



THE BIG (By EDNA FERBER)

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLARK AGNEW.

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(Continued from last week.)

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—Introducing "So Big" Dirk DeJong in his infancy and his mother, Selina DeJong, daughter of a gambler and a fortune teller.

CHAPTER II—Selina secures a position as a teacher at the High Prairie school in the outskirts of Chicago.

CHAPTER III—The monotonous life of a country teacher is brightened somewhat by the companionship of the sensitive, artistic boy with whom she falls in love.

CHAPTER IV—Selina hears gossip concerning the affection of the "Widow Paarlberg," rich and good-looking, for Fervus DeJong, poor truck farmer.

CHAPTER V—Proximity, in their positions of "teacher" and "pupil," and Selina's loneliness in her uncontented surroundings, lead to mutual affection.

CHAPTER VI—Selina becomes Mrs. DeJong, a "farmwife" at that time. Dirk is born. Selina (of Vermont stock, businesslike and shrewd) plans for building up the farm, which she inherited from her husband, Maartje Pool, Klaas's wife.

CHAPTER VII—Dirk is eight years old when his father dies. Selina, faced with the necessity of making a living for her boy and herself, rises to the occasion, and, with Dirk taking a truck load of vegetables to the Chicago market, a woman selling in the market place is an innovation.

CHAPTER VIII—As a disposer of the vegetables from her truck Selina is a fat failure, buyers being shy of dealing with her. To a commission dealer she sells part of her stock.

CHAPTER IX—August Hempel, risen to prominence and wealth in the business world, wishes to assist Selina in making the farm something more of a paying proposition.

CHAPTER X—Selina achieves the success with the farm which she knew was possible, her financial troubles ending. At eighteen Dirk enters Midwest university.

CHAPTER XI—Dirk goes to Cornell university, intending to make architecture his life work, and on graduation enters the office of a firm of Chicago architects.

CHAPTER XII—Paula, despite her marriage and motherhood, continues interested in Dirk, their friendship beginning to cause gossip. She urges Dirk to give up the profession of architecture and enter business for the greater financial reward possible.

CHAPTER XIII—Dirk enlists in the army, going to the officers' training camp at Fort Sheridan. He gets to France finally but sees no actual fighting. Selina is vaguely dissatisfied with Dirk's progress, the tension increasing when he tells her he has decided to give up architecture for business.

CHAPTER XIV—Dirk returns to the United States and enters the office of a large and successful architectural firm. He meets Selina and her new husband, August Hempel, who has become a very wealthy man.

the Truck Farmers' association valued her opinion. Her life was full, pleasant, prolific.

Chapter XIV

Paula had a scheme for interesting women in bond buying. It was a good scheme. She suggested it so that Dirk thought he had thought of it.

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Dirk's private office was almost as difficult of access as that of the nation's executive. Cards, telephones, office boys, secretaries stood between the caller and Dirk DeJong, head of the bond department.

Dirk was glad to see you; quietly, interestedly glad to see you. As you stated your business he listened attentively, as was his charming way.

Ladies in the modish black of recent bereavement made quite a somber procession to his door. His suggestions (often originating with Paula) made the Great Lakes Trust company's discreet advertising rich in results.

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"Women are becoming more and more used to the handling of money," Paula said, shrewdly. "Pretty soon their patronage is going to be as valuable as that of men.

"But would the women come?" "Of course they'd come. Women will accept any invitation that's engraved on heavy cream paper."

The Great Lakes Trust had a branch in Cleveland now, and one in New York, on Fifth avenue. The drive to interest women in bond buying and to instruct them in finance was to take on almost national proportions.

The Talks for Women on the Subject of Finance were held every two weeks in the crystal room of the Blackstone and were a great success.

"Oh, yes. She remembered." "That boy of yours has made his mark, too, I see. Doing grand, ain't it? Wa-al, great satisfaction having a son turn out well like that. Yes, sirree! Why, look at my da'ter Carl'ine—"

Life at High Prairie had its savor, too. Frequently you saw strange visitors there for a week or ten days at a time—boys and girls whose city pallor gave way to a rich tan; tired-looking women with sagging figures who drank Selina's cream and ate her abundant vegetables and tender chickens as though they expected these viands to be momentarily snatched from them.

Selina picked these up in odd corners of the city. Dirk protested against this, too. Selina was a member of the High Prairie school board now. She was on the Good Roads committee and

on the well-known banker or lawyer or business man who was scheduled to address the meeting. Dirk spoke here or four times during the winter here was markedly a favorite. The women, in smart crepe gowns and tailored suits and small chic hats, twittered and murmured about him, even while they sensibly digested his well-thought-out remarks.

It was decided that for the national advertising there must be an illustration that would catch the eye of women, and interest them. The person to do it, Dirk thought, was this Dallas O'Mara whose queer hen-track signature you saw scrawled on half the advertising illustrations that caught your eye.

"M-m-m, she's very good," Paula had said, guardedly, "but aren't there others who are better?" "She!" Dirk had exclaimed. "Is it a woman? I didn't know. That name might be anything."

"Oh, yes, she's a woman." She said to be very—very attractive. Dirk sent for Dallas O'Mara. She replied, suggesting an appointment two weeks from that date.

Dirk's secretary called Dallas O'Mara on the telephone. Could she come down to see him that day at eleven? "No; she worked until four daily at her studio."

Could she come to his office at four-thirty, then? Yes, but wouldn't it be better if he could come to her studio where he could see something of the various types of drawings—oils, or black-and-white, or crayons.

All this relayed by his secretary at the telephone to Dirk at his desk. He jammed his cigarette end viciously into a tray, blew a final infuriated wreath of smoke, and picked up the telephone connection on his own desk.

"Hello, Miss—uh—O'Mara. This is Mr. DeJong talking. I much prefer that you come to my office and talk to me." (No more of this nonsense.) "Her voice." "Certainly, if you prefer it. I thought the other would save us both some time. I'll be there at four-thirty."

"Very well. Four-thirty," said Dirk, crisply. Jerked the receiver onto the hook. That was the way to handle 'em. These females of forty with straggling hair and a bundle of drawings under their arm.

The female of forty with straggling hair and a bundle of drawings under her arm was announced at four-thirty to the dot. Dirk let her wait five minutes in the outer office, being still a little annoyed.

Dirk had made the appointment with her for Thursday at three. Paula said she'd go with him, and went. She dressed for Dallas O'Mara and the result was undeniably enchanting.

Miss O'Mara sat down. Miss O'Mara looked at him with her tired deep blue eyes. Miss O'Mara said nothing. She regarded him pleasantly, quietly, composedly. He waited for her to say that usually she did not come to business offices; that she had only twenty minutes to give him; that the day was warm or cold; his office handsome; the view over the river magnificent.

Now, this was a new experience for Dirk DeJong. Usually women spoke to him first and fluently. Quiet women waxed voluble under his silence; voluble women chattered. Paula always spoke a hundred words to his one. But here was a woman more silent than he; not sullenly silent, nor heavily silent, but quietly, composedly, restfully silent.

"I'll tell you the sort of thing we want, Miss O'Mara." He told her. When he had finished she probably would burst out with three or four plans. The others had done that.

When he had finished she said, "I'll think about it for a couple of days while I'm working on something else. I always do. I'm doing a soap picture now. I can begin work on yours Wednesday."

"But I'd like to see it—that is, I'd like to have an idea of what you're planning to do with it." Did she think he was going to let her go ahead without consulting his judgment? "Oh, it will be all right. But drop into the studio if you like. It will take me about a week, I suppose. I'll be over on Ontario in that old studio building. You'll know it by the way most of the bricks have fallen out of the building and are scattered over the sidewalk."

smile. Her teeth were good but her mouth was too big, he thought. Nice big warm kind of smile, though. He found himself smiling, too, sociably. Then he became businesslike again. Very businesslike.

"How much do you—what is your—what would you expect to get for a drawing such as that?" "Fifteen hundred dollars," said Miss O'Mara.

"Nonsense." He looked at her then. Perhaps that had been humor. But she was not smiling. "You mean fifteen hundred for a single drawing?" "For that sort of thing, yes."

"I'm afraid we can't pay that, Miss O'Mara." Miss O'Mara stood up. "That is my price." She was not at all embarrassed. He realized that he had never seen such effortless composure.

"Not any crazier than the prices you top-notchers get." "Still, fifteen hundred dollars is quite a lot of money."

"I think so, too. But then, I'll always think anything over nine dollars is quite a lot of money. You see, I used to get twenty-five cents apiece for sketching hats for Gage's."

"Arrived! Heavens, no! I've started." "Who gets more money than you do for a drawing?" "Nobody, I suppose."

"Well, then, in another minute I'll be telling you the story of my life." She smiled again her slow wide smile; turned to leave. Dirk decided that while most women's mouths were merely features this girl's was a decoration.

"Make a note, Miss Rawlings, to call Miss O'Mara's studio on Thursday." "In the next few days he learned that a surprising lot of people knew a surprisingly good deal about this Dallas O'Mara. She hailed from Texas, hence the name. She was twenty-eight—twenty-five—thirty-two—thirty-six. She was beautiful. She was ugly. She was an orphan.

She had worked her way through art school. She had no sense of the value of money. Two years ago she had achieved sudden success with her drawings. Her ambition was to work in oils. She told like a galley-slave; played like a child; had twenty beaux and no lover; her friends, men and women, were legion and wandered in and out of her studio as though it were a public thoroughfare.

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"Hello!" Said Dallas O'Mara. "This is it. Do you think you're going to like it?"

will you dump some of those things. This is Mrs. Storm, Mr. DeJong—Gilda Heran." Her secretary, Dirk later learned.

The place was disorderly, comfortable, shabby. A battered grand piano stood in one corner. A great skylight formed half the ceiling and sloped down at the north end of the room.

"Perched atop the stool, one slipped foot screwed in a rung, Dallas worked concentratedly, calmly, earnestly. There was something splendid, something impressive, something magnificent about her absorption, her indifference to appearance, her unawareness of outsiders, her concentration on the work before her.

"Oh," said Dallas in that deep, restful, leisurely voice of hers, "there are always between twenty and thirty—she slapped a quick scarlet line on the board, rubbed it out at once—"thought people in and out of here every hour, just about, I like it."

"Gosh!" he thought, "she's—I don't know—she's—"

"Shall we go?" said Paula. He had forgotten all about her. "Yes, yes, I'm ready if you are."

Outside, "Do you think you're going to like the picture?" Paula asked. They stepped into her car.

"Sure." "Attractive, isn't she?" "Think so?"

So he was going to be on his guard, was he? Paula threw in the clutch viciously, jerked the lever into second speed. "Her neck was dirty."

Dirk turned sideways to look at her. It was as though he saw her for the first time. She looked brittle, hard, artificial—small, somehow. Not in physique but in personality.

The picture was finished and delivered within ten days. In that time Dirk went twice to the studio in Ontario street. Dallas did not seem to mind. Neither did she appear particularly interested.

He thought a good deal about Dallas O'Mara. He found himself talking about her in what he assumed to be a careless, offhand manner. He liked to talk about her. He told his mother of her. He could tell himself go with Selina, and he must have taken advantage of this for she looked at him intently and said, "I'd like to meet her. I've never met a girl like that."

"I'll ask her if she'll let me bring you up to the studio some time when you're in town." (Continued next week.)

FARM NOTES.

—Pennsylvania's flow of maple sap this spring has been estimated as being worth \$512,500.

—Seed bare places on the lawn. Constant seeding keeps the grass thick and the weeds thin.

—Keep ahead of the weeds and they will never grow up to be troublesome pests. Clean cultivation means fewer undesirable plants in the fields and gardens in the following years.

—One farmer today produces as much as four or five farmers did thirty years ago, say farm economists. More and better machinery, with improved cultural practices makes production more efficient.

—One hundred and twenty-eight "boarder" cows were forced out of Pennsylvania cow testing associations in April, the monthly report of the dairy extension service of the Pennsylvania State College shows.

—Of the 305 litters in the 1925 ton litter race, 192 are pure bred; 98 are sired by pure bred boars, and 15 are miscellaneous. Watch the percentage of each that make the ton litter. Good blood tells. Listen to its story this fall.

—When pastures begin to get short do not fail to give the cows supplementary feed. Hay, green feed, or grain may be used. An important thing in profitable milk production is liberal feeding at all seasons of the year.

—More than three hundred litters have been enrolled and nominated for the 1925 Ton Litter club. Results obtained last year show that producing a ton of pork with one litter in 180 days is an economical means of filling the pork barrel. This year it will be no different.

—Cow testers are much in demand for Keystone associations. A course of training for men to fill the vacancies which come in July, August and September will be given at The Pennsylvania State College, July 20 to 25. Practical instruction is the young man for actual testing work.

—Thirty-seven associations tested 11,944 cows. The Carbon-Lehigh association led with 503 cows tested. The Westmoreland association and the Cumberland group were first in the number of cows producing 40 pounds of butterfat or more with 81 each, and the Lycoming association led the groups with 236 cows giving over a thousand pounds of milk. There were 1463 cows producing more than forty pounds of milk and 2292 giving over a half ton of milk.

—Beekeepers throughout Pennsylvania are cautioned to be on the watch for the development of American foul brood in their hives. A close watch should be kept for dead brood from now until the first of September. The disease attacks larvae causing a brownish decay to take place. It is a menace in all parts of the State.

Control measures include removal of the bees from the infested hive, swarming them into a new hive. Infestation remains in the honey, so the bees must build new combs. Burn or bury the old combs.

—Requests for information on how to register a farm name in order to prevent any other farm owner in the State from using the same name are frequently received by the Department of Agriculture.

The procedure is as follows: Write to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Harrisburg, for the application blank used in registering trademarks and trade-names. In this application, the farmer certifies as to the farm owner, location of residence, the products sold from the farm, the trade-mark or farm name will be used.

Two copies of the farm letterhead or other medium carrying the farm name must be sent with the application. The fee for registration is \$5.00.

—Fear that not enough farmers in the wheat growing counties of the State are giving serious attention to the control of the angoumois grain moth is expressed by H. E. Hodgkiss, extension entomologist at The Pennsylvania State College.

The weather conditions of last year were unfavorable to the development of the moth and not so much damage was done. But reverse conditions exist this summer and damage that may run into several millions of dollars can be expected, unless growers in the affected sections take heed of the situation at once.

"Thresh early," is the warning from State College. Threshing in the field before August 1 is recommended, and the job should be done before September 1, by all means, say specialists. He adds: "The moth is working now in barns where the spring clean-up was neglected. This means a re-infestation of the grain in the bins and if the weather influences have increased the breeding of the moth in the field, we must be fearful of an outbreak in September or early in August."

Opal Diggers Work Hard for Small Remuneration

Of all the rough "outback" jobs in Australia, digging for opal is about the worst. Cooler Pedy lies in the heart of the Stewart range, 170 miles from the nearest station on the East-West railway, and its whole population of between 70 and 80 diggers lives underground in burrows scratched out of the hillsides. A tin shanty, in which the diggers keep their tools, is the only sign of life showing above ground.

Every morning the diggers come out of their holes and set out for the opal fields, to cut patiently through the rock in the hope of finding the beautiful black diamonds lying beneath. Between them they have dug up many thousands of dollars' worth of opal in the last four years, though they have worked only a small area of a field said to be 40 miles long. In normal times opal is worth about \$15 an ounce, but now that there is practically no demand for the gems the diggers have opal, but no money.

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