

The Rules

By

Dipika Guba

Playwright Contact: dipikawrites@gmail.com

Agent Contact:

Mark Orsini and Bruce Ostler

Bret Adams Ltd.

448 W. 44th Street New York, NY 10036

212-765-5630

morsini@bretadamsltd.net

Who

ANA BARBIE thirty two, an unmarried woman
MEHR BARBIE thirty four, an unmarried woman
JULIA BARBIE thirty six, an unmarried woman

The women are not related

VALMONT Colin Firth, unmarried..eternally

Where

A city in the First World
English is a first language
In a recession
Peacetime at home

When

Today
Now
Always?

How

Pauses and *Silences* are stony
/ Stands for overlapping dialogue
No breath between transitions
Dialogue is *fast*.
Playing style is not naturalistic, but heightened and honest.
Characters feel very fully and completely.
Violent emotions are felt fully and then abandoned completely when a new emotion
arises.

Notes

Scene titles come from *The Rules* written by Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider (*Time
Tested Secrets for Capturing the heart of Mr Right*) first published 1995

They do not need to be included in staging.

Don't Meet Him Halfway or Go Dutch on a Date

An outside café in the centre of a modern metropolitan city.
The looming shadow of tall buildings and the low lull of traffic noise.
ANA, a woman in her mid thirties, sits opposite VALMONT, an attractive man in a
suit.

VALMONT
So tell me...

ANA
Yes..

VALMONT
You're a doctor.

ANA
No.

VALMONT
You look like one, I mean, your whole..

ANA
My whole what?

VALMONT
Persona. You look like you do something that's..

ANA
Real?

VALMONT
You look like you do something that you take pride in and that involves a lot of
responsibility.

ANA
I'm not a doctor.

VALMONT
So what *do* you do?

ANA
It's impolite to ask.

VALMONT
I told you what I do.

ANA
I didn't ask you.

VALMONT
Right...all CEO's are the same.

ANA
Not judging.

VALMONT
Yes you are. And it's sexy.

ANA
Do you want to come over?

VALMONT
Yes.

ANA
Will you?

VALMONT
No.
Busy.

ANA
Of course.

VALMONT
But, tonight?

ANA
I meant tonight! Did you think I meant now? It's the afternoon!

VALMONT
You're very beautiful.
Gorgeous, in fact.

ANA
I try. Hard.

VALMONT
It shows.

ANA

I have to do something in all my spare time.

VALMONT

When you're not being a doctor.

ANA

That's right.

VALMONT

Fire-woman? Soldier? Nurse?

ANA

Anything in a uniform...

VALMONT

I've a uniform too. What's more uniform than a suit?
Even when it's tailor made... You're a teacher.

ANA

Right first time.

VALMONT

You are...look at you, you're a teacher...

ANA

It only took you half an hour.

VALMONT

I've only known you half an hour.

ANA

You're a bad guesser.

VALMONT

You're a bad judge of character.

Pause

VALMONT

Art?

ANA

No.

VALMONT
French?

ANA
Non!

VALMONT
Science?

ANA
Close.
Music.

VALMONT
A music teacher. That's so
Lovely.
Really lovely.
You're beautiful, you know that?

ANA
That's my favourite rhetorical question.

VALMONT
Do you want to come over?

ANA
I would love to, except I have to go home and do nothing.

VALMONT
I love musicians.

ANA
I'm not a musician.
I teach music.

VALMONT
I can't tell if you're entirely serious or entirely not serious.

ANA
I can't tell if you're going to prove to be more than you seem.

VALMONT
Ouch.

ANA
It's just..your persona.

(He inhales)

VALMONT

This is probably not going to happen is it?
All your poking and prodding.
It can really wear on a man's self esteem.
But she did something right...your friend.

ANA

Did she?

VALMONT

This is no ordinary blind date.
I don't feel blind, I feel like my eyes have been opened.
You're familiar to me.
Like the inside lining of an old coat.
What do you play?

ANA

The violin.

VALMONT

Do you love it?

ANA

It's my job.

VALMONT

I play too.

ANA

What do you play?

VALMONT

Everything.

My fingers ...they've been in training a long time.....

(He smiles. Then checks his watch)

VALMONT

Listen. I have to run. D'you want to get the check?

ANA

My pleasure.

VALMONT

Thanks. I'll be in touch.

(He leans in and kisses her mouth.)

VALMONT

I always make good on my promises.

That was for free by the way.

And don't try to pay for anything.

I took care of it.

Did you really think I was going to let you get the cheque?

ANA

It wouldn't have mattered.

VALMONT

You're lying.

Tonight?

ANA

Yes.

VALMONT

I'll see you at eight.

666.

Scared?

ANA

No!

VALMONT

Buzz once and head up.

ANA

Ok.

Pause

VALMONT

Aren't you going to leave?

ANA

No, I have nothing to do remember?

VALMONT

If you say so. Enjoy the afternoon.

I have a tab here if you get hungry again.

ANA

I'm saving my appetite.

(She gets up.)

Actually, I do have to go.

VALMONT

Shame. On such a nice afternoon..so many possibilities.

Where are you going?

ANA

To see a friend.

VALMONT

I enjoyed treating you to lunch.

(He looks at her with familiarity.

He leaves.

She watches him go.)

(Her cell phone beeps)

(She takes it out and looks at it.

She looks over in his direction. She smiles)