

## SO BIG

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## Chapter XIV

Paula had a scheme for interesting women in bond buying. It was a good scheme. She succeeded in so that Dirk thought he had thought of it. Dirk was head of the bond department in the Great Lakes Trust company's magnificent new white building on Michigan boulevard north.

His white towers gleamed pink in the lake lights. Dirk said it was a terrible building badly proportioned, and that it looked like a vast vanilla sundae. His new private domain was more like a splendid bookless library than a business office. It was finished in rich dull walnut and there were great upholstered chairs, soft rugs, shaded lights. Special attention was paid to women clients. There was a room for their convenience fitted with low restful chairs and couches, lamps, writing desks, in mauve and rose. Paula had selected the furnishings for this room. Ten years earlier it would have been considered absurd in a suite of business offices. Now it was a routine part of the equipment.

Dirk's private office was almost as difficult of access as that of the executive. Cards, telephones office boys, secretaries stood between the caller and Dirk DeJong, head of the bond department. You asked for him, entering his name in the ear of the sto-foot statuette detective who, in the guise of usher, stood in the center of the marble rotunda eying each visitor with a coldly appraising gaze. This one nodded lightly ahead of you, no further back, only to give you over to the care of a glorified office-boy who took your name. You waited. He returned. You waited. Presently there appeared a young woman with inquiring eyebrows. She conversed with you. She vanished. You waited. She reappeared. You were ushered into Dirk DeJong's large and luxurious inner office, and there formally led.

Dirk was glad to see you; quietly, interestingly glad to see you. As you stated your business he listened attentively, as was his custom way. The volume of business done with women clients by the Great Lakes Trust company was enormous. Dirk was conservative, helpful—and he always got the business. He talked little. He was amazingly effective.

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 direct advertising rich in results. Next little pamphlets written for women on the subjects of saving, investments. "You are not dealing with a soulless corporation," said these brochures. "May we serve you? You need more than friends. Before acting, you should have your judgment vindicated by an organization of investment specialists. You may have relatives and friends, some of whom would gladly advise you on investments. But perhaps you rightly feel that the less they know about your financial affairs, the better. To handle trusts, and to care for the securities of widows and orphans, is our business."

It was startling to note how this sort of thing mounted into millions. "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. The average woman doesn't know about bonds—about bond buying. They think they're

something mysterious and risky. They ought to be educated up to it. Didn't you say something, Dirk, about classes in finance for women?"

"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 place in almost national proportions. There was to be newspaper and magazine advertising.

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. Paula was right. Much of old Aug Hempel's shrewdness and business foresight had descended to her. The women who yielded with money to invest; business women who had thriftily saved a portion of their salaries; moneyed women who wanted to manage their own property, or who resented a husband's interference. Some came out of curiosity. Others for lack of anything better to do. Others to gaze on the well-known banker or lawyer or business man who was scheduled to address the meeting. Dirk spoke three or four times during the winter and was markedly a favorite. The women, in smart crepe gowns and tailored suits and small chic hats, twined and murmured his name, even while they solemnly digested his well-thought-out remarks. He looked very handsome, clean-cut, and distinguished here on the platform in his admirably reduced clothes, a small white flower in his buttonhole. He talked easily, clearly, fluently; answered the questions put to him afterward with just the right mixture of thoughtful hesitation and confidence.

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-trick signature you saw scrawled on half the advertising illustrations that caught your eye. Paula had not been enthusiastic about this idea.

"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's said to be very—very attractive."

Dirk sent for Dallas O'Mara. She replied, suggesting an appointment two weeks from that date. Dirk decided not to wait, consulted other commercial artists, looked at their work, heard their plans outlined, and was satisfied with none of them. The time was short. Ten days had passed. He had his secretary call 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 take me to her studio where he could see something of the curious types of drawings—skits, or black-and-white, or crayons. She was working mostly in crayons now.

All this relayed by his secretary at the telephone to Dirk at his desk. He jammed his cigarette and victory into a trap, blew a final infuriated wreath of smoke, and picked up the telephone connection on his own desk. "One of those d-d temperamental near-artists trying to be grand." He uttered, his hand over the mouthpiece. "Here, Miss

Bawlings—I'll talk to her. Switch her over."

"Hello, Miss—oh—O'Mara. This is Mr. DeJong talking. I am a little better than I was when I last talked to you. (No more of his now—into.) Her voice. "Certainly, if you prefer it. I thought the other would save us both some time. I'll be there at four-thirty." Her voice was leisurely, low, rounded. An admirable voice. Restful.

"Very well. Four-thirty," said Dirk crisply. Jerked the receiver onto the hook. That was the way to handle him. 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 door. Dirk let her wait five minutes in the outer office, being still a little annoyed. At four-thirty-five there entered his private office a tall slim girl in a smart light-colored dress, a fur-trimmed skirt, and a black hat at once so daring and so simple that even a man must recognize its French nationality. She carried no portfolio of drawings under her arm, but a series of unbusinesslike thoughts such as: "Gosh! Eyes! Eyes! That's the way I like to see girl dress. Tired looking. No, guess she's sort of fatigued. Pretty. No, she isn't. Yes, she. . . . Aloud he said, "This is very kind of you, Miss O'Mara." Then he thought that sounded pompous and said, curtly, "Sit down."

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; Miss O'Mara said nothing, pleasantly. So Dirk began to talk, rather hurriedly.

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'm 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." She smiled a slow wide smile. Her teeth were good but her mouth was too big, he thought. Nice

found himself smiling, too, socially. 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. It was he who was fumbling with the objects on his flat-topped desk—a pen, a sheet of paper, a blotter. "Goodbye, Mr. DeJong."

She held out a friendly hand. He took it. Her hair was gold—dull gold, not bright—and coiled in a single great knot at the back of her head, low. He took her hand. The tired eyes looked up at him.

"Well, if that's your price, Miss O'Mara. I wasn't prepared to pay any such—but of course I suppose you top-notchers do get crazy prices for your work."

"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."

She was undeniably attractive. "And now you've arrived. You're successful."

"Arrived! Heavens, no! I've started."

"Who gets more money than you do for a drawing?"

"Nobody, I suppose."

"Well, then."

"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.

She was gone. Miss Ethelinda Quinn et al., in the outer office, appraised the costume of Miss Dallas O'Mara from her head-to-order four-year-to-be-made-in-France millinery and achieved a lightning mental reconstruction of their own costumes. Dirk DeJong in the inner office realized that he had ordered a fifteen-dollar drawing, sight unseen, and that Paula was going to ask questions about it.

"Make a note, Miss Rawlings, to call Miss O'Mara's studio on Thursday."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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The most picturesque and delightful Summer pleasure island near Detroit. Every sport that pleases: Bathing, dancing, sailing; explore the mysterious caves; see Perry's battle monument, picnic groves, athletic fields. Numerous fine hotels and cottages cater to Summer vacationers at reasonable prices. Stay a day for a week and enjoy yourself, forget your troubles and renew your health.

This beautiful island playground is reached only by the palatial and speedy day excursion steamer PUT-IN-BAY. One great deck devoted to dancing and music. Steamer PUT-IN-BAY gives excursions daily from Detroit to Put-In-Bay Island at 9 a. m. from the wharf at the foot of First Street. Four hours crowded with pleasure at the island, and arrive back in Detroit at 8 p. m. Fare for the round trip 80 cents week days; Sundays and Holidays, \$1.25.

## Cedar Point and Sandusky, Ohio

After leaving Put-In-Bay Island the steamer sails on through the narrow channels among the delightful Lake Erie islands to Sandusky and Cedar Point, Ohio. Cedar Point, just across the bay from Sandusky, is known as the Atlantic City of the West. With its huge hotels, electric park, magnificent bathing beach and board walk it is really the Queen of the Great Lakes Summer resorts.

On Fridays, after July 4, Steamer Put-In-Bay gives a special excursion to Cedar Point, allowing four hours at the wonderful resort, and reaching Detroit at 10:30 p. m.

## Dancing Moonlight

Leaves Detroit 8:45 p. m. Fare, Wed. and Sat. 60c. Sun. and Holidays, 75c.

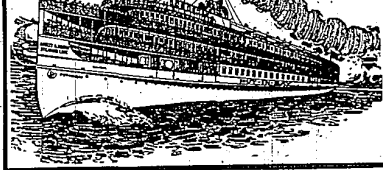
## Write for Map Folder

Ashley & Dustin

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Did you have a hard time last Sunday finding a place to spend the day by yourselves

?

Plan to come out to

## Log Cabin Beach

next Sunday and bring your lunch and bathing suit. Plenty of shade, a fine beach, diving float, good fishing.

Think how convenient and pleasant it would be and how proud you would feel to have a permanent place of your own where you can be absolutely private and have all the joys of summer right at your elbow.

We have fifty-foot lots right on the lake for as low as \$1,000 and large lots with all lake privileges as low as \$300 on terms, 10 per cent down, 1 per cent per month.

The fishing season is on. Come out and try your luck. Commerce Lake is famous for its bass.

LOG CABIN BEACH is directly opposite Dodge Bros. State Park No. 5 on the Walled Lake-Commerce road and within one-half hour's drive of Farmington. It is the ideal site for your summer home.

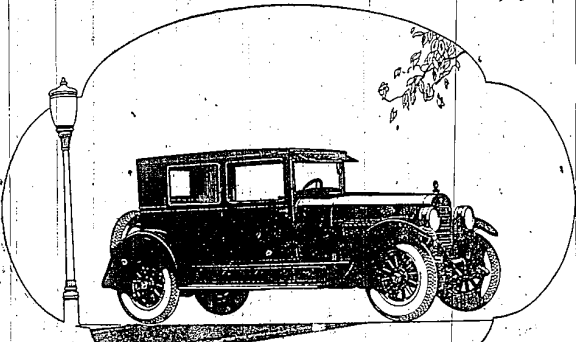
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