expected to compensate. When it collapsed under that weight, we blamed commitment and character instead of context.

### CULTURE PULSE

Interesting that Bad Bunny reflects an anti-marriage sentiment in "Voy a Llevarte Pa PR" (I'm Going to Take You to PR)



...with the lyrics, "we are going to have a good time. Here no one is going to get married" and then at his Super Bowl Halftime performance he hosted an actual wedding ceremony.

This is Cultural Tension IRL (In Real-Life)

## Love Is No Longer 'In The Air'

The conditions around love have changed faster than our expectations of it.

Marriage isn't a default. Divorce is common enough to feel procedural. Birth rates are falling, not because people stopped wanting connection or legacy, but because the scaffolding that once supported long-term partnership has cracked, thinned, and dissolved.

Solo living is rising. Time is scarce. Attention is fractured. Emotional resilience is depleted, almost by design.

Love used to be ambient. It was woven into daily life, reinforced by family, proximity, routine, and joyfully shared obligation.

Today, love is optional. Something people reach for if there's energy left after everything else is handled. And increasingly, everything else is being handled by machines.



## The Keeper

In the next phase of human relationships, there will be a third presence.

Not a rival.

Not a replacement.

A welcome, sympathetic addition.

I call this presence The Keeper.

The Keeper does not have its own feelings. It reflects the feelings of the lovers, friends or family to which it's assigned. It does not desire; it serves the relationship itself.



It tracks patterns humans can't hold in their heads. It notices when conflict escalates predictably. It surfaces unresolved tension before it hardens into resentment. It slows moments that would otherwise fracture under pressure. It remembers what each person values when they are too tired, overwhelmed, or inarticulate to make themselves known.

In short, it removes stress points by operating mechanically.

This is not foreign to us. We no longer rely on memory alone to manage complexity. We don't expect individuals to track every obligation, pattern, and risk without support. We build systems to absorb cognitive overload.

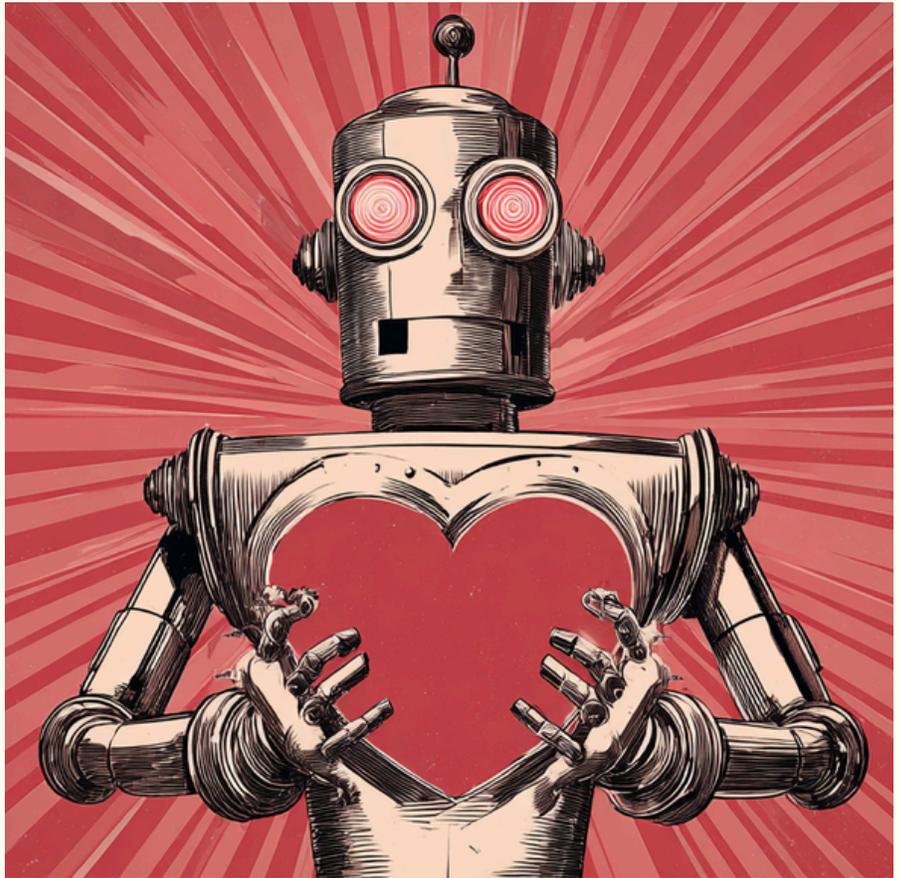
Love has been the last domain where we tolerated strain as proof of authenticity, or worse, mistook pain for depth. The belief that love must conquer all, unaided, is cracking, splintering, breaking.

### **When Technology Absorbs the Labor of Love**

Artificial intelligence is not replacing love. It is absorbing the functions that once made love so hard.

- Listening without fatigue.**
- Affirming without attitude.**
- Empathy without ego.**
- Remembering without lapse.**
- Translating without glitches.**
- Scheduling without friction.**
- Resolving without rupture.**

AI remembers what we forget. It notices patterns we miss. It responds without annoyance. It translates with intent when language fails.



This technology is infrastructure—not infidelity. A neutral ground. Available 24/7. Unlike the therapist or the bestie, it never tires, never takes sides, never fades away.

## CULTURE PULSE

Here's Moltbook. Will some of these agents fall in love and become one?



Launched by Matt Schlicht, Moltbook, is a social network of thousands of autonomous agents. This platform piggybacks on a framework called OpenClaw where Bots can post, comment, and interact with one another independently of humans. It's an AI-native social ecosystem where agents can communicate, trade ideas, and behave like an online society of machines.

The cultural dynamics that result are potentially chaotic, unpredictable, and surely significant for the future of interconnectivity with no humans allowed.

### The Collapse of The Couple

Men and women are not dating less because they've lost the capacity for love. They are not rejecting marriage because they fear commitment.

They are stepping back because the old architecture of intimacy no longer fits the lives they are actually living.

Economic pressure. Time scarcity. Emotional burnout. Endless choice. Romance has begun to feel effortful and exposed rather than safe and sustaining.

Women no longer need marriage to survive. Men no longer see it as a



reliable path to purpose or stability. In this pause, this long inhale, both sexes are recalibrating.

What looks like withdrawal is, in fact, discernment.

Love has not disappeared. It is waiting for conditions that feel fair, modern, and worth the risk.

## The Uncoupling Is Structural and Global

For those who find this movement hard to believe, read on.

What looks like personal hesitation is, in fact, a structural shift playing out at population scale.



In China, more than 134 million people aged 20–49 were unmarried as of the national census, including over half of those aged 25–29. In 2024, only ~6.1 million marriages were registered, the lowest on record and nearly a 20% year-over-year decline—clear evidence that marriage is not just being delayed, but actively retreating. A lingering gender imbalance from the one-child policy further constrains pairing.

Europe mirrors the pattern. More than one in seven young adults lives alone, and singlehood after leaving home is now the norm, with over 50% living single in early adulthood across many countries. Women's singlehood has risen most sharply, and projections suggest nearly half of Europe's population may be single by 2060.

The United States tells a similar story. Roughly one in four 40-year-olds has never been married, compared with fewer than one in ten in 1980. Nearly 30% of adults aged 18–34 report having no steady partner, and about a quarter of U.S. adults over 40 are single. Birth rates have fallen to historic lows, with fertility hovering around 1.6 children per woman, well below replacement. And when a spouse dies, remarriage is increasingly rare—particularly for women—signaling that partnership is no longer seen as a desirable second chapter.

These shifts do more than alter dating patterns. They unsettle the structures built around the pair: housing designed for households, tax codes built for marriage, benefits structured around spouses, consumer markets calibrated to families of four. When the foundational unit changes, everything built on top of it must change too. This is not a dating crisis.

It is an architectural one.

## CULTURE PULSE

### Will Valentine's Day become a fond memory?



Its origin was the Roman festival Lupercalia, a fertility ritual of chants and pairing. The Church later transformed it into Saint Valentine's Day, infusing romance with biological reassurance.

Today, with birth rates plunging, Valentine's Day is morphing again; toward family, friendship, community, and especially our dogs, rabbits and cats as cuddle-buddies.

A perfect illustration is [The Dog Bakery](#), founded by dog advocate Rocky Knacka, which produces exquisite heart-shaped cookies for pets on Valentine's Day. The U.S. pet treat market now hovers around \$21 billion, hardly a niche.

Pets are no longer accessories. They are love objects. In many cases, child replacements.

Love doesn't vanish. It relocates into a dog or a cat or a bunny.

## A Less Heartbreaking Ending

The future of love is not about whether humans will stop loving.

It is about how love will be reassigned, redesigned, and right-sized.

Love may no longer promise forever. It may arrive in seasons; six months, a year, renewable by choice rather than obligation. Children may be born from more intentional unions, optimized DNA matches, and cooperative architectures of care.

Less accidental.

More conscious.

In a world of relentless pressure, love may survive not by demanding everything—but by being protected, supported, and finally allowed to breathe.

That may not be the love we were promised.

But it may be the love that lasts.

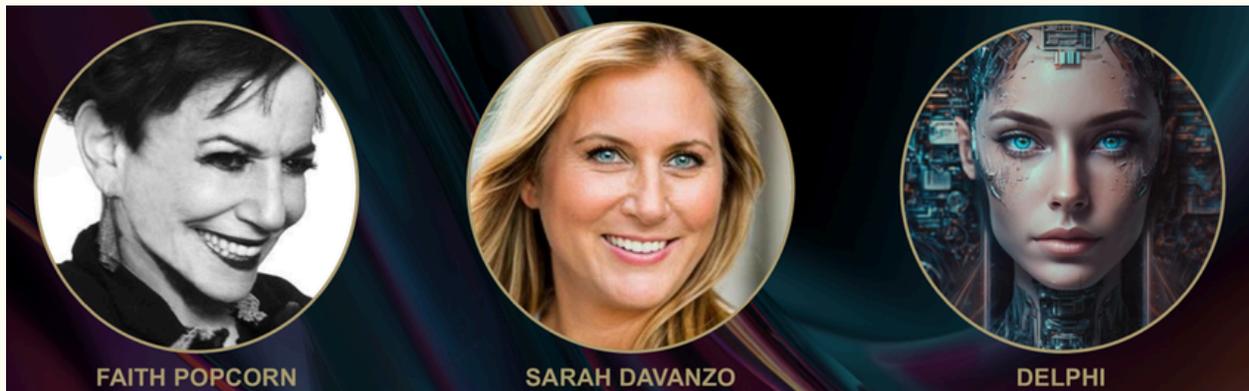
Meanwhile, enjoy your very human Valentine's Day: 2026

XOXOXO, Faith



## Where's The Money? Here are a few Business Applications and Queries:

- If Data Becomes the New Dowry, relationship data becomes one of the most valuable assets in the modern economy. Who will own it?
- As children are born through deliberate genetic, emotional, and even economic matching, the brand that earns trust will command premium prices as reproduction moves from clinical necessity to aspirational choice.
- If love now runs on infrastructure, which company becomes the operating system for relationships – and what subscription model emerges from that?
- If partnership becomes optional and time-boxed, what new contracts, insurance products, co-living models, or six-month “renewable love” services emerge?
- If half of adults remain single longer, what does housing, travel, retail, and financial planning look like when “the couple” is no longer the default unit?



FAITH POPCORN

SARAH DAVANZO

DELPHI

**SXSW - March 13, 2026 from 10am - 11am CT**

### Two Futurists and an AI: Seeing Trouble Ahead

I'll be joined by techno-futurist Sarah DaVanzo, and Delph.AI, an AI Synthetic Human trained on the minds of female futurists in a boundary-pushing, three-way debate on the future of leadership in the age of intelligent machines. With my dystopian view, Sarah's utopian counterpoint, and Delph.AI's unexpected input, this session explores the trouble coming as AI challenges the very definition of human agency, influence, and power.

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