

Just Days Before Valentine's Day, Award-Winning Author Reframes the Holiday as a Living Legend

SOVAS and Independent Press Award winner Sheldon Collins examines how the Valentine legend evolved over 1,800 years into a global ritual.

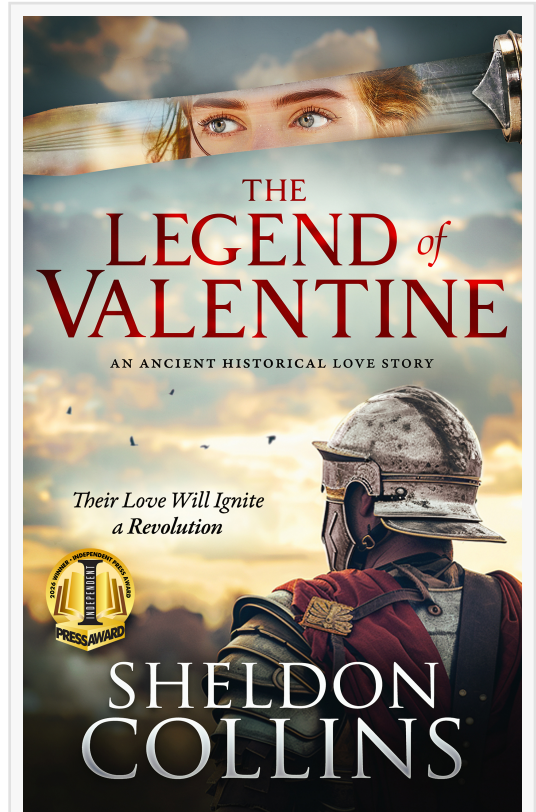
LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, February 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With Valentine's Day just days away, award-winning author and filmmaker [Sheldon Collins](#) is drawing renewed attention to a provocative question gaining interest among readers, scholars, and cultural commentators alike: has the story behind Valentine's Day become the most widely celebrated legend in human history?

Collins' historical novel and immersive full-cast audiobook, [The Legend of Valentine](#), recently received Outstanding Production honors at the 2026 SOVAS Voice Arts Awards along with Independent Press Award (IPA) recognition, validating his work as one of the most comprehensive modern explorations of the holiday's origins. Through a fictional retelling grounded in history, literature, and legend, Collins examines how the story behind Valentine's Day evolved into a global cultural ritual.

As billions of people across cultures and belief systems prepare to observe February 14, Collins argues that Valentine's Day occupies a singular place among legends—not because of historical certainty, but because of scale, endurance, and ritual repetition.

"Most people participate in Valentine's Day without ever being told a story," Collins says. "That's unusual. Legends usually require retelling. Valentine's Day doesn't. It renews itself automatically, every year, on the same date, all over the world."

A Legend Built Over Nearly 1,800 Years



The Legend of Valentine Book Cover

The historical foundation of the Valentine legend is remarkably small. In the third century, Valentine appears briefly in Roman records as a Christian martyr executed during the reign of Emperor Claudius II. Beyond that, documentation is scarce. What followed was not history, but storytelling.

Over the next 1,800 years, the meaning of Valentine accumulated gradually—layered by faith, folklore, literature, and cultural practice. Early Christian traditions emphasized sacrifice, healing, and moral symbolism. Later generations added romance, ritual, and emotional meaning.

“Legends don’t start big,” Collins notes. “They start small, and they grow because people keep adding meaning.”

How Chaucer and Shakespeare Shaped the Legend

The transformation of Valentine from martyr to romantic figure came through literature rather than historical record. In the 14th century, Geoffrey Chaucer associated Saint Valentine’s Day with love and courtship in *Parliament of Fowls*, shifting the legend from biography to ritual. Two centuries later, William Shakespeare deepened the emotional and psychological meaning of Valentine’s Day in works such as *Hamlet*.

“

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Stephen Endelman

“Chaucer connected Valentine’s Day to love,” Collins says. “Shakespeare made it personal. That’s how legends survive—each era adds something that speaks to its own time.”

Why Valentine’s Day Is Structurally Different from Other Legends

Unlike legends such as King Arthur or Robin Hood, which rely on periodic rediscovery through new adaptations, Valentine’s Day renews itself annually through ritual. Anthropologists have long observed that repeated, calendar-based observance is one of the most powerful mechanisms for cultural survival. Valentine’s Day does not ask to be remembered—it is performed.



The Legend of Valentine Creative & Production Team at the SOVAS

“Other legends need to be retold,” Collins says.
“Valentine’s Day gets reenacted.”

A New Layer—and a Natural Path to the Screen

In *The Legend of Valentine*, Collins weaves nearly 1,800 years of storytelling into a single cohesive narrative, dramatizing the familiar elements of the legend—ancient Rome, faith, power, forbidden love, sacrifice, and hope—while adding a new narrative layer that unifies the tradition as a living story.

Grammy-nominated composer and film producer Stephen Endelman has partnered with Collins to bring the property into the marketplace for screen adaptation as a limited series.

“What Sheldon accomplished is remarkable,” Endelman says. “He took nearly eighteen centuries of fragmented history, literature, and myth and wove it into one emotionally coherent story. In doing so, he didn’t just summarize the legend—he added a new layer that feels both authentic and cinematic, one that naturally lends itself to adaptation for the screen.”

Collins’ full-cast audiobook, featuring 20 voice actors, brings that vision to life in dramatic form, reinforcing the enduring resonance of the Valentine legend when presented as story rather than explanation.

As Valentine’s Day returns this week, Collins’ question remains open for debate: is the story behind Valentine’s Day merely a holiday tradition—or the most widely celebrated legend humanity has ever sustained?

Sheldon Collins is available for interviews discussing:

- The 1,800-year evolution of the Valentine legend
 - How Chaucer and Shakespeare shaped the holiday’s romantic meaning
 - Why Valentine’s Day functions as a living, reenacted legend
 - How *The Legend of Valentine* adds a new layer suited for screen adaptation
- Additional long-form background material available upon request.

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