

The Deal
Madelyn Marks

Characters:

DANNY: Mid 20's, calculated

GRAHAM: Mid 20's, irritable

Setting:

Danny and Graham's living room.

(Lights up on a small living room. There's a coffee table with a paper and a pen. Black ink. DANNY sits on a couch behind the table staring down at the papers. Enter GRAHAM)

DANNY

Hi, welcome home.

GRAHAM

(caught off guard by DANNY's stiff presence)

Uhm hi? What is— what are you doing?

DANNY

Well I was waiting for you to come home.

GRAHAM

You were just...waiting?

DANNY

Yeah I mean not for like a long time. Like not a weird amount of time. Like five minutes. I've only been here for five minutes.

GRAHAM

...Ok

(DANNY gestures for GRAHAM to sit next to him. GRAHAM sits on the chair furthest from DANNY.)

DANNY

So I have a proposal.

GRAHAM

You're so fucking weird. What's your proposal?

DANNY

Ok can you mabe not bully me first?

GRAHAM

Are you kidding me? I come home and you're sitting like a weird little kid waiting for me like I'm santa or something and you're telling me I can't make fun of you at least a little?

DANNY

I'm being organized. I knew what time you got off work and I prepared so that we could do this right when you got home.

GRAHAM

Do what? You still haven't told me what's going on.

DANNY

It's a proposal.

GRAHAM

Yes I know that Danny. Now tell me what the proposal is.

DANNY

Well I guess it's more of contract.

GRAHAM

Ok so what's in the contract?

DANNY

A proposal

GRAHAM

YES we've established this. Now tell me what is in the proposal in the contract.

DANNY

Ok so it's some rules. Well not really rules but like, boundaries I guess. For my—our, sorry, our apartment.

GRAHAM

More rules? You already have so many.

DANNY

Right but I didn't think I had enough so I made some more and then I typed them up into this contract that I thought we could each sign and then like keep on file so we know the rules ya know?

GRAHAM

I regret moving in with you.

DANNY

(grabbing the paper and referring to it)

Ok rule number one: clean up your own messes

GRAHAM

Makes sense. Next

DANNY

Great, rule number two: don't borrow anything of the others' without asking first.

GRAHAM

Seems pretty reasonable to me.

DANNY

Rule number three: no more than eleven people in the apartment.

GRAHAM

Eleven? Why eleven?

DANNY

Eleven people is the max amount of people who can fit into this apartment while still having enough space to avoid anybody feeling crowded or claustrophobic.

GRAHAM

But what if we throw a party and between the two of us, we want to invite more than eleven people?

DANNY

Rule number four: no parties

GRAHAM

WHAT

DANNY

This apartment isn't meant for parties.

GRAHAM

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? Every apartment is meant for parties.

DANNY

Rule number five: only—

GRAHAM

Hold on! I'm still stuck on rules three and four! Eleven seems like a small number for parties—I mean gatherings or whatever you'll allow. Are you not up for negotiation?

DANNY

Oh there's no need for negotiation. I've already considered every scenario for this specific apartment and groundplan and eleven people has to be the limit. Anymore and at least one person will feel cramped at all times.

GRAHAM

Did you go to work today?

DANNY

No. Rule number five: only classical music is to be played in the common areas. If you want to listen to your garbage tunes, you'll have to save it for your bedroom or your car.

GRAHAM

What is your problem with music from this century?!?

DANNY

Rule number six: no questioning my music taste

GRAHAM

No way that's the next one on this paper.

(grabs the paper from DANNY)

DANNY

(pulls out another paper from a hidden place)

Rule number seven: I'm the only one allowed to use the oven.

GRAHAM

Why can't I use the oven?

DANNY

Cause you burn things.

GRAHAM

I BURNT ONE THING ONE TIME AND IT WASN'T EVEN MY FAULT. YOUR STUPID
TIMER DOESN'T WORK.

DANNY

Rule number-

GRAHAM

BACK THE FUCK UP. I want to be able to bake if I want to bake.

DANNY

Ok I will consider modifying the rule if you promise to be extra careful when baking.

GRAHAM

Oh my god fine! I'll be careful.

DANNY

Extra careful?

GRAHAM

YES whatever! Just change the rule.

DANNY

Promise?

GRAHAM

What?

DANNY

Do you promise to be extra careful when baking?

GRAHAM

Yeah whatever! I promise to be extra careful when baking.

DANNY

(holding out his pinky)

Pinky promise?

GRAHAM

You can't be serious.

DANNY

I mean if you don't want the privilege of baking...

GRAHAM

UGH FINE.

(locks pinkies with DANNY)

I FUCKING PINKY PROMISE!

DANNY

Great! Now that you've pinky promised to be extra careful when baking, the rule can be modified to this: Rule number seven: baking is only permitted when I'm home to supervise.

GRAHAM

Wow thanks Mom

DANNY

Don't be bitter.

GRAHAM

These rules are ridiculous.

DANNY

Rule number eight: no Christmas decorations until the clock strikes midnight AFTER Thanksgiving

GRAHAM

That feels oddly specific.

DANNY

Rule number nine: no opening my mail

GRAHAM

I mean I wasn't planning on opening your mail.

DANNY

Ok good then don't.

GRAHAM

I'm not gonna.

DANNY

Good!

GRAHAM

Great!

(pause)

DANNY

Rule number ten: no inviting anybody over with the same name as me.

GRAHAM

But what if I meet somebody with the same name as you and they're like really cool?

DANNY

Do not invite them over.

GRAHAM

You're a very unreasonable person.

DANNY

(offering a pen to GRAHAM)

Sign it.

GRAHAM

What? I didn't even get a say in most of these.

DANNY

You don't need a say. The rules are great. They're fantastic. Sign the contract.

GRAHAM

They are most definitely not fantastic! I am not signing this. Not yet anyway

DANNY

Graham I do not have time for your shenanigans. Please sign the contract.

GRAHAM

I am not gonna sign the contract!

DANNY

But you have to. I've already signed it.

GRAHAM

BECAUSE ALL THE RULES ARE IN YOUR FAVOR

DANNY

I feel like these rules benefit you as well. Sign the contract.

GRAHAM

They do not! It is painfully obvious that you came up with all these rules and that I didn't get a say in any of them!

DANNY

You got a say in the oven rule and that's just a fact. Sign the contract.

GRAHAM

DANNY IF YOU ASK ME TO SIGN THAT PAPER ONE MORE TIME, I SWEAR TO GOD I'M GONNA TAKE THAT PEN AND SHOVE IT SO FAR UP YOUR ASS THAT FROM NOW ON, EVERY TIME YOU SNEEZE, A LITTLE BIT OF INK COMES OUT.

DANNY

You need to relax.

GRAHAM
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT? INK SNEEZES FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?

DANNY
I just want you to sign the contract.

GRAHAM
No, do not fuck with me. You just want power. You want me to sign this stupid little paper so that you can lord these stupid little rules over me until I lose my goddamn mind and move out or something.

(pause)
Oh my god is that what you want? For me to move out? Is that why you made this stupid fucking contract? To provoke me enough to make me want to move out so you can have your apartment to yourself?

DANNY
Relax, I made the contract so we—

GRAHAM
It isn't it? That's what this is all about huh? That's why you pulled that weird stunt where you sat waiting for me to get home. You wanted to make me uncomfortable. You wanted me to feel anything but comfortable in my own home so that I wouldn't want to live here anymore.

(pause)
Well GUESS WHAT! You win! I have enough self-respect that I know I don't have to take this.
(grabs a few of his belongings and heads for the door)
I will be picking up the rest of my stuff later. GOODBYE DANNY

(GRAHAM leaves. We watch as DANNY throws away the papers, puts the pens away, grabs a tv remote, and relaxes. Finally. Lights out)

END OF PLAY

