



### St. Valentine's Story

*Let me introduce myself. My name is Valentine.*

*I lived in Rome during the third century. At that time an Emperor named Claudius ruled Rome. I didn't like him, and I wasn't the only one! A lot of people shared my feelings.*

*Claudius wanted to have a big army. He expected men to volunteer to join. Many men just did not want to fight in wars. They did not want to leave their wives and families. This made Claudius furious. So what happened? He thought that if men were not married, they would not mind joining the army.*

*So Claudius banned all the marriages.*

*Young people thought his new law was cruel!*

*Did I mention that I was a priest???*

*One of my favourite activities was marrying couples.*

*Even after the Emperor passed his law, I kept on performing marriage ceremonies... secretly, of course.*

*Imagine a small candlelit room with only the bride, groom and myself. We would whisper the words of the ceremony, listening all the while for the steps of soldiers. One night we did hear footsteps. The couple I was marrying managed to escape in time. But I was caught, thrown in jail and told that my punishment was ...*

*Death!*

*Many young people came to the jail to visit me.*

*One of them was the daughter of the prison guard.*

*Sometimes we would sit and talk for hours, she helped me to keep my spirits up.*

*On the day I was to die, I left my friend a little note thanking her. I signed it "Love from your Valentine"*

*I believe that note started the custom of exchanging love messages on Valentine's Day.*

*It was written on the day I died, February 14, 269 A.D. Now every year on this day people remember that love can't be beaten.*

*Your Valentine*



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