



(Continued from last week.)

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—Introducing "So Big" (Dirk DeJong) in his infancy. And his mother, Selma DeJong, daughter of Simeon Peake, gambler and gentleman of fortune. Her life, to young womanhood in Chicago in 1888, has been unconventional, somewhat seamy, but generally enjoyable. At school her chum is Julia Hempel, daughter of August Hempel, butcher. Simeon is killed in a quarrel that is not his own, and Selma, fifteen years old and practically destitute, becomes a school-teacher.

CHAPTER II—Selma secures a position as teacher at the High Prairie school, in the outskirts of Chicago, living at the home of a truck farmer, Klaas Pool. In Roelf, twelve years old, son of Klaas, Selma perceives a kindred spirit, a lover of beauty, like herself.

CHAPTER III—The monotonous life of a country school-teacher at that time, in Selma's brightened somewhat by the companionship of the sensitive, artistic boy Roelf.

CHAPTER IV—Selma hears gossip concerning the affection of the "Widow Paarlberg," rich and good-looking, for Pervus DeJong, poor truck farmer, who is insensible to the widow's attractions. For a community "sociable" Selma prepares a lunch basket, dainty, but not of ample proportions, which is "auctioned," according to custom. The smallness of the lunch box excites derision, and in a show of fun the bidding becomes spirited. DeJong finally securing it for \$10, a ridiculously high price. Over their lunch basket, which Selma and DeJong share together, the school-teacher arranges to instruct the good-natured farmer, whose education has been neglected.

CHAPTER V—Propinquity, in their positions of "teacher" and "pupil," and Selma's loneliness in her unconventional surroundings, lead to mutual affection. Pervus DeJong wins Selma's consent to be his wife.

Chapter VI

They were married the following May, just two months later. Selma was at once bewildered and calm; rebellious and content. Overlaying these emotions was something like grim amusement. Beneath them, something like fright. She moved with a strange air of fatality. It was as if she were being drawn inexorably, against her will, her judgment, her plans, into something sweet and terrible. When with Pervus she was elated, gay, voluble. He talked little; looked at her dumbly, worshipfully.

There were days when the feeling of unreality possessed her. She, a truck farmer's wife, living in High Prairie the rest of her days! Why, no! No! Was this the great adventure that her father had always spoken of? She, who was going to be a happy wayfarer down the path of life—any one of a dozen things. This High Prairie winter was to have been only an episode. Not her life! She looked at Maartje. Oh, she'd never be like that. That was stupid, unnecessary. Pink and blue dresses in the house, for her. Frills on the window curtains. Flowers in bowls.

Some of the pangs and terrors with which most prospective brides are assailed the confided to Mrs. Pool while that active lady was slamming about the kitchen.

"Did you ever feel scared and—and sort of—scared when you thought about marry, Mrs. Pool?"

Maartje Pool's hands were in a great batch of bread dough which she pummeled and slapped and kneaded vigorously. She shook out a handful of flour on the baking board while she held the dough mass in the other hand, then plumped it down and again began to knead, both hands doubled into fists.

She laughed a short little laugh. "I ran away."

"You did! You mean you really ran—but why? Didn't you loo—like Klaas?"

Maartje Pool kneaded briskly, the color high in her cheeks, what with the vigorous pummeled and rolling, and something else that made her look strangely young for the moment—girlish, almost. "Sure I liked him. I liked him."

"But you ran away?"

"Not far. I came back. Nobody ever knew I ran, even. But I ran. I knew."

"Why did you come back?"

Maartje elucidated her philosophy without being in the least aware that it could be called by any such high-sounding name. "You can't run away far enough. Except you stop living you can't run away from life."

The girlish look had fled. She was world-old. Her strong arms ceased their pounding and thumping for a moment. On the steps outside Klaas and Jakob were scanning the weekly reports preparatory to going into the city late that afternoon.

Selma had the difficult task of winning Roelf to her all over again. He was like a trusting little animal, who, wounded by the hand he has trusted, is shy of it. Still, he could not withstand her long. Together they dug

and planted flower beds in Pervus' dingy front yard. It was too late for tulips now. Pervus had brought her some seeds from town. They ranged all the way from poppies to asters; from purple iris to morning glories. The last named were to form the back-porch vine, of course, because they grew quickly. Selma, city-bred, was ignorant of varieties, but insisted she wanted an old-fashioned garden—marigolds, pinks, mignonette, phlox. She and Roelf dug, spaded, planted.

Her trousseau was of the scantiest. Pervus' household was already equipped with such linens as they would need. The question of a wedding gown troubled her until Maartje suggested that she be married in the old Dutch wedding dress that lay in the bride's chest in Selma's bedroom.

"A real Dutch bride," Maartje said. "Your man will think that is fine."

Pervus was delighted. Selma basked in his love like a kitten in the sun. She was, after all, a very lonely little bride with only two photographs on the shelf in her bedroom to give her courage and counsel. The old Dutch wedding gown was many inches too large for her. The skirt-band overlapped her slim waist; her slender little bosom did not fill out the generous width of the bodice; but the effect of the whole was amazingly quaint as well as pathetic.

They were married at the Pools'. Klaas and Maartje had insisted on furnishing the wedding supper—ham, chickens, sausages, cakes, pickles, beer. The Reverend Dekker married them, and all through the ceremony Selma chided herself because she could not keep her mind on his words in the fascination of watching his short, stubby beard as it wagged with every motion of his jaw. Pervus looked stiff, solemn and uncomfortable in his wedding blacks—not at all the handsome giant of the everyday corduroys and blue shirt. In the midst of the ceremony Selma had her moment of panic when she actually saw herself running shrieking from this company, this man, this house, down the road, on, toward—toward what? The feeling was so strong that she was surprised to find herself still standing there in the Dutch wedding gown answering "I do" in the proper place.

After the wedding they went straight to DeJong's house. In May the vegetable farmer cannot neglect his garden even for a day. The house had been made ready for them.

Throughout the supper Selma had had thoughts which were so foolish and detached as almost to alarm her. "Now I am married. I am Mrs. Pervus DeJong. That's a pretty name. It would look quite distinguished on a calling card, very spidery and fine:

"MRS. PERVUS DE JONG

At Home Fridays."

She recalled this later, grimly, when she was Mrs. Pervus DeJong, at home not only Fridays, but Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

They drove down the road to DeJong's place. Selma thought, "Now I am driving home with my husband. I feel his shoulder against mine. I wish he would talk. I wish he would say something. Still, I am not frightened."

Pervus' market wagon was standing in the yard, shafts down. He should have gone to market today; would certainly have to go tomorrow, starting early in the afternoon so as to get a good stand in the Haymarket. By the light of his lantern the wagon seemed to Selma to be a symbol. She had often seen it before, but now that it was to be a part of her life—this DeJong market wagon and she Mrs. DeJong—she saw clearly what a crazy, disreputable and poverty-proclaiming old vehicle it was, in contrast with the neat strong wagon in Klaas Pool's yard, smart with green paint and red lettering that announced, "Klaas Pool, Garden Produce." With the two sleek farm horses the turnout looked as prosperous and comfortable as Klaas himself.

Pervus swung her down from the seat of the buggy, his hand about her waist, and held her so for a moment, close. Selma said: "You must have that wagon painted, Pervus. And the seat-springs fixed and the sideboard mended."

He stared. "Wagon!"

"Yes. It looks a sight."

The house was tidy enough, but none too clean. Pervus lighted the lamps. There was a fire in the kitchen stove. It made the house seem stuffy on this mild May night. Selma thought that her own little bedroom at the Pools', no longer hers, must be deliciously cool and still with the breeze fanning fresh from the west. Pervus was putting the horse into the barn. The bedroom

was off the sitting room. The window was shut. This last year had taught Selma to prepare the night before for next morning's rising, so as to lose the least possible time. She did this now, unconsciously. She brushed her hair, laid out tomorrow's garments, put on her high-necked, long-sleeved night-gown and got into this strange bed. She heard Pervus DeJong shut the kitchen door; the latch clicked, the

lock turned. Heavy quick footsteps across the bare kitchen floor. This man was coming into her room. . . . "You can't run far enough," Maartje Pool had said. "Except you stop living you can't run away from life."

Next morning it was dark when he awakened her at four. She started up with a little cry and sat up, straining her ears, her eyes. "Is that you, father?" She was little Selma Peake again, and Simeon Peake had come in, gay, debonair, from a night's gaming.

Pervus DeJong was already padding about the room in stocking feet. "What—what time is it? What's the matter, father? Why are you up? Haven't you gone to bed. . . ." Then she remembered.

Pervus DeJong laughed and came toward her. "Get up, little lazy bones. It's after four. All yesterday's work I've got to do, and all today's. Breakfast, little Lina, breakfast. You are a farmer's wife now."

Dirk DeJong was born in the bedroom off the sitting room on the fifteenth day of March, of a bewildered, somewhat resentful, but deeply interested mother; and a proud, foolish, and vainglorious father whose air of achievement, considering the really slight part he had played in the long, tedious, and racking business, was disproportionate. The name Dirk had sounded to Selma like something tall, straight, and slim. Pervus had chosen it. It had been his grandfather's name.

Sometimes, during those months, Selma would look back on her first winter in High Prairie—that winter of the icy bedroom, the chill black drum, the schoolhouse fire, the chilblains, the Pool pork—and it seemed a lovely dream; a time of ease, of freedom, of careless happiness.

Pervus DeJong loved his pretty young wife, and she him. But young love thrives on color, warmth, beauty. It becomes prosaic and inarticulate when forced to begin its day at four in the morning by reaching blindly, dazedly, for limp and obscure garments dangling from bedpost or chair, and to end that day at nine, numb and sodden with weariness, after seventeen hours of physical labor.

It was a wet summer. Pervus chose tomato plants so carefully set out in the hope of a dry season, became dragged gray specters in a waste of mire. Of fruit the field bore one tomato the size of a marble.

For the rest, the crops were moderately successful on the DeJong place. But the work necessary to make this so was heart-breaking. Selma had known, during her winter at the Pools', that Klaas, Roelf, and old Jakob worked early and late, but her months there had encompassed what is really the truck farmer's leisure period. She had arrived in November. She had married in May. From May until October it was necessary to tend the fields with a concentration amounting to fury. Selma had never dreamed that human beings toiled like that for sustenance. Toil was a thing she had never encountered until coming to High Prairie. Now she saw her husband wrenching a living out of the earth by sheer muscle, sweat, and pain. During June, July, August, and September the good black prairie soil for miles around was teeming, a hotbed of plenty. There was born in Selma at this time a feeling for the land that she was never to lose. Perhaps the child within her had something to do with this. She was aware of a feeling of kinship with the earth; an illusion of splendor, of fulfillment.

As cabbages had been cabbages, and no more, to Klaas Pool, so to Pervus, these carrots, beets, onions, turnips, and radishes were just so much produce, to be planted, tended, gathered, marketed. But to Selma, during that summer, they became a vital part in the vast mechanism of a living world. Pervus, earth, sun, rain, all elemental

forces that labored to produce the food for millions of humans. She thought of Chicago's children. If they had red

cheeks, clear eyes, nimble brains it was because Pervus brought them the food that made them so. Something of this she tried to convey to Pervus. He only stared, his blue eyes wide and unresponsive.

"Farm work grand! Farm work is slave work. Yesterday, from the load of carrots in town I didn't make enough to bring you the goods for the child so when it comes you should have clothes for it. It's better I feed them to the live stock."

Pervus drove into the Chicago market every other day. During July and August he sometimes did not have his clothes off for a week. Together he and Jan Steen would load the wagon with the day's garnering. At four he would start on the tedious trip into town. The historic old Haymarket on West Randolph street had become the stand for market gardeners for miles around Chicago. Here they stationed their wagons in preparation for the next day's selling. The early comer got the advantageous stand. There was no regular allotment of space. Pervus tried to reach the Haymarket by nine at night. Often bad roads made a detour necessary and he was late. That usually meant bad business next day. The men, for the most part, slept on their wagons, curled up on the wagon seat or stretched out on the sacks. Their horses were stabled and fed in nearby sheds, with more actual comfort than the men themselves. One could get a room for twenty-five cents in one of the ramshackle rooming houses that faced the street. But the rooms were small, stuffy, none too clean; the beds little more comfortable than the wagons. Besides, twenty-five cents! You got twenty-five cents for half a barrel of tomatoes. You got twenty-five cents for a sack of potatoes. Onions brought seventy-five cents a sack. Cabbages went a hundred heads for two dollars, and they were five-pound heads. If you drove home with ten dollars in your pocket it represented a profit of exactly zero. The sum must go above that. No; one did not pay out twenty-five cents for the mere privilege of sleeping in a bed.

One June day, a month or more after their marriage, Selma drove into Chicago with Pervus, an incongruous little figure in her bride's finery perched on the seat of the vegetable wagon piled high with early garden stuff. It was, in a way, their wedding trip, for Selma had not been away from the farm since her marriage.

As they jogged along now she revealed magnificent plans that had been forming in her imagination during the past four weeks. It had not taken her four weeks—or days—to discover that this great broad-shouldered man she had married was a kindly creature, tender and good, but lacking any vestige of initiative, of spirit. She marveled, sometimes, at the memory of his boldness in bidding for her lunch box that evening of the raffle. It seemed incredible now, though he frequently referred to it, wagging his head drowsily and grinning the broadly complacent grin of the conquering male. But he was, after all, a dull fellow, and there was in Selma a dash of fire, of wholesome wickedness, of adventure, that he never quite understood. For her flashes of flame he had a mingled feeling of uneasiness and pride.

In the manner of all young brides, Selma started bravely out to make her husband over. He was handsome, strong, gentle; slow, conservative, morose. She would make him keen, daring, successful, buoyant. Now, bumping down the Halsted road, she sketched some of her plans in large dashing strokes.

"Pervus, we must paint the house in October, before the frost sets in, and after the summer work is over. Then that west sixteen. We'll drain it." "Yeah, drain," Pervus muttered. "It's clay land. Drain and you have got yet clay. Hard clay soil." Selma had the answer to that. "I know it. You've got to use tile drainage. And—wait a minute—humus. I know what humus is. It's decayed vegetables. There's always a pile by the side of the barn; and you've been using it on the quick land. All the west sixteen isn't clay. Part of it's muckland. All it needs is draining and manure. With potash, too, and phosphoric acid."

Pervus laughed a great hearty laugh that Selma found surprisingly infuriating. "Well, well, well! School teacher is a farmer now, huh? I bet even Widow Paarlberg don't know as much as my little farmer about"—he exploded again—"about this, now, potash and—what kind of acid? Tell me, little Lina, from where did you learn all this about truck farming?"

"Out of a book," Selma said, almost snappishly. "I sent to Chicago for it." "A book! A book!" He slapped his knee. "A vegetable farmer out of a book."

"Why not! The man who wrote it knows more about vegetable farming than anybody in all High Prairie. He knows about new ways. You're running the farm just the way your father ran it."

"What was good enough for my father is good enough for me."

"It isn't!" cried Selma. "It isn't! The book says clay loam is all right for cabbages, peas, and beans. It tells you how. It tells you how!" She was like a frantic little fly darting and pricking him on to accelerate the stolid sluggishness of his slow plodding gait.

Pervus stared straight ahead down the road between his horse's ears much as Klaas Pool had done so maddeningly on Selma's first ride on the Halsted road. "Fine talk. Fine talk."

"It isn't talk. It's plans. You've got to plan."

"Fine talk. Fine talk."

"Oh!" Selma beat her knee with an impatient fist.

It was the nearest they had ever come to quarreling. It would seem that Pervus had the best of the argument, for when two years had passed the west sixteen was still a boggy clay mass, and unprofitable; and the old house stared out shabby and paintless, at the dense willows by the roadside.

They slept that night in one of the twenty-five-cent rooming houses. Rather, Pervus slept. The woman lay awake, wept a little, perhaps. But in the morning Pervus might have started

(if he had been a man given to nothing) that the fine jaw-line was set as determinedly as ever with an angle that spelled inevitably paint, drainage, humus, potash, phosphoric acid, and a horse team.

She rose before four with Pervus, glad to be out of the stuffy little room with its spotted and scaly green wall paper, its rickety bed and chair. They had a cup of coffee and a slice of bread in the eating house on the first floor. Selma waited while he tended the horse. It was scarcely dawn when the trading began. Selma, watching it from the wagon seat, thought that this was a ridiculously haphazard and perilous method of distributing the food for whose fruition Pervus had toiled with aching back and tired arms. But she said nothing.

She kept, perforce, to the house that first year, and the second. Pervus declared that his woman should never work in the fields as did many of the High Prairie wives and daughters. Selma learned much that first year, and the second, but she said little. She kept the house in order—rough work, and endless—and she managed, miraculously, to keep herself looking fresh and neat. She understood now Maartje Pool's drab garments, harassed face, heavily swift feet, never at rest. The idea of flowers in bowls was abandoned by July. Had it not been for Roelf's faithful tending, the flower beds themselves, planted with such hopes, would have perished for lack of care.

Roelf came often to the house. He found there a tranquillity and peace never known in the Pool place, with its hubbub and clutter. In order to make her house attractive Selma had actually rifled her precious little bank board—the four hundred and ninety-seven dollars left her by her father. She still had one of the clear white diamonds. She kept it sewed in the hem of an old flannel petticoat.

The can of white paint and the brush actually did materialize. For weeks it was dangerous to sit, lean, or tread upon any paintable thing in the DeJong farmhouse without eliciting a cry of warning from Selma. She would actually have tried her hand at the outside of the house with a quart can and a three-inch brush if Pervus hadn't intervened. She hemmed dimity curtains, made slip-covers for the hideous parlor sofa and the ugliest of the chairs. Subscribed for a magazine called House and Garden. Together she and Roelf went to pore over this fascinating periodical. If High Prairie had ever overheard one of these conversations between the farm woman who would always be a girl and the farm boy who had never been quite a child, it would have raised palms high in an "Og heden!" of horror. But High Prairie never heard, and wouldn't have understood if it had.

Selma was up daily at four. Dressing was a swift and mechanical covering of the body. Breakfast must be ready for Pervus and Jan when they came in from the barn. The house to clean, the chickens to tend, sewing, washing, ironing, cooking. She contrived ways of minimizing her steps, of lightening her labor. And she saw clearly how the little farm was mismanaged through lack of foresight, imagination, and—she faced it squarely—through stupidity. She was fond of this great, kindly, blundering, stubborn boy who was her husband. But she saw him with amazing clearness through the mists of her love. There was something prophetic about the way she began to absorb knowledge of the farm work, of vegetable culture, of marketing. Listening, seeing, she learned about soil, planting, weather, selling. The daily talk of the house and fields was of nothing else. About this little twenty-five-acre garden patch there was nothing of the majesty of the Iowa, Illinois and Kansas grain farms, with their endless billows of wheat and corn, rye, alfalfa and barley rolling away to the horizon. Everything was done in diminutive here. Selma sensed that every inch of soil should have been made to yield to the utmost. Yet there lay the west sixteen, useless during most of the year; reliable never. And there was no money to drain it or enrich it; no ready cash for the purchase of profitable neighboring acreage. She did not know the term intensive farming, but this was what she meant.

(Continued next week.)

Old Spirit of the Sabbath is Being Revived.

The old spirit of the Sabbath, before the day of movies, motoring, golf and other complex recreations, will be revived in Oak Park, a suburb of Chicago of 50,000 population, in a mid-May festival of cherry blossoms and church going in which citizens will walk to worship and wear frock coats and silk hats in the manner of years gone by.

The plan was originated by a newspaper editor, after Oak Park, the world's largest village, had voted down a proposal to permit operation of Sunday movies, and was taken up by several organizations, which began distribution of thousands of cherry trees. On the Sunday of the festival, churches, homes and all public buildings will be decorated with the fragrant blossoms.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

DAILY THOUGHT.

"Taking it altogether, This world is hard to beat! There's a thorn with every rose— But aren't the roses sweet?"

—J. Whitcomb Riley.

One notes that most of the crepe de chine frocks are two-piece. If one chooses, the chiffon dance frock may be of a vivid print.

Printed crepe frocks button in a long line straight down the front. Some of the new skirts are slightly fuller, but not a bit longer.

The pointed decolletage is generally deeper in back than in front.

For evening there are embroidered and beaded coats of intricate cut. Sometimes whole skirts are of the fine pleating which is so very popular.

Russian embroidery is effective on a child's two piece frock of jersey. At Palm Beach the younger set fancy the gayly printed the bathing suits. Very charming are the new rain coats of thin, flowered, rubberized silk. A formal frock for afternoon has a tunic of eyelet embroidery on batiste.

Although the vogue for college striped neckwear shows no abatement it is said in London that for general effects are the patterns of the moment. And in the patterns of the moment to feature shades of beetroot, beige, tan, china blue, gray, maroon and burnt cork, as the predominating ground colors, according to a leading authority.

A new style note is the handkerchief which exactly matches the tie. This has been brought about by the fact that the handkerchief pocket adorning the single and double-breasted jackets calls for decoration. Foulards and crepe de chine are the favorite materials for this type of handkerchief. There is every indication that forard neckwear will be even more popular this summer than it was last and as evidence of this there is cited the demand by men who lead the styles in London for foulard neckwear in shades of beige, lacquer, beetroot, china blue and Quaker gray. The large floral designs of other seasons have given way to small, neat, rather conventional patterns.

An outstanding phase of styles in neckwear is the enormous popularity of college colors.

In the painting of furniture there are two fields for exercising your endeavor. New furniture you have bought for just this purpose, and your old shabby things at home. New furniture intended for painting is either procured unstained or is lucky enough to find it in this condition. Inexpensive pieces of excellent line are nabbed up for a song, and promised a speedy new coat which will fit them for the highest society, and cover forever the unprepossessing original finish of golden oak, or some other ugly beginning.

And as it is never wise to put the cart before the horse, while I know that you are on tip-toe with impatience to be told how to paint on flowers and posies, it is really best for you to know first how to get the proper painted background for your effective decorations.

If the furniture that is to be painted and decorated is in its natural state and has never before been guilty of a finish, it should first be coated with shellac. This not only seals the open grain of the wood and causes the first coat of paint to go on better, but it seals any imperfection or any resinous knot that would thereafter give endless trouble by oozing inconveniently when brought in contact with heat, thus spoiling the painted surface. So much for absolutely unfinished furniture.

If the furniture is old and shabby, and the former finish is cracked and worn, it should be removed by means of a paint and varnish remover, or thorough sand papering. After all the old finish has vanished, and the surface washed and dried, the coating of shellac should be applied as for originally unfinished furniture. If the furniture is new and varnished, the finish may be disregarded, except for slight sand papering, and the preliminary coat of paint laid on. Otherwise, if desired, the varnished finish may be removed, in which case one has at once unfinished furniture requiring a coat of shellac.

The first two coats of paint required for furniture may have their chief foundation of white lead with turpentine and dryer, but with no oil. This may be freely mixed with the color pigment to be used for the final coats. If desired, though this is not necessary, after every coat of paint is finished it should be allowed to dry thoroughly; then before laying on the next one it should be well sand papered; every surface should be as smooth and free from lumps, drops or other irregularities as the finished coat; also it should be sufficiently roughened to tightly hold the new coat.

After two coats of paint have been applied, the furniture is ready for the enamel finish. This should be an egg-shell enamel, and may consist of one or two coats, depending on the desired fineness of the finished work, and the appearance of the first coat when dry. After the last coat of enamel is dry, if its color is light it should be carefully rubbed with powdered pumice and water; if the color is dark, the powdered pumice should be moistened with oil instead. The furniture is then prepared to receive what flower-like ministrations you feel qualified to apply.

Before the subject of preparing designs and stencils is gone into, and while still on that of the paint medium, the thought of the actual decorating will be enhanced fourfold if you know you may be allowed to use real artist colors squeezed out of tubes upon a palette. Such is the delightful case; with them you should mix a drying oil and for brushes you should select oxhair or sable, unless the surface to be decorated is of an extremely high polish, when the brushes should be camel's hair.

For one who has little experience with the brush or no skill in drawing, the cut stencil provides a means to the end of decorating furniture which is not to be scorned.