

Man with Farm Seeks Woman with Tractor: The Best and Worst Personal Ads of All Time

Laura J. Schaefer

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#3717851 in Books 2005-04-21Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 .45 x 5.52 x 7.30l, .30 #File Name: 1560256869149 pagespersonal ads galore over the years, best and worst | File size: 26.Mb

Laura J. Schaefer : Man with Farm Seeks Woman with Tractor: The Best and Worst Personal Ads of All Time before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Man with Farm Seeks Woman with Tractor: The Best and Worst Personal Ads of All Time:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Interesting collection taps rich source of social historyBy Debra HamelOnline dating sites and [...] advertisements and TV shows like Blind Date or The Love Connection are really nothing new. Personal ads have been with us for nearly 300 years. In Man with Farm Seeks Woman with Tractor Laura Schaefer collects almost 200 examples of the genre, most dating to the 19th and early 20th centuries, and most having appeared originally in English and US publications. Schaefer divides the ads among eleven chapters by type--the self-deprecating or desperate, the poetic, the downright bizarre, and so on.As with any collection of this sort, the

majority of the texts selected for inclusion will probably fail to interest any given reader, and readers will differ in which of the ads included most appeal to them. But among the ho-hum here that didn't spark my interest are some true gems. For example: a 19-year-old GI writing in 1946 to ask for pen pals; the parents of a sickly 21-year-old looking to attach their daughter to some benevolent doctor; a 70-year-old, castle-owning German baron in the market for a very particular sort of 16- to 20-year-old girl; notice that a lisping, one-legged wife has run away with the parish priest; a man with a glass eye looking for a woman "who also has a glass eye or some other deformity not more severe." My own favorites in Schaefer's collection are those ads that offer a snapshot of real life, recording some small unremarkable moment long lost to memory. What can have transpired between these two on a London street, for example, to prompt such interest?"A LADY WHO passed a Gentleman on Monday, the 17th of this month in Hartstreet, Bloomsbury, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, without speaking to him, is anxious for an opportunity of seeing him again, any time after the 7th of January."-- December 25, 1810,The Times (London)More than a century later, more than an ocean away, another chance encounter was memorable to at least one of the parties concerned:"LADY WHOSE CAR ticket was refused by conductor on S. Meridian car, Friday, June 20 at 7 a.m. wishes to communicate with gentleman who witnessed the refusal. DRexel 5056."--June 26, 1924,Indianapolis StarIn some cases one wants desperately to know how the advertisers fared in their quests.The personals are surely a rich source of social history. Certainly they reflect their times, young widows and widowers apparently being thick on the ground in the 19th century, and the contracting of relationships hinging very often on the quantifiable resources one could muster--whether a yearly stipend or a tractor. It is also interesting to note that the dangers inherent in forming relationships by mail, electronic or traditional, are not new, and neither is the discussion over the desirability of doing so.Schaefer's book is a quick read, and many of her selections are excellent. There are times when I would have liked her to provide additional context for her selections. Murders committed by men placing personal ads are alluded to on two occasions, for example, and one would like very much to know more about these cases. It would also be interesting--though I realize this isn't the book Schaefer set out to write--if the author had researched what is known of the subsequent history of at least some of the advertisers featured: that elderly, castle-wielding baron must have left his mark in the record books, for example. But Man with Farm Seeks Woman with Tractor is recommended as a quick and interesting read and as a window into what seems to be a rich vein of historical information.Debra Hamel -- author of Trying Neaira: The True Story of a Courtesan's Scandalous Life in Ancient Greece (Yale University Press, 2003)0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Woman with farm sought Man with tractorBy M BryantThe title of this book sparked my attention, because I (a woman) with farm would like to have found a man with a tractor (because I didn't have either (man or tractor). Believe it or not, I recently sold the farm.4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Fun Book to give and haveBy K. CovertI ordered this book on a whim and have since given to 5 people for Birthday, Valentine Days, Appreciation gifts etc. Its one of those fun books to have around and flip through. Visitors to my home always end up paging through it and readig out loud. It's also a stress free way of learning some history. What better way to catch on to the social and romantic mores of the time than reading a personal add written by vast array of people!? I recomend this book if your looking for a fun gift, or conversation starter.

We've all been there, whether searching the personals for a romantic connection or posting an ad in hopes of luring in a new friend. A great source of entertainment, many people skim through the personals section for a quick laugh, never questioning its origin or its interesting history. Personal ads began popping up sporadically in the eighteenth century and became common by the end of the nineteenth. Whole publications devoted to romantic and marriage-minded classifieds flourished around the turn of the last century. In the last half of the twentieth century, personal ads exploded in myriad publications from coy gay ads of the 1950s to colorful ads in the alternative presses of the 1970s. Today, more and more people are paying for a chance at love. From the best and the worst, the hopeful and the hopeless, the bitter and the sweet, the romantic and the lustfulnever before has a collection like this been assembled from so many decades past. By including hundreds of funny and surprising personal ads from historical newspapers as well as modern Web sites, Man with Farm will entertain and inform.

From Publishers WeeklyA writer for Match.com offers what could have been a delightful diversion--after all, who doesn't like reading personals, even if they're happily attached? But this little collection doesn't offer what its subtitle promises. There are plenty of amusing and, yes, pathetic personal ads (several of the latter from patheticpersonals.com), but many of them seem to have been chosen primarily for their odd, outdated diction and mid-19th-century sensibility. And collected together, they get a little boring. Highlights: a man hoping for a woman with one leg shorter than the other, "as only like and like can be enduringly happy"; the 42-year-old "old maid" who, in 1892, writes that she wants "some chap to love me"; the hippie doing time in San Quentin seeking "chicks that aren't hung up on middle class Amer. type life" in 1971. But far too many are examples of educated, honorable 1850s gentlemen looking for pleasant, virtuous 1850s ladies. It's interesting to learn that the personal ad has been around for nearly three centuries, but the fact remains that most people read personal ads either because they're looking for a date or because they're curious what people around them--people they might even know!--are looking for at that very

moment. And this collection doesn't offer readers either. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "[Man with Farm] will give you plenty of fun tidbits to throw into a conversation during your next online date." -- Match.com, June 2005