

# FACTS AND FANCIES FOR WOMAN AND THE HOME CIRCLE

## THE DAILY SHORT STORY

Second Choice.  
By R. RAY BAKER.

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SADIE Marshall came out of the cloakroom with a little skip in her walk and a lot of happiness in her eyes, and went behind the counter to prepare for the big rush of bargain hunters enticed by announcement of the "warmth yellow tag sale at Miller Brothers dry goods store."

"What's the excitement?" inquired Tillie Edmonds, offering a stick of gum which proved acceptable.

"Can't tell you," demurred Sadie, as she stripped the wrapping off the gum and placed the delicacy in her mouth. "It's a secret, but—gee! I'm happy."

Tillie scowled. She felt like reclaiming the gum, but it was too late. Sadie was chewing it recklessly.

"Oh, all right; keep it to yourself," snorted Tillie, and proceeded to turn her back on the other girl and display unusual energy in dusting some bolts of muslin.

But Sadie couldn't keep it. "Till tell you," she said, "if you promise not to tell anyone else"; and Tillie turned with the scowl still on her face but her ears wide open. "I'm—I'm engaged to one of the finest young men in the world."

Tillie's face was radiant with smiles. She seized both of the other's hands and pumped them up and down for a full minute while she showered congratulations on her.

"Good! Fine!" she beamed. "When you going to leave us, and what's the gentleman's name? Is it that one I saw you walking with in Central Park feeding the squirrels a couple of weeks ago?"

The light of happiness in Sadie's eyes lost some of its brilliancy, although it was by no means dispelled.

"No," she said somewhat less enthusiastically, "he's not the one, although he asked me only last Sunday. That's Mr. Piper, but he's not the one I'm going to marry, although I have to confess I like him an awful lot. My future husband's name is Jasper Jewels, and he's got loads of money and drives a motor car and—everything."

Tillie sniffed.

"I'm kinda sorry," she said. "I liked that Mr. Piper real well what Tillie I saw of him, and I get suspicious of these fellows who have lots of money. How do you know he's rich and has an automobile?"

"Well, I've ridden in the car with him," declared Sadie, "and as for his being rich—why, he told me so himself and you ought to see the clothes he wears! He's slick and span always, I tell you. Mr. Piper, as I said, is nice and has been very good to me, and if I hadn't been that Mr. Jewels bobbed up—"

Then the bargain hunters began to arrive and there was no time to talk or think of matrimony for the rest of the day. About the time the 5 o'clock whistles were blowing a blonde young man garbed in a blue and white striped suit of a cut and shade that bordered on the radical entered the white goods department and Sadie introduced him as her "intended." He had an easy grace of manner, and a winning smile that quite captivated the sales girls—all except Tillie, who simply said, "Howdy do, glad to know you," and continued shoving bolts of cloth back on the shelves.

Sadie clung to his arm as they left the store and entered a big green touring car that stood at the curb. Those few salesgirls who were able to scramble to the window did so and stood gaping as the machine whirled away.

After having dinner at a restaurant, Sadie and Mr. Jewels took a ride in Brooklyn before going to the theatre. While on the ride Sadie was presented with a ring containing a dazzling white set. Then, just in time to see the beginning of the performance they drove up to the theatre.

The play was a good one. It had enjoyed a long run at the theatre and still was drawing big houses. But Sadie's enjoyment of it was considerably interfered with by her conscience, which was awakened by the presence of a young man seated across the aisle three rows down. The young man had dark brown hair and wore rather plain but neat clothes. Evidently he was in the company of two others, who sat on either side of him, for he could be seen conversing with them frequently.

"Mr. Piper," mused Sadie. "How in the world can he afford to come to this show? He works somewhere in a factory in Brooklyn. I forget just where he said."

Her conscience was bothering her because of the treatment she was accorded her own heart. She knew that she really cared more for Mr. Piper than for her present escort, and she also realized that it was the lure of wealth that had caused her to accept Jewels' offer of marriage.

Her acquaintance with Mr. Piper dated six months back, to one day in late summer, when she was canoeing with two girls chums on the Ogo lake. None of the three knew anything of the management of a canoe, and they nearly paid dearly for their rash adventure on the water. They were about half a mile from shore when the canoe overturned, and if it had not been for Robert Piper, who, with two other young men, paddled up at the right moment, it is unlikely that any of the girls would have escaped with their life. Robert at once began being attentive to Sadie and the affair had become quite serious when she met Jasper Jewels one night at a dance.

Just how the alarm started was never ascertained but as the curtain descended at the end of the second act the cry of "fire" spread through the audience. It was taken up from the orchestra seats and the boxes to the balconies and galleries, and without stopping to learn the extent of the dan-

## Confessions of a Bride

Loneliness and Depression Work Their Will With Me.

Bluebeard's wives must have been very primitive women. If they had been even half civilized, I presume they never would have lost their lovely heads. I often thought of their sad fate as I carried Dr. Certes's mysterious keys around with me. Often did I look with a smile at the longest key, but never once did I have the least temptation to find the lock which it fitted.

Probably I am only a fair sample of the modern civilized girl who finds it quite impossible to open other people's letters, packages and closets. I was aware that Certes's desk concealed the details of a scandal about Daddy Lorimer. I guessed it must be that affair with the "Queen of Smiles," but it was not for me to investigate. Certainly, Mrs. Bluebeard would have saved her life if she had lived today because, well, it simply isn't done!

But I was lonely enough in the great house, just as Mme. Bluebeard had been in her castle long ago.

I think my depression began with the discovery of the Bolshevik stuff in the files and the recollection of what Eloise had called Certes. I even got the notion that Certes might have gone west to spread Bolshevik propaganda, not directly, of course; and I had to assure myself that he could not be a spy without having been "spotted" by the government long ago; moreover Daddy Lorimer was much too clever to be deceived by a fraud of any kind. This was a great comfort.

I didn't want to add Hamilton Certes to all my other disappointments in life.

I suppose I must have been getting morbid. Women fall into that mood very easily. I had always tried to avoid it, but as the days dragged away in the lonely house where I hadn't a

thing to do except file away political papers that made me more and more doleful, I came at last to my zero hour.

I began to feel that I had been abandoned by all the people who ought to love me when, to tell the truth, I had run away from most of the things which make the average woman happy!

Twisting facts and feeling sorry for themselves in consequence is a perversion of women. I suppose I couldn't escape my share of it.

But, indeed, I was really honest in feeling that nobody cared for me deeply—except Certes, and by all the laws of the land, by the laws of my own nature, I was forbidden to find rest on Certes's heart. I was shut out of Bob's heart, too. My plan to woo him back again was losing its attractiveness. It seemed such hard work—and victory so uncertain.

Many times I reviewed my strange position in Certes's house and my odd relation to Bob. I couldn't shape any happiness for myself. I recognized my utter uselessness. Nobody needed me. That was worse than having no one to love me. I wept over myself and my woes. My heart hurt dreadfully.

I endured the same sort of hurt, I fancy, which makes so many lonely girls want "to end it all." I had always been impatient with them, had thought them stupid and selfish. Now I know they are both, for that is what I was myself at the end of a lonely, rainy Sunday a few days before Certes was expected home.

Certainly it was worse than stupid. It was a sinful idea which came into my head—but it had the thrill which is so often to be found in sin. My temptation took this form:

"You are dead in theory, Jane Lorimer. Why not be dead in fact?"

or if any existed, the greater part of the audience went into a panic, and those who did try to maintain their composure were carried off their feet by the frenzied mob, which swept in the fury of terror toward the exits.

Startled like the rest, but so dazed that she scarcely knew which way to turn, Sadie sprang to her feet, reaching out an arm to clutch her male escort. But he had fled up the aisle. Helpless, the girl stood there, buffeted back and forth until a strong arm grasped her and she felt herself lifted and carried swiftly away, while cries of terror and pain were raised repeatedly on every hand.

It seemed like hours, but it was only a moment later that she realized she was again on her feet and was surprised to see that she was standing on the stage, which was free of the panic-stricken crowd. Beside her stood Robert Piper.

"Come, let's get out of here," faltered Susie. "We'll be burned up." Piper laughed.

"I guess not. There isn't any fire. It's a false alarm. If the orchestra had only been on the job it could have stopped the panic; it's been done that way many a time."

The next day Miller Brothers said continued. After the mad nightmare at the theatre however the battle for bargains seemed to Sadie like a very calm and sedate affair. Nevertheless she was kept so busy that she had no time for words with Tillie until late in the afternoon.

"Well, Mr. Jewels coming after you again this evening?" Tillie inquired during a lull, as she leaned up against the wall and uttered a sigh of relief and placed a stick of gum in her mouth.

Sadie's lip curled. "But Mr. Piper is. I decided to marry him after all, and let Mr. Jewels go even if he is rich and owns a motor car. I'll take my chances on the poor factory hand. See here's the ring Jasper gave me last night. I'm going to send it back."

Tillie took the ring and held it up to the light. An expression of scorn crossed her face as she placed her arms skimbo and stopped chewing gum long enough to say:

"Some jewel Sadie, some jewel! Pure catarrh!"

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glass and brass, that's what it is. So you're going to take a chance on the poor one, are you? Why, you poor deluded kid, I've been investigating things since I met your used-to dance last night, and I've found some interesting facts; and one is that your second choice is the best one you could have made. I thought that Jasper looked kinda suspicious. And I was right. Do you know who he chauffeurs for? Well, I'll tell you. The fellow that owns the big green machine is Robert Piper, who also owns a factory over in Brooklyn; and he's all to the good "that fellow is."

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