

SO BIG

(BY EDNA FERBER)

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLARK AGNEW

Copyright by Doubleday, Page & Co. WNU Service.



(Continued)

"And guess," thrilled Paula, "guess who's coming with him, Dirk! That wonderful Roelf Pool, the French sculptor!"

"What do you mean—French sculptor! He's no more French than I am. He was born within a couple of miles of my mother's farm. His people were Dutch truck farmers. His father lived in High Prairie until a year ago, when he died of a stroke."

When he told Selina she flushed like a girl, as she sometimes still did when she was much excited. "Yes, I saw it in the paper. I wonder," she added, quietly, "if I shall see him."

That evening you might have seen her sitting, fingering the faded shabby time-worn objects the saving of which Dirk had denounced as sentimental. The crude drawing of the Haymarket; the wide-ribbed cashmere dress; some faded brittle flowers.

Paula was giving a large—but not too large—dinner on the second night. She was very animated about it, excited, gay. "They say," she told Dirk, "that Goguet doesn't eat anything but hard-boiled eggs and rusks. Oh, well, the others won't object to squabs and mushrooms and things. And his hobby is his farm in Brittany. Pool's stunning—dark and somber and very white teeth."

Paula was very gay these days. Too gay. It seemed to Dirk that her nervous energy was inexhaustible—and exhausting. Dirk refused to admit to himself how irked he was by the shallow heart-shaped exquisite face, the lean brown clutching fingers, the air of ownership. He had begun to dislike things about her as an unfaithful spouse is irritated by quite innocent mannerisms of his unconscious mate. She scuffed her heels a little when she walked, for example. It maddened him. She had a way of biting the rough skin around her carefully tended nails when she was nervous. "Don't do that!" he said.

Dallas never irritated him. She rested him, he told himself. He would arm himself against her, but one minute after meeting her he would sink gratefully and resistlessly into her quiet depths. Sometimes he thought all this was an assumed manner in her.

"This calm of yours—this effortless—ness," he said to her one day, "is a pose, isn't it?" Anything to get her notice.

"Partly," Dallas had replied, amiably. "It's a nice pose though, don't you think?"

What are you going to do with a girl like that?

There was the woman who could hold him entirely, and who never held out a finger to hold him. He tore at the smooth wall of her indifference, though he only cut and bruised his own hands in going it.

"Is it because I'm a successful business man that you don't like me?"

"But you're an attractive man. Dangerous, that's the wide-eyed ingenue. You know I don't want you. You've got me and you don't want me. If I had been a successful business man instead of a successful business man would that have made any difference?"

"Good Lord, no! Some day I'll probably marry a horny-handed son of toll, and if I do it'll be the horny hands that will win me. If you want to know, I like 'em with their ears on them. There's something about a man who has fought for it—I don't know what it is—a look in his eye—the feel of his hand. He needn't have been successful—though he probably would be. I don't know. I only know he—well, you haven't a mark on you. Not a mark! I'm not criticizing you. But you're all smooth. I like 'em bumpy. That sounds terrible. It isn't what I mean at all. It isn't—"

"Oh, never mind," Dirk said, wearily. "I think I know what you mean. Listen, Dallas. If I thought—I'd go back to Hollis & Sprague's and begin all over again at forty a week if I thought you'd—"

"Don't!"

Chapter XVI

General Goguet and Roelf Pool had been in Chicago one night and part of a day. Dirk had not met them—was to meet them at Paula's dinner that evening. He was curious about Pool but not particularly interested in the warrior. Restless, unhappy, wanting to see Dallas (he admitted it, bitterly) he dropped into her studio at an unaccustomed hour almost immediately after lunch and heard gay voices and laughter.

Dallas in a grimy smock and the scuffed kid slippers was entertaining two truants from Chicago society—Gen. Emile Goguet and Roelf Pool. They seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely. She introduced Dirk as casually as though their presence were a natural and expected thing—which it was. She had never mentioned them to him. Yet now: "This is Dirk DeJong—Gen. Emile Goguet. We were campaigners together in France. Roelf Pool. So were we, weren't we, Roelf?"

Gen. Emile Goguet bowed formally, but his eyes were twinkling. He appeared to be having a very good time. Roelf Pool's dark face had lighted up with such a glow of surprise and pleasure as to transform it. He strode over to Dirk, clasped his hand. "Dirk DeJong! Not—why, say, don't you know me? I'm Roelf Pool!"

"I ought to know you," said Dirk. "Oh, but I mean I'm—I knew you when you were a kid. You're Selina's Dirk. Aren't you? My Selina. I'm driving out to see her this afternoon. She's one of my reasons for being here. Why, I'm—" He was laughing, talking excitedly, like a boy. Dallas again, was enjoying it immensely.

"They've run away," she explained to Dirk, "from the elaborate program that was arranged for them this afternoon. I don't know where the French got their reputation for being polite. The general is a perfect boor, aren't you? And scared to death of women. He's the only French general in captivity who ever took the trouble to learn English."

"We're all going," announced Dallas, and made a dash for the stuffy little bedroom off the studio.

Well, this was a bit too informal. "Going where?" inquired Dirk. The general, too, appeared bewildered.

Roelf explained, delightedly. "It's a plot. We're all going to drive out to your mother's. You'll go, won't you? You simply must."

"Go?" now put in General Goguet. "Where is it that we go? I thought we stayed here, quietly. It is quiet here, and no reception committees." His tone was wistful.

Roelf attempted to make it clear. "Mr. DeJong's mother is a farmer. You remember I told you all about her in the ship coming over. She was wonderful to me when I was a kid. She was the first person to tell me what beauty was—is. She's magnificent. She raises vegetables."

"Ah! A farm! But yes! I, too, am a farmer. Well!" He shook Dirk's hand again. He appeared now for the first time to find him interesting.

"Of course I'll go. Does mother know you're coming? She has been hoping she'd see you, but she thought you'd grown so grand—"

"Wait until I tell her about the day I landed in Paris with five francs in my pocket. No, she doesn't know we're coming, but she'll be there, won't she? I've a feeling she'll be there, exactly the same. She will, won't she?"

"She'll be there." It was early spring; the busiest of seasons on the farm.

They were down the stairs and off in the powerful car that seemed to be at the visitors' disposal. Through the loop, up Michigan avenue, into the South side, Chicago, often lowering and gray in April, was wearing gold and blue today. The air was sharp, but beneath the brusqueness of it was a gentle promise. Dallas and Pool were much absorbed in Paris plans, Paris reminiscences. "And do you remember the time we—only seven francs among the lot of us and the dinner was— you're surely coming over in June, then— oils— you'll get the thing, I tell you— you'll be great, Dallas— remember what Murray said— study— work—"

Dirk was wretched. He pointed out objects of interest to General Goguet. Sixty miles of boulevard. Park system. Finest in the country. Grand

boulevard. Drexel boulevard. Jackson park. Illinois Central trains. Terrific, yes, but they were electrifying. Going to make 'em run by electricity, you know. Things wouldn't look so dirty, after that. Halsted street. Longest street in the world.

And, "Ah, yes," said the general, politely. "Ah, yes. Quite so. Most interesting."

The rich black loam of High Prairie. A hint of fresh green things just peeping out of the earth. Hothouses. Coldframes. The farm.

"But I thought you said it was a small farm!" said General Goguet, as they descended from the car. He looked about at the acreage.

"It is small," Dirk assured him. "Only about forty acres."

"Ah, well, you Americans. In France we farm on a very small scale, you understand. We have not the land. The great vast country." He waved his right arm. You felt that if the left sleeve had not been empty he would have made a large and sweeping gesture with both arms.

Selina was not in the neat, quiet house. She was not on the porch, or in the yard. Meena Bras, phlegmatic and unflustered, came in from the kitchen. Miss DeJong was in the fields. She would call her. This she proceeded to do by blowing three powerful blasts and again three on a horn which she took from a hook on the wall. She stood in the kitchen doorway.

Why suffer from headaches? Have YOUR EYES Examined F. M. French & Son Jewelers, Optometrists Albany, Oregon

In a low voice: "There, that's what I mean. That's what I mean when I say I want to do portraits. Not portraits of ladies with a string of pearls and one lily hand half hidden in the folds of a satin skirt. I mean character portraits of men and women who are really distinguished looking—distinguishedly American, for example—like your mother."

Dirk looked up at her quickly, half smiling, as though expecting to find her smiling, too. But she was not smiling. "My mother?"

"Yes, if she'd let me. With that fine splendid face all lit up with the light that comes from inside; and the jawline like that of the women who came over in the Mayflower; or crossed the continent in a covered wagon; and her eyes! And that battered funny gorgeous bun old hat and the white shirt-

He picked up Selina's Rough Work Worn Hand and Kissed It.

rough work-worn hand and kissed it. And then, as she smiled a little, uncertainly, her left hand at her breast, her cheeks pink; Roelf, too, kissed her hand tenderly.

"Why," said Selina, and laughed a soft tremulous little laugh. "Why, I've never had my hand kissed before."

She stood on the porch steps and waved at them as they were whirled swiftly away, the four of them. A slight straight little figure in the plain white blouse and the skirt spattered with the soil of the farm.

"You'll come out again!" she had said to Dallas. And Dallas had said yes, but that she was leaving soon for Paris, to study and work.

"When I came back you'll let me do your portrait!"

"My portrait!" Selina had exclaimed, wondering.

Now as the four were whirled back to Chicago over the asphalted Halsted road they were relaxed, a little tired. They yielded to the narcotic of spring that was in the air.

Roelf Pool took off his hat. In the cruel spring sunshine you saw that the black hair was sprinkled with gray. "On days like this I refuse to believe that I'm forty-five. Dallas, tell me I'm not forty-five."

"You're not forty-five," said Dallas in her leisurely caressing voice.

Roelf's lean brown hand reached over frankly and clasped her strong white one. "When you say it like that, Dallas, it sounds true."

"It is true," said Dallas. They dropped Dallas first at the shabby old Ontario street studio, then Dirk at his smart little apartment, and went on.

Dirk turned his key in the lock. Saki, the Japanese houseman, slid silently into the hall making little hissing noises of greeting. On the correct little console in the hall there was a correct little pile of letters and invitations. He went through the Italian living room and into his bedroom. The Jap followed him. Dirk's correct evening clothes (made by Peel the English tailor of Michigan boulevard) were laid correctly on his bed—trousers, vest, shirt, coat; fine, immaculate.

"Messages, Saki?"

"Missy Stion telephone."

"Oh. Leave any message?"

"No. Say s'e call 'gain."

"All right, Saki." He waved him away and out of the room. The man went, and closed the door softly behind him. A correct Jap servant should. Dirk took off his coat, his vest, and threw them on a chair near the bed. He stood at the bedside looking down at his Peel clothes, at the

SPRING TIME IS Paint TIME You are invited to inspect and price our new and complete line of Lowe, Paints and Bros., Varnishes HILL & Co Halsey Oregon

Dr. C. FICQ, Dentist "PLATES THAT FIT" Grows, bridge work and fillings. It will pay you to get my prices on your dental work. Casick bank building, Albany

He Picked Up Selina's Rough Work Worn Hand and Kissed It. rough work-worn hand and kissed it. And then, as she smiled a little, uncertainly, her left hand at her breast, her cheeks pink; Roelf, too, kissed her hand tenderly. "Why," said Selina, and laughed a soft tremulous little laugh. "Why, I've never had my hand kissed before." She stood on the porch steps and waved at them as they were whirled swiftly away, the four of them. A slight straight little figure in the plain white blouse and the skirt spattered with the soil of the farm. "You'll come out again!" she had said to Dallas. And Dallas had said yes, but that she was leaving soon for Paris, to study and work. "When I came back you'll let me do your portrait!" "My portrait!" Selina had exclaimed, wondering. Now as the four were whirled back to Chicago over the asphalted Halsted road they were relaxed, a little tired. They yielded to the narcotic of spring that was in the air. Roelf Pool took off his hat. In the cruel spring sunshine you saw that the black hair was sprinkled with gray. "On days like this I refuse to believe that I'm forty-five. Dallas, tell me I'm not forty-five." "You're not forty-five," said Dallas in her leisurely caressing voice. Roelf's lean brown hand reached over frankly and clasped her strong white one. "When you say it like that, Dallas, it sounds true." "It is true," said Dallas. They dropped Dallas first at the shabby old Ontario street studio, then Dirk at his smart little apartment, and went on. Dirk turned his key in the lock. Saki, the Japanese houseman, slid silently into the hall making little hissing noises of greeting. On the correct little console in the hall there was a correct little pile of letters and invitations. He went through the Italian living room and into his bedroom. The Jap followed him. Dirk's correct evening clothes (made by Peel the English tailor of Michigan boulevard) were laid correctly on his bed—trousers, vest, shirt, coat; fine, immaculate. "Messages, Saki?" "Missy Stion telephone." "Oh. Leave any message?" "No. Say s'e call 'gain." "All right, Saki." He waved him away and out of the room. The man went, and closed the door softly behind him. A correct Jap servant should. Dirk took off his coat, his vest, and threw them on a chair near the bed. He stood at the bedside looking down at his Peel clothes, at the

vacation Go somewhere this summer. Plan to make it the happiest vacation you ever had. Low Roundtrip Fares are in effect throughout the summer season. It's amazing what they will enable you to see and do. So go—this vacation. Know Oregon. Visit Tillamook Beaches, Newport Beaches, Coos Bay Beaches, Mountain Resorts, Crater Lake, Oregon Caves. And rely upon our agents for full travel information. Ask for our illustrated booklet "Oregon Outdoors." Southern Pacific C. P. Moody, agt, Phone 228

CASH PAID for false teeth, dental gold, platinum and discarded jewelry. Hoke Smelting and Refining Co., Otsego, Mich. Amor A. Tussing LAWYER AND NOTARY HALSEY, OREGON DELBERT STARR Funeral Director and Licensed Embalmer Efficient Service. Motor Hearses. Lady Attendant. Brownsville, Oregon. W. L. WRIGHT Mortician & Funeral Director Halsey and Harrisburg Call D. TAYLOR, Halsey, or W. L. WRIGHT, Harrisburg

BARBER SHOP First-class Work J. W. STEPHENSON. Their Name Was Legion! By COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER A romance of liquid gold—of flowing oil. Also a romance of the American Legion, especially of those happy fighters the Marines. Legion men, read this splendid tale and see how readily your buddies respond to the call of red-hot action! All others should read it for its exceptional interest and good fictional qualities. A peace-time story with a war-time flavor. WATCH FOR IT AS A SERIAL IN RURAL ENTERPRISE

CUT FLOWERS AND SHEET MUSIC HALL'S Floral and Music Shop Alban

A Modern Barber Shop Laundry sent Tuesdays Agency Hub Cleaning Works ABE'S PLACE