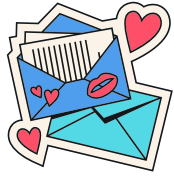


NAME: _____

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READING COMPREHENSION



THE STORY BEHIND

Valentine's day

While Valentine's Day might be associated with romantic love, the real story behind its namesake, St. Valentine, is full of bloodshed and heartbreak. On February 14, around the year 270 A.D., Valentine, a holy priest in Rome in the days of Emperor Claudius II, is said to have been executed.

Under the rule of Claudius the Cruel, Rome was involved in many unpopular and bloody campaigns. The emperor had to maintain a strong army, but was having a difficult time getting soldiers to join his military leagues. Claudius believed that Roman men were unwilling to join the army because of their strong attachment to their wives and families.

To get rid of the problem, Claudius banned all marriages and engagements in Rome. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret.

When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Valentine was arrested and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who condemned him to be beaten to death with clubs and to have his head cut off. The sentence was carried out on February 14, on or about the year 270.

Legend also has it that while in jail, St. Valentine left a farewell note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From Your Valentine."

For his great service, Valentine was named a saint after his death.

Unknown words

Questions to discuss

- Why do we celebrate Valentine's day on February 14th?
- Who gave the order to kill Valentine?
- How did Valentine signed the letter to Julia?
- Why was Valentine named a Saint?