

The Art of Courtly Love

by Andreas Capellanus (1174-1186)

*The following is a selection from the book *The Art of Courtly Love* written in the late 12th century. The book was purportedly written to instruct the author's friend Walter in the ways of love and women, a fact that accounts in part for the masculine point of view and tone of the book. Whatever its original purpose, the book became, in effect, an attempt to describe and codify the principles of a social system that came to be called "courtly love."*

The Art of Courtly Love falls into three large units or "books." Book One contains some introductory material and definitions, describes the effects of love, tells what classes of people may aspire to love for one another, and shows how love may be acquired. Book Two discusses such questions as how love, once attained, may be kept, how it decreases in intensity, how it comes to an end, what to do if one's lover is unfaithful, and what the "rules of love" are. Book Three is about the rejection of love, and why men should, after all, refrain from engaging in love relationships with women. The selection below are the rules written in chapter two.

1. Marriage is no real excuse for not loving.
2. He who is not jealous cannot love.
3. No one can be bound by a double love.
4. It is well known that love is always increasing or decreasing.
5. That which a lover takes against the will of his beloved has no relish.
6. Boys do not love until they reach the age of maturity.
7. When one lover dies, a widowhood of two years is required of the survivor.
8. No one should be deprived of love without the very best of reasons.
9. No one can love unless he is propelled by the persuasion of love.
10. Love is always a stranger in the home of avarice (*desire for money*).
11. It is not proper to love any woman whom one would be ashamed to seek to marry.
12. A true lover does not desire to embrace in love anyone except his beloved.
13. When made public love rarely endures.
14. The easy attainment of love makes it of little value: difficulty of attainment makes it prized.
15. Every lover regularly turns pale in the presence of his beloved.
16. When a lover suddenly catches sight of his beloved his heart palpitates.
17. A new love puts an old one to flight.
18. Good character alone makes any man worthy of love.
19. If love diminishes, it quickly fails and rarely revives.
20. A man in love is always apprehensive.
21. Real jealousy always increases the feeling of love.
22. Jealousy increases when one suspects his beloved.
23. He whom the thought of love vexes eats and sleeps very little.
24. Every act of a lover ends in the thought of his beloved.
25. A true lover considers nothing good except what he thinks will please his beloved.
26. Love can deny nothing to love.
27. A lover can never have enough of the solaces of his beloved.
28. A slight presumption causes a lover to suspect his beloved.
29. A man who is vexed by too much passion usually does not love.
30. A true lover is constantly and without intermission possessed by the thought of his beloved.
31. Nothing forbids one woman being loved by two men or one man by two women.

One of the lasting impacts of the Middle Ages is the romanticization of the aspects of love and honor. Some of the ideals that were held up in the Middle Ages are still held in high esteem today. In the chart below, choose 4 of the rules on the previous page and find a modern song that relates (or venerates the idea). Include the song, artist, specific lyrics and explanation of the relation between the lyric and the rule.

Number of the rule	Name of Song and Artist	Lyric of the Song	Explanation of relationship

Do you think that these rules were “unique” to the middle Ages? Or is it more likely that these are the first time that they were written down? What evidence might there be for your claim.