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Dramatic Publishing

Never Trust a Man

A Comedy in One Act
by
ANNE COULTER MARTENS



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(NEVER TRUST A MAN)

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Never Trust a Man

A Comedy in One Act for Six Women

CHARACTERS

EMILY.....*who mentions the ring*
ROSE.....*who is to receive the ring*
BETTY.....*who hears about the ring*
SALLY.....*who is heartbroken about the ring*
AUNT HATTIE.....*who is shocked about the ring*
LUCRETIA.....*who is indignant about the ring*

PLACE: *The Blake living-room.*

TIME: *The present. Evening.*

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

EMILY: She is a middle-aged woman, jolly and motherly. She wears a becoming street dress and a hat. Her purse and gloves are on the table.

BETTY: She is a pretty girl of eighteen, little, and highly excitable. She bubbles over with enthusiasm on the slightest provocation. She wears a becoming silk print or sports dress.

SALLY: She is a lovely girl of eighteen, a decided contrast to Betty in coloring, and tall and willowy. She is dressed in a much more feminine type of dress than is Betty. She's inclined to pose artistically to express her sorrow, and she does it very, very well indeed.

AUNT HATTIE: She is tall, rawboned, hatchet-faced, past middle age, a gossipy soul who looks cheerfully on the dark side. She wears a severely tailored suit and a prim hat to match.

LUCRETIA: She is a spinster of probably forty who tries to pass for twenty. Her sharp features, her little bobbing curls, and her bundlesome umbrella, are in strange contrast with her gaudy dress. She wears spectacles, probably of the horn-rimmed variety.

ROSE: She is a dashing young girl of about twenty, vivid in coloring and personality, very strikingly and modishly dressed in a suit with smart accessories. Her self-assurance and pose makes Betty and Sally seem even younger than they are.

PROPERTIES

EMILY: Purse; gloves.

LUCRETIA: Umbrella.

Never Trust a Man

SCENE: *The living-room of the Blake home. There is a door in the R wall, upstage, to the front of the house, and a door in the L wall, about C, to the dining-room and kitchen. There is a window U C, a desk D L, with a small chair, and a telephone, a small settee against the wall D R, an easy chair and a footstool R C, and a small table with chairs right and left of it L C.]*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: EMILY is seated D L, talking over the telephone. She is a middle-aged woman, jolly and motherly. She wears a becoming street dress and a hat. Her purse and gloves are on the table.]

EMILY [*telephoning*]. Yes, indeed, Mrs. Hill. When George told me, I was delighted. . . . No, I haven't spoken of it to anyone.

[*BETTY enters U R. She is a pretty girl of eighteen, little, and highly excitable. She bubbles over with enthusiasm on the slightest provocation. She wears a becoming silk print or sports dress. BETTY crosses to the window U C, and stands looking out, waiting for the end of the conversation.*]

EMILY [*telephoning*]. I think it would be nice to keep it as a surprise, don't you? . . . Yes, of course. George is working tonight, or he would be over to see Rose. . . . I'm glad you're pleased about it. Rose is such a sweet girl. George said he is going to give her a ring tomorrow.

[*BETTY whirls with a gasp, crosses quickly L C, and stares at EMILY, amazed.*]

EMILY [*telephoning*]. Well, good-bye, Mrs. Hill. Good-bye.

[*She hangs up the receiver and rises, turns, and sees BETTY.*]

Why—Betty!

BETTY [*excitedly*]. Mother, I heard what you were saying to Mrs. Hill! I couldn't help hearing it.

EMILY [*a little put out*]. You did? Pshaw! George and Rose planned to surprise you all. [*She crosses D R, and hunts for something on the settee.*]

BETTY [*tagging after EMILY as far as R C, and fairly dancing in her excitement*]. I've never been so surprised in my life! Mother, isn't it just lovely? I mean, I'm so thrilled! Rose Hill is the nicest girl! I always wanted to know her better. Now that she and George—

EMILY [*still hunting*]. Where *did* I put my purse? [*She crosses L C, shoving BETTY aside, and sees her purse on the table.*]

BETTY. But, Mother, how can you be so cool and calm?

EMILY. Oh, there it is. [*She picks up the purse.*] I have a committee meeting at Mrs. Black's, but I'll be back in about half an hour. [*She hesitates.*] Betty, my dear, perhaps you'd better not mention about your brother and Rose to anyone. You know—

BETTY [*eagerly*]. Oh, I won't mention it to a soul! Wild horses couldn't drag it from me. Honestly, Mother, I'll be as silent as the grave. Good old George!

EMILY. I'll have to hurry along. I'm glad you are pleased about it. You won't be lonesome home here all alone, will you?

SALLY [*off U R*]. Yoo-hoo! Betty!

BETTY [*calling*]. Yoo-hoo! Right in here!

[*SALLY enters U R. She is a lovely girl of eighteen, a decided contrast to BETTY in coloring, and tall and willowy. She is dressed in a much more feminine type of dress than is BETTY. She's inclined to pose artistically to express her sorrow, and she does it very, very well indeed.*]

SALLY. Hello, Mrs. Blake. Hi, Betty!

BETTY. Hi!

EMILY. Well, I'm so glad you came, Sally! I was just leaving Betty all alone, with nothing but a book to keep her company. Good-bye, my dears. I'll be back in a little while.

[EMILY goes out U R.]

SALLY. Where is everybody, Betty?

BETTY. George is working late.

SALLY. Who asked you where George was, goosie? What were you going to do tonight? Read?

BETTY. Yes, but I don't want to read, now. I just couldn't! I'm too excited.

SALLY [*perching on the arm of the chair R C*]. Excited? What's happened? Don't tell me something's really happened in Pottsville!

BETTY. You'd be surprised if you knew.

SALLY. Then tell me!

BETTY. I can't. Mother asked me not to say a word about it to anyone. I guess she wants to wait till it's announced.

SALLY [*jumping up excitedly*]. Announced! Betty Blake! It's an engagement! I just know it is. Who is it, Betty? Tell me! Please!

BETTY [*importantly*]. Honestly, Mother asked me not to tell. I'm not even s'posed to know about it. But I just happened to hear Mother talking to Mrs. Hill, and I heard her mention Rose—I couldn't help hearing. It wasn't as if I was really eavesdropping, or anything like that. Honestly, Sally, I'd like to tell you, but Mother said to keep it a secret. [*She crosses D L to the desk.*]

SALLY. Oh, I know, I know! Rose Hill is engaged, isn't she?

BETTY [*turning, astonished*]. Why, how did you ever guess? It was a complete surprise to me.

SALLY. Betty, please tell me! Who's she engaged to?

BETTY. Well—[*She hesitates.*] Since you know so much already, maybe it'd be all right if I told you the rest. [*She*

crosses D C, nearer SALLY.] You won't breathe it to a soul, will you, Sally?

SALLY [*ferrently*]. Not to a living soul. [*She crosses D C, facing BETTY.*]

BETTY. Then, I'll tell you!

SALLY. Go on, who?

BETTY. You know, I just *had* to tell someone, Sally!

SALLY. Who?

BETTY. I'm so excited about it, I don't know what to do. I've always admired Rose Hill, although, of course, I don't know her very well, and when I heard Mother talking about the engagement, I was thrilled. It's so romantic, really! Mother said he is going to give her a ring tomorrow.

SALLY [*stamping her foot impatiently*]. Betty!

BETTY. What?

SALLY. Stop rattling on, and say something!

BETTY. Why, I've been telling you just as fast as I can talk!

SALLY. But who?

BETTY. Why, my brother George, of course! Who did you think it was?

[*BETTY whirls about, exuberantly, on her toes, and then stops, facing SALLY. SALLY, on the word "George," gasps, crosses D R, and sinks slowly onto the settee.*]

BETTY [*pausing, looking at SALLY*]. What's wrong?

SALLY [*weakly*]. Your—brother—George!

[*BETTY looks at SALLY curiously.*]

BETTY. Yes, George. [*Enthusiastic again, kneeling on the footstool R C.*] Isn't he a sly old dog? I never even suspected he was interested in Rose Hill, did you?

SALLY. No, I—I— [*She sobs.*] I—oh, George, George! How could you? [*She flings herself onto the settee and bursts into uncontrolled sobbing.*]

BETTY [*jumping up*]. Sally!