

sExpat

By Deidre Dare

The One with All the Russians

Once I'd finished my long sojourn to



the States and returned to Moscow, I had to finally admit the fact that I am now completely out-of-touch with American culture.

I did not have a good summer over there.

I found the Americans to be both banal and self-righteous – an absolutely nauseating combination.

What's worse is that they have this nauseating combination in the romantic arena as well.

So upon coming back I decided that I would avoid future culture-shocks when I next visit the US by spending some time re-learning American values.

In order to accomplish this, I spent last week watching all ten seasons of the popular TV show *Friends*.

I didn't choose a television program because I believe that the American media reflects the underlying culture's values.

I chose it because I'm convinced that Americans get their "values" from TV. Because, trust me, they certainly aren't getting them from books, travel or originality in thought.

From that gruelling experience of total cultural immersion, I've managed to figure out some of the rules (amorous and otherwise) that the Americans live by.

As you'll see, these are very different from the way we view things here:

USA Rule #1: Never sleep with someone on the first date.

Russian Response: If you want to, why on Lenin's Tomb not?

USA Rule #2: Even if you eat all the pizza you want and never exercise, you won't get fat.

Russian Response: Oh yes you will: Just look at yourselves!

USA Rule #3: If your partner kisses someone else and regrets it, you should still leave them.

Russian Response: Huh?

USA Rule #4: Being drunk and partying down is a very bad thing.

Russian Response: Huh???

USA Rule #5: You are not allowed to have sex with someone else if you're on a break from your relationship with your partner.

Russian Response: Huh?!

USA Rule #6: It will work out if you get back together with your ex.

Russian Response: Who on Earth gets back together with their ex?

USA Rule #7: The unrelenting reality of certain death need not be considered.

Russian Response: Huh?

USA Rule #8: Once you are married, you can never sleep with another person besides your spouse.

Russian Response: Huh???

USA Rule #9: Every man wants to try a threesome with two women, but never will, because threesomes are evil and perverse.

Russian Response: Huh?!!!

USA Rule #10: Everything works out and we all live happily ever after.

Russian Response: Get real. No, we don't.

In my opinion, the Americans are very into "right" and "wrong" behaviour; they lack the conception of the subtlety that is the essence of the human condition. They're too black and white.

And Russia? Russia is all different shades of grey.

For now, the States and I are...

Well, we're on a break.

xxooDD