

SO BIG

By
EDNA FERBER

(By Doubleday, Page & Co.)
WNU Service.

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—Introducing "So Big" (Dirk DeJong) in his infancy. And his mother, Selma DeJong, daughter of Simon Peake, gambler and gentleman of fortune. Her life, to young womanhood in Chicago in 1878, has been unconventional, somewhat seamy, but generally enjoyable. At school her chum is Julie Hempel, daughter of August Hempel, butcher. Simon is killed in a quarrel that is not his own, and Selma, nineteen 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, Klaus Pool. In 1891, twelve years old, son of Klaus, 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, brightens somewhat by the nomination of the sensitive, artistic boy, Roel.

CHAPTER IV—Selma hears gossip concerning the affection of "Big" and Paarlberg, rich and good-looking, for Pervus DeJong, poor truck farmer, who is inseparable to the widow's attractions. For a community "social" 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 sense 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—Frequently, in their positions of "Big" and "Paarlberg," Selma's loneliness in her ungenial surroundings, lead to mutual affection. Pervus DeJong wins Selma's consent to be his wife.

CHAPTER VI—Selma becomes Mrs. DeJong, a farmer's wife, with all the hardships unavoidable at that time. Dirk is born. Selma (of Vermont stock, businesslike and shrewd) has plans for building up the farm, which are ridiculed by her husband. Marjorie Pool, Klaus' wife, dies, and Selma's requisite decent interval Klaus marries the "Widow Paarlberg." The boy Roel, sixteen years old now, leaves his home, to make his way to France and study, his ambition being to be-

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

CHAPTER VIII—As a dispenser of the vegetables from her truck Selma is a fat falling buyer being shy of dealing with her. To a commission dealer she sells part of her stock. On the way home she peddles from door to door, with indifferent success. A policeman demands her license. She has none, and during the ensuing altercation Selma's girlhood chum, Julie Hempel, now Julie Arnold, recognizes her.

CHAPTER IX—August Hempel, risen to prominence and wealth in the business world, arranges to assist Selma in making the farm something more of a paying proposition. Selma gratefully accepts his help, for Dirk's sake.

CHAPTER X—Selma achieves the success with the farm which she knew was possible, her financial troubles ending. At eighteen Dirk enters Mid-western University.

"High-bred hogs. They're worth their weight in silver this minute, and will be for years to come. I won't go in for them extensively. Just enough to make an architect out of Mr. Dirk DeJong." Then, at the expression of his face: "Don't look so pained, son. There's nothing revolting about a hog—he's a handsome, impressive-looking animal, the hog, when he isn't trotting like one."

He looked dejected. "I'd rather not go to school on—hogs."

She took off the felt hat and tossed it over to the old coach by the window; smoothed her hair back with the flat of her palm. You saw that the soft dark hair was liberally sprinkled with gray now, but the eyes were bright and clear as ever.

"You know, Sobig, this is what they call a paying farm—a vegetable farm. We're out of debt, the lads in good shape, the crop promises well if we don't have another rainy cold spring like last year's. I'm having a grand time. When I see the asparagus plantation actually yielding, that I planted ten years ago, I'm as happy as if I'd stumbled on a gold mine. I think, sometimes, of the way your father objected to my planting the first one. April, like this, in the country, with everything coming up green and new in the rich black loam—I can't tell you. And when I know that it goes to market as food—the best kind of food, that keeps people's bodies clean and clear and flexible and strong! I like to think of babies' mothers saying: 'Now eat your spinach, every scrap, or you can't have any dessert! Carrots make your eyes bright. Finish your potato. Potatoes make you strong!'"

Selma laughed. "Hubbed a little. 'Yes, but how about hogs? Do you feel that way about hogs?'"

"Certainly," said Selma, briskly. She pushed toward him a little blue-and-white platter that lay on the white cloth near her elbow. "Have a bit more bacon, Dirk. One of these nice curly slivers that are so crisp."

"I've finished my breakfast, Mother." He rose.

The following autumn saw him a student of architecture at Cornell. He worked hard, studied even during his vacation.

He would come home to the heat and humidity of the Illinois summers and spend hours each day in his own room that he had fitted up with a long work-table and a drawing board. His T-square was at hand; two triangles—a 45 and a 90; his compass; a pair of dividers. Selma sometimes stood behind him watching him as he carefully worked on the tracing paper. His contempt for the local architecture was now complete. Especially did he hold forth on the subject of the apartment houses that were mushrooming on every street in Chicago from Hyde Park on the south to Evanston on the north. Chicago was very elegant in speaking of these; never called them "flats"; always apartments. In front of each of these (there were usually six to a building) was stuck a little glass-enclosed cubicle known as a sun-parlor. In these (sometimes you heard them spoken of, grandly, as solariums) Chicago dwellers took refuge from the leaden skies, the heavy lake atmosphere, the gray mist and fog and smoke that so frequently swathed the city in gloom. They were done in yellow or rose tints, and flower-laden boxes. In these frank little boxes Chicago read its paper, sewed, played bridge, even ate its breakfast. It never pulled down the shades.

"Terrible!" Dirk fumed. "Not only are they hideous in themselves, stuck on the front of those houses like these pairs of spectacles; but the lack of decent privacy! They do everything but bathe in 'em. Have they never heard the advice given people who live in glass houses?"

By his junior year he was talking in a large way about the Beaux Arts. But Selma did not laugh at this. "Perhaps," she thought. "Who can tell! After a year or two in an office here, why not another year of study in Paris if he needs it?"

Though it was her busiest time on the farm Selma went to Illinois for his graduation in 1913. He was twenty-two and, she was calmly sure, the best-looking man in his class. Undoubtedly he was a figure to please the eye; tall, well-built, as his father had been, and blond, too, like his father, except for his eyes. These were brown—not so dark as Selma's, but with some of the soft liquid quality of her glance. They strengthened his face, somehow; gave him an ardent look of which he was not conscious. Women, feeling the ardor of that dark glance turned upon them, were likely to credit him with feelings toward themselves of which he was quite innocent. They did not know that the glance and its effect were mere matters of pigmentation and eye-conformation. Then, too, the gaze of a man who talks little is always more effective than that of one who is loquacious.

Selma, in her black silk dress, and her plain black hat, and her sensible shoes, was rather a quaint little figure among all those vivacious, bearded, and herbiboned mammals. But a distinctive little figure, too. Dirk need not be ashamed of her. She eyed the rather paunchy, prosperous, middle-aged father and thought, with a pang, how much handsomer Pervus would have been than any of these. If only he could have lived to see this day. Then, involuntarily, she wondered if this day would ever have occurred, had Pervus lived. Chided herself for thinking thus.

When he returned to Chicago, Dirk went into the office of Hollis & Sprague, architects. But his work there was little more than that of draughtsman, and his weekly stipend could hardly be dignified by the term of salary. But he had large ideas about architecture and he found expression for his suppressed feelings on his week-ends spent with Selma at the farm.

"Baroque" was the word with which he dismissed the new Bechtold hotel, north. He said the new Lincoln park hotel looked like an igloo. He said that the city council ought to order the Potter Palmer mansion destroyed as a blot on the landscape, and waxed profane on the subject of the east face of the Public Library building, downtown.

"Never mind," Selma assured him, happily. "It was all thrown up so hastily. Remember that just yesterday, or the day before, Chicago was an Indian foot, with tepees where towers are now, and mud walls in place of asphalt. Beauty needs time to perfect it. Perhaps we've been waiting all these years for just such youngsters as you. And maybe some day I'll be driving down Michigan boulevard with a distinguished visitor—Roel Pool, perhaps. Why not? Let's say Roel Pool, the famous sculptor. And he'll say, 'Who designed that building—the one that is so strong and yet so light? So gay and graceful and yet so reticent?' And I'll say, 'Oh, that! That's one of the earlier efforts of my son, Dirk DeJong.'"

But Dirk pulled at his pipe moodily; shook his head. "Oh, you don't know, mother. It's so d-d slow. First thing you know I'll be thirty. And what am I! An office boy—or little more than that—at Hollis."

During his university years Dirk had seen much of the Arnolds, Eugene and Paula, but it sometimes seemed to Selma that he avoided these meetings—those parties and week-ends. She was content that this should be so, for she guessed that the matter of money held him back. She thought it was well that he should realize the difference now. Eugene had his own car—one of five in the Arnold garage. Paula, too, had hers. Her fascination for Dirk was strong. Selma knew that, too. In the last year or two he had talked very

little of Paula and that, Selma knew, meant that he was hard hit. Sometimes Paula and Eugene drove out to the farm. Eugene would appear in rakish cap, loose London knickers, queer brogans with an English look about them, a carefully careless looseness about the hang and fit of his jacket. Paula did not affect sports clothes for herself. She was not the type, she said. Slim, dark, vivacious, she wore slinky clothes—crepes, chiffons. Her eyes were languorous, lovely. She worshiped luxury and said so.

"I'll have to marry money," she declared. "Now that they've finished calling poor grandpa a beef-baron and taking I don't know how many millions away from him, we're practically on the streets."

"You look it!" from Dirk; and there was bitterness beneath his light tone. "Well, it's true. All this silly muck-raking in the past ten years or more. Poor father! Of course, granddad was purty rough, let me tell you. I read some of the accounts of that last indictment—the 1910 one—and I must say I gathered that dear old Aug made Jesse James look like a philanthropist. I should think, at his age, he'd be a little scared. After all, when you're over seventy you're likely to have some doubts and fears about punishment in the next world. But not a grand old pirate like grandfather. He'll sack and burn and plunder until he goes down with the ship. And it looks to me as if the old boat had a pretty strong list to starboard right now. Father says himself that unless a war breaks, or something, which isn't at all likely, the packing industry is going to spring a leak."

"Elaborate figure of speech," murmured Eugene. The four of them—Paula, Dirk, Eugene and Selma—were sitting on the wide screened porch that Selma had had built at the southwest corner of the house. Paula was, of course, in the couch-swing. Occasionally she touched one slim languid foot to the floor and gave indolent impetus to the couch.

"It is, rather, isn't it? Might as well finish it, then. Darling Aug's been the grand old captain right through the 'V'age. Dad's never been more than a pretty bum second mate. And as for you, Gene my love, cabin boy would be, y'understand me, big." Eugene had gone into the business a year before.

"What can you expect," retorted Eugene, "of a lad that hates salt pork? And every other kind of pig meat?" He despised the yards and all that went with it.

Selma got up and walked to the end of the porch. "There's Adam coming in with the last load for the day. He'll be driving into town now. Cornelius started an hour ago." She went down the steps on her way to oversee the loading of Adam Bras' wagon. At the bottom of the steps she turned. "Why can't you two stay to supper? You can quarrel comfortably right through the meal and drive home in the cool of the evening."

"I'll stay," said Paula, "thanks. If you'll have all kinds of vegetables, cooked and uncooked. And let me go out into the fields and pick 'em myself like Maud Muller or Marie Antoinette or any of those make-believe rustic girls."

In her French-heeled slippers and her filmy silk stockings she went out into the rich black furrows of the fields, Dirk carrying the basket. "Asparagus," she ordered first. Then, "But where is it? Is that it?" "You dig for it, idiot," said Dirk, stooping, and taking from his basket the queerly curved sharp knife or spud used for cutting the asparagus shoots. "Cut the shoots three or four inches below the surface."

"Oh, let me do it!" She was down on her sliken knees in the dirt, ruined a goodly patch of the fine, tender shoots, gave it up and sat watching Dirk's expert manipulation of the knife. "Let's have radishes, and corn, and tomatoes, and lettuce and peas and artichokes and—"

"Artichokes grow in California, not Illinois."

The day was marvelously mild for March in Chicago. Spring usually so coy in this region, had flung herself at them head first. As the massive revolving door of Dirk's office building flung him into the street he saw Paula in her long ice sporting sweater at the curb. She was dressed in black. All feminine fashionable and middle-class Chicago was dressed in black. All feminine fashionable and middle-class America was dressed in black. Two years of war had robbed Paris of its husband, brothers, sons. All Paris walked in black. America, untouched, gayly borrowed the smart habiliments of mourning and now Michigan boulevard and Fifth avenue walked demurely in the gloom of crepe and chiffon; black hats, black gloves, black mittens. Only black was "good" this year.

(Continued next week)



You Like Me Better Than Any Man You Know.

He was more than usually uncommunicative, and noticeably moody. Paula remarked it. "Why the Otello brow?"

"You didn't mean that rot, did you? About marrying a rich man. You were joking, weren't you?"

"I wasn't. I'd hate being poor, or even just moderately rich. I'm used to money—lots of it. I'm twenty-

four. And I'm looking around." He kicked an innocent beet-top with his boot. "You like me better than any man you know."

"Of course I do. Just my luck."

"Well, then?"

"Well, then, let's take these wiggles in."

She made a pretense of lifting the heavy basket, Dirk snatched it roughly out of her hand so that she gave a little cry and looked ruefully down at the red mark on her palm. He caught her by the shoulder—even shook her a little. "Look here, Paula. Do you mean to tell me you'd marry a man simply because he happened to have a lot of money?"

"Perhaps not simply because he had a lot of money. But it certainly would be a factor, among other things."

Six months later Paula Arnold was married to Theodore A. Storm, a man of fifty, a friend of her father's, head of so many companies, stockholder in so many banks, director of so many corporations that even old Aug Hempel seemed a recluse from business in comparison. She never called him Teddy. No one ever did. Theodore Storm was a large man—not exactly stout, perhaps, but flabby. His inches saved him from grossness. He had a large white serious face, fine thick dark hair, graying at the temples. Within three years Paula had two children, a boy and a girl. "There! That's done," she said. Her marriage was a great mistake and she knew it. For the war, coming in 1914, a few months after her wedding, sent the Hempel-Arnold interests sky-rocketing. Millions of pounds of American beef and pork were shipped to Europe. In two years the Hempel fortune was greater than it ever had been. Paula was up to her eyes in relief work for Bleeding Belgium.

Dirk had not seen her in months. She telephoned him unexpectedly one Friday afternoon in his office at Hollis & Sprague's.

"Come out and spend Saturday and Sunday with us, won't you? We're running away to the country this afternoon, you can't imagine. I'm sending the children out this morning. I can't get away so early. I'll call for you in the roadster this afternoon at four and drive you out myself."

"I don't think I—"

"I'll call for you at four. I'll be at the curb. Don't keep me waiting, will you?"

Chapter XII

In town Dirk lived in a large front room and alcove on the third floor of a handsome old-fashioned three-story-and-basement house. He used the front room as a living room, the alcove as a bedroom. He and Selma had furnished it together, discarding all of the room's original belongings except the bed, a table, and one fat comfortable faded old armchair whose brocade surface hinted a past grandeur. When he had got his books ranged in open shelves along one wall, soft-shaded lamps on table and desk, the place looked more than livable; lived in. During the process of furnishing Selma got into the way of coming into town for a day or two to prow the auction rooms and the second-hand stores. She had a genius for this sort of thing; hated the spick-and-span varnish and veneer of the new furniture to be got in the regular way.

She enjoyed these rare trips into town; made a holiday of them. Dirk would take her to the theater and she would sit entranced. Strangely enough, considering the lack of what the world calls romance and adventure in her life, she did not like the motion pictures. "All the difference in the world," she would say, "between the movies and the thrill I get out of a play at the theater. My, yes! Like fooling with paper dolls when you could be playing with a real live baby."

The day was marvelously mild for March in Chicago. Spring usually so coy in this region, had flung herself at them head first. As the massive revolving door of Dirk's office building flung him into the street he saw Paula in her long ice sporting sweater at the curb. She was dressed in black. All feminine fashionable and middle-class Chicago was dressed in black. All feminine fashionable and middle-class America was dressed in black. Two years of war had robbed Paris of its husband, brothers, sons. All Paris walked in black. America, untouched, gayly borrowed the smart habiliments of mourning and now Michigan boulevard and Fifth avenue walked demurely in the gloom of crepe and chiffon; black hats, black gloves, black mittens. Only black was "good" this year.

Death of Sole Survivor

Rolland Anderson, sole survivor of the Randolph logging train disaster some 12 years ago, died Saturday in a Portland hospital of cancer from which he had been suffering for more than a year.

Mr. Anderson, who was the only one of seven to escape alive, when the bridge collapsed while the locomotive was on it, was so severely scalded that skin was contributed by 125 persons for grafting. He was a patient in the hospital for 25 months.

Deceased is survived by four brothers: Nonda Anderson, Geo. Anderson, Mack Anderson, and Holland Anderson; a sister, Mrs. Vega Birne, of Alhambra, Calif. Mr. Anderson had been employed in logging camps by his brother, Nonda, for some thirty years.—Western World.

Quality House Paint

\$2.00 a gallon

This paint comes in only two colors, Brown and Gray. If you have a building that needs paint, paint it now.

5 Gallon Lots \$1.95 a gal.

Oerding Hardware

Owned by the Seven Oerding Brothers
Three Doors East of Post Office Phone 74M

His Protection and Yours

AJAX Tires are wrapped differently. In fact, they are wrapped twice. You see the inner wrapping.

The inner wrapping is your protection and your dealer's.

It certifies that the AJAX Tire so wrapped is a new, first-quality tire.

That's worth remembering when you need a tire.

Your AJAX dealer is—

Wallace Tire Shop

at 333 First Street

AJAX TIRES

Gold Mills at Bandon

Two of the Banks gold mills, a newly invented centrifugal amalgamator developed by Geo. Banks of Seattle, have been installed at the Little mine east of Bandon and will be in full operation within the coming week according to Mr. Banks who is here superintending the installation.

A system of sluice box screens is being installed whereby the sands are to be conveyed into the machines. A paystreak between six and seven feet in depth and extending for some distance has been struck and is said to be comparatively rich in gold and platinum. This is to be worked with the machine, affording an excellent opportunity to make a test that will determine the feasibility of the invention for handling the local sands on a commercial scale.

The machine handles the raw sand after it has been screened down to the size of a pea and each machine is said to be able to handle between five and six tons of sand an hour. Mr. Banks states that tailings have been panned and repaired without finding colors, which proves that the machine saves everything in the way of values. The machines are inexpensive and can be quickly constructed.

At present eight men are at work erecting sluice boxes and building a dam to provide water for sluicing purposes. The company has an option on about 30 acres of old-ocean beach that is believed to be good workable property. Additional acreage is said to be available.—World.

Special Notice

On account of a ruling by the post-office department we can only furnish the Oregon Farmer at the low rate we have been charging for it when \$1.00 is paid in connection with a Sentinel subscription—but this really doesn't increase the price at all, as we furnish it for five years for the dollar.

SCHLAGE BUTON-LOCKS

installed in
10 minutes

Each SCHLAGE Buton Lock comes to you as a single self-contained unit. No adjusting necessary. No complicated mortising. Simply drill two holes in the door, slip the lock into place, and draw it up with two machine screws.

Just Press the BUTTON in the knob to Lock

Just Turn the KNOB to Unlock

Convenient. Charming. Distinctive. No building completely modern without SCHLAGE Buton Locks. Types for all doors. Glass knobs or metal knobs in all U. S. standard finishes.

E. W. GREGG

First Street, Coquille