

# Zelda Dameron

By  
MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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## CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

He waited, to study his ground a little, and he glanced at Leighton, as though to make sure that the young man had not deserted him.

"Father is a little forgetful sometimes," said Zelda. "He isn't a young man, you must remember." The sympathy with which she spoke made Merriam uncomfortable, and Leighton moved uneasily. It was not a pleasant task—that of telling a young woman that her father was a rascal.

"But while the order of court can be procured and injury to the purchaser prevented, there is another side of the matter that we must consider."

"Yes, uncle"—and she smiled a little forlornly. She knew that she should meet the blow bravely when it fell, but it hurt her now to feel her uncle's kindness.

"It hurts me—Zelda, it hurts me more than I can tell you, to have to say that all is not quite clear about this transaction. Your father has sold at an extraordinary price. I fear that he is in difficulties. In this real estate matter you have your remedy. It is of this that I wish to speak particularly. It is only right that I should protect you if I can."

"You are very kind; you are always good to me, Uncle Rodney."

"The failure to get the court's approval of the sale of the real estate makes it possible for us to save this one piece, maybe, though nearly all the rest is gone—to get it back, perhaps. The situation is not agreeable. Your father received the money and I am afraid he has made ill use of it. But we may find it possible to set this sale aside, or get an additional sum from the purchaser."

Merriam was looking intently at the floor as he spoke these sentences. He was suddenly aware that Zelda had risen and crossed the room until she stood before him, with flaming cheeks and flashing eyes. He unconsciously rose and drew away from her. It seemed to Leighton that the air in the room grew tense. The girl stood between the two men, her lips parted, one hand on the back of a chair.

"Uncle Rodney, I never thought that you would—insult me—in your own house—under the pretense of kindness! I should like to know what you gentlemen mean, and what you think I am—that I should listen to such things from you! To think that I should be willing to take advantage of the law to defraud some one, on the theory that my father was defrauding me—stealing from me, I suppose you mean?"

"Zee, one moment—"

"No, sir! I shall hear no more from you. I never want to see you again—either of you!" She had spoken brokenly, and the last three words came slowly, with a kind of hiss. "But before I go, I wish to say something to you, to ease your feelings of pity for me. It was by my request—and by my order—that father sold that property; and he gave me the money—do you understand?—gave me the money for it—and I have spent it—all of it!" She was gone so quickly that the front door clammed on her last word, as though to add to the contempt that it carried.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Zelda had carried in her heart for weeks the fear of some such disclosure as that which she had just heard from her uncle. In her ignorance of business, she had not even vaguely guessed what had taken so strong a hold upon her father. He had acted strangely during the long summer, but she had attributed his vagaries to the infirmity of years.

Zelda went at once to the living-room where her father usually sat with his newspaper, but he had not come home; and she went up to her own room, glad of a respite. She had acted her part so long; she had defended him in her own heart and by her own acts; she had even sought to clothe him in her thoughts with something of the dignity, the nobility even, of honorable age; but this was now at an end. It was clear that a crisis had been reached, and while the purely business aspect of the situation did not trouble her at all, she felt that her relations with her father could never again be the same. She had been shielding him, not from the contempt of her kindred, but from her own distrust as well; and now that this was at an end, she went slowly to her room with a new feeling of isolation in her heart.

She made a light and put aside her hat and coat with the studied care that she gave to little things in our perplexities. Then she unlocked the drawer of her desk in which she kept her mother's book. It opened at the page that had meant so much to her, that had been her guide and her command, and she pondered the sentences anew. When she heard her father come in she went down in her street dress, with the little book in her pocket, slowly and with no plan formed.

He stood with his back to the flame, his hands behind him, and regarded Zelda warily, in a way that had grown habitual of late.

"Where have you been, Zee?" he asked.

"I went down to Zimmer's to look at some pictures they are showing there,

and on my way home I stopped at Uncle Rodney's."

"Ah, yes; your Uncle Rodney. I haven't seen him since he came home." He did not seek the evening paper with his wonted eagerness when they returned to the sitting-room after dinner, but continued talking.

"There are some business matters that I should like to speak of to-night, Zee."

"Very well, father."

"As to your affairs, the trusteeship established by your dear mother is nearly at an end. It expires by the limitations of your mother's will on your twenty-first birthday, that is, tomorrow."

"Yes; I believe that is so."

He looked at her quickly; he found her composure disquieting. Perhaps Rodney Merriam had been giving her counsel.

"As we have just said—and I was glad to find you agreeing with me—a woman does well to let business alone. There is an immense amount of detail connected with an estate—even a comparatively small one, like your mother's. There are many accounts to keep, I have kept them for years in my own way. I am not an expert accountant, but I hope that my work is accurate. At any time that you would like to examine the books, I should be glad to aid you."

"Thank you—yes, of course," said Zelda, hurriedly. She had been thinking of other things; but she now fixed her attention upon what her father was saying.

"I have thought, Zee, that perhaps you would like to continue this trusteeship. No one else understands the nature of the property so well as I. I have given the best years of my life to studying it. The burden is a considerable one for my years. I am nearing 70—but if you would like to have me go on, I should be willing to do so. Your dear mother gave me her entire confidence; it would please me if I could feel that your own trust in me was equally great."

"I suppose there is no hurry about it, father. It would be just as well for me to go over the whole matter at the time of the change." She spoke carelessly, but a bitterness had begun to creep into her heart. The contempt that she had smothered for a year now ceased to be a smoldering ember and leaped into flame.

"I wished to propose that myself," he replied, smiling. "And I will tell you now what I had expected to conceal until your birthday, of a little gift I am making you. I have placed two thousand dollars to your credit at the bank. It is subject to your check. It is from my own estate, of course. I should hardly make you a present of my own money."

"You are very kind; it is a handsome gift; but I think we'd better put it into the new trusteeship. Then I shall not be tempted into extravagances."

He had expected some exuberant expression of pleasure; but she had spoken coldly, and her manner troubled him. He took from the table a brown paper parcel and opened it, carefully untying the knot in the tape which fastened it.

"I think you have never seen a copy of your mother's will, Zee—unless perhaps your Uncle Rodney has shown it to you."

"No; I have never seen it," she answered.

He unfolded a copy of the last will and testament of Margaret Dameron carefully, and then refolded it lengthwise to remove the creases for greater convenience in examining it. He proceeded with an exaggerated deliberation. A man likes to mystify a woman about business matters; his own wisdom grows refulgent in the dark recesses of her ignorance.

Dameron read his wife's will through, and Zelda listened attentively, though few of the terms meant anything to her, and the numbers of lots and the names of additions, divisions and subdivisions were only figures. Her father paused now and then to make some comment on an item, explaining more fully what was meant.

Either her uncle had deceived her or her father was lying; and she knew that her uncle had told the truth. The situation cleared for her slowly. His request for a continuation of the trusteeship veiled his wish to keep her affairs in his own hands, without a break. It was a clever plan and in an impersonal way she admired his audacity.

"You understand," her father continued, "that the personal property—that means stocks, bonds and so on—was to be sold and the proceeds reinvested as I saw fit. It was necessary to change most of it—I had no option in the matter. Your grandfather, Zee, had been one of the early railroad builders in this part of the country, and the original small independent lines have all been merged into great systems. It should be a matter of pride to you that your grandfather was a man so far-seeing and progressive. But now, his children and their children derive the benefit. I recall that a representative in Congress from our State was defeated for re-election back in the '40s, for voting an appropriation to aid Morse in his experiments

with the telegraph. They charged him with wasting the people's money. But times change, and men change with them."

He sighed, and the thin leaves of his copy of the will rustled in his fingers as he sought the place where he had dropped his reading. He lingered over the words that described the nature of the trust. They were very sweet to him, because they were at once a justification of himself and a refutation of the slanders of his wife's family. He knew, too, that they gave emphasis to the suggestion that he was now making to Zelda, that she renew the trusteeship. He wished to put this as much as possible in the light of a favor to the girl.

"I am very sorry that my friend and counsel, Mr. Carr, is absent, as I should like to have him prepare the new deed of trust. He is a man of the highest probity. He is the ablest lawyer at our bar. In Mr. Carr's absence I have not thought it wise to take another attorney into our confidence. I have prepared a deed of trust myself. Shall I read the deed?"

"Yes, please," said Zelda. "I should like to hear it."

He had, as he said, copied the form of a trust deed that was well-known among local lawyers. As a trust deed it was absolutely above reproach, save only that neither the property as described nor any equivalent for the bulk of it was any longer in existence as a part of the estate of Margaret Merriam Dameron.

Zelda sat inert, listening to the recital, as her father read with deliberation and with due regard for the sonorous legal phrases. He even read through the notarial certificate; and then he drew off his glasses and settled back in his chair with a satisfied air. He hoped that Zelda would discuss some of the provisions, or ask questions, so that he might be assured that she suspected nothing.

Zelda said nothing. Her rose and fumbled with the pen and ink that lay on the table by the inkstand, while he waited for her to speak. The silence grew oppressive; the girl had always responded quickly in their talk. He turned, holding the pen in his hand.

"I suggest that you look the paper over before signing, Zee."

He held the paper toward her, but she shook her head.

"Very well. I have read it to you carefully; and you can, of course, have a copy at any time. It is perfectly proper for you to sign to-night—the day before your birthday; you can acknowledge it before a notary to-morrow."

He was smiling, but he held the pen toward her with a hand that shook perceptibly. Repulsion and pity struggled for the mastery as she pondered, looking away from him into the fire. She felt that she could never meet his eyes again; but she seemed to see them in the flames, the small gray eyes that were so full of cunning and avarice. It was his deceit, his effort to play upon her credulity, that stung her now into a fierce contempt. She rose and turned toward him.

"I wish you would not lie to me, Ezra Dameron," she said, quietly, with even the suggestion of a caress upon the syllables of his name.

(To be continued.)

## SIMPLE LANGUAGE THE BEST.

### Two Good Examples That Should Impress Themselves Upon the Mind.

Benjamin Franklin once decided to rewrite the Bible. He got as far as the allegory of Job. He erased the passage, "Doth Job fear God for naught?" a question supposed to have been put to the Almighty by Satan. This is how Benjamin, who was bent upon making the Bible dignified, academic and scholastic, transformed that passage: "Does your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of personal attachment and affection?" Improving upon the simplicity of simple English always has just that effect.

By way of contract between this pompous foolishness and the writing of a gifted man with a sense of humor, I note that Mark Twain in "Innocence Abroad" tells how he left a room at night when he was a boy, having found a corpse upon the floor:

"I went away from there. I do not say that I went away in any sort of hurry, but I simply went—that is sufficient. I went out at the window and I carried the sash along with me. I did not leave the sash, but it was harder to take it than it was to leave it, so I took it—I was not scared, but I was considerably agitated."

Young men who are meditating a literary or journalistic career, as well as young men who think of writing for a living, will do well to study Mark Twain. Then they can pick up the thousand-legged Latin derivatives as they are needed from the writings of Burke and the speeches of college presidents and professors.—Syracuse Post-Standard.

### She Wondered.

The first time that Lyndner John Appleton went off to work without kissing his wife good-by she wondered that he did his work well enough to hold his job. "His heart is cold," she explained to her neighbors.—Atchison (Kan.) Globe.

### Daysey Mayme.

Daysey Mayme Appleton has a heart that responds quickly to every appeal for charity. "The prizes I won at card parties," she explains, "come in handy in giving to the sickly and needy."—Atchison (Kan.) Globe.

## WHEN A MAN IS A FAILURE.

When he values success more than character and self-respect.

When he has no confidence in himself nor in his fellow men.

When he does not try to make his work a little better each day.

When he loves his own plans and interests more than humanity.

When he tries to rule others by bullying instead of by example.

When he knows that he is in the wrong, but is afraid to admit it.

When his friends like him for what he has more than for what he is.

When he values wealth above health, self-respect, and the good opinion of others.

When he is so busy doing that he has no time for smiles and cheering words.

When he is so burdened by his business that he finds no time for rest and recreation.

When he lets a day go by without making some one happier and more comfortable.

When he envies others because they have more ability, talent, or wealth than he has.

When he becomes so absorbed in his work that he cannot see that life is greater than work.

When he does not care what happens to his neighbor or to his friend so long as he is prosperous.

## FASHION HINTS



A neat dress for morning is made on the most simple of lines. It is one piece in style, and depends entirely for trimming effect on the contrasting material used in the collar and cuffs.

## PEOPLE AND THINGS.

The happy eagle of Brazil feeds exclusively on monkeys.

London has 2,150 miles of streets and 390 miles of tramways.

Eighty-seven in every hundred Canadian farmers own their own farms.

Cooked food is sold from automobiles in the streets of Paris, Berlin and Moscow.

Six arc lamps installed in a London theater, in 1873, were the first electric lamps used commercially in that city.

Costa Rica is solidly on a gold basis and experiences none of the disadvantages of fluctuations in the price of silver for exchange.

The latest estimate placed on the wheat crop in Chile for the harvest of 1910 fixes the yield at 23,942,000 bushels—a big gain over 1909.

Though blessed with the most fertile soil and most favorable climate in the world, the United States produce less wheat an acre planted than England, Germany or Holland.

Newitt C. Baldwin, the oldest official of the Methodist Church in Verona, N. J., estimates that he has walked 25,000 miles in going from his home to the church and back in the last fifty-five years. His home is one mile from the church.

The declared exports from Smyrna to the United States increased from \$2,413,937 in 1908 to \$3,703,825 in 1909. Opium shipments increased from \$411,684 to \$1,091,050 and carpets from \$149,278 to \$349,129, and tobacco from \$257,831 to \$430,136.

Mrs. Mary Bruen, mother of the Reverend J. de Hart Bruen, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Belvidere, N. J., is 84 years old and has spent seventy-two years of her life in teaching Sunday school. At present she has charge of a Bible class in her son's church.

Maurice Maeterlinck, whose literary craft is a marvel of the present day, and who has just produced in London the successful drama, "Bluebird," is a delightful talker to one or two friends. When faced by half a dozen or more he becomes as shy as a school-girl and cannot be driven into speech.

## PILES

"I have suffered with piles for thirty-six years. One year ago last April I began taking Cascarets for constipation. In the course of a week I noticed the piles began to disappear and at the end of six weeks they did not trouble me at all. Cascarets have done wonders for me. I am entirely cured and feel like a new man." George Kryder, Napoleon, O.

Pleasant, Palatable, Potent, Taste Good, Do Good, Never Sicken, Weaken or Grip. 10c, 25c, 50c. Never sold in bulk. The genuine tablet stamped C.C.C. Guaranteed to cure or your money back.

### A Byron Statue.

Many years ago some admirers of Lord Byron raised a subscription for a monument to the poet to be placed in Westminster Abbey. Chantrey was requested to execute it, but on account of the smallness of the sum subscribed he declined, and Thorwaldsen was then applied to and cheerfully undertook the work.

In about 1838 the finished statue arrived at the customs house in London, but to the astonishment of the subscribers the dean of Westminster, Dr. Ireland, declined to give permission to have it set up in the abbey, and owing to this difficulty, which proved insurmountable, for Dr. Ireland's successor was of the same opinion, it remained for upward of twelve years in the customs house, when (1848) it was removed to the library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

The poet is represented in the statue of the size of life, seated on a ruin, with his left foot resting on the fragment of a column. In his right hand he holds a style up to his mouth, in his left a book, inscribed "Child Harold." He is dressed in a frock coat and cloak. Beside him on the left is a skull, above which is the Athenian owl. The likeness is, of course, posthumous. Thorwaldsen was born November 19, 1770, and died on March 24, 1844.

### The Flash of Genius.

A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within more than the luster of the firmament of birds and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts, they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty.—Emerson.

### True Secret of Living.

The secret of living is the discovery of the greatest good, the things that are really worth the seeking, the values that do not fade nor depreciate. The greatest good you can do any person or people is to train them to make this discrimination, to help them to choose for themselves amongst the many possible prizes the ones that are worthy.

"Mabel, I don't propose—"

"Well, George, I've noticed that, but daddy says you'd better propose before long or there will be doin'a."

"When you interrupted me, Mabel, I was about to say that I do not propose to wait any longer to learn whether you do or do not return my love."

"Oh, George! This is so sudden!"—Houston Post.

If you ran a shoe store, would you like it if your clerks bought shoes of an opposition dealer?

### Footgear Brought Success.

It was the sturdy sandals of the Teutonic tribes that enabled them to march across Europe to the walls of Rome, and we know that the footgear of an army is still a most important part of its equipment. Those whom the Romans called Scythians wore rough sheepskin boots and the Gauls were already noted for their woollen soles.

### Better Look Outside.

If you want to make the best of your life, don't spend much time in looking within and wondering if your feelings are all right. Look outside instead, and see what you are doing for others, what you are saying about other people, how you are behaving to those around you. If you are behaving kindly and truly to your neighbor you will not go far wrong.

### Montana City Holds Record.

Miles City, Montana, holds the record for variation in temperature. The highest temperature recorded there is 111 deg., which is within 8 deg. of the highest recorded in the United States. Miles City's lowest mark has been 67 deg. below zero, which is truly arctic. The range between these two extremes is 178 deg., which is a record.

### Hereditary Instinct.

When baby turns away from the amiable visitor who is trying to make friends, and rushes to mother and buries his face in her skirts, he is doing exactly what it was wise for children to do in the ancient forest, when stranger and danger were the same thing, and not just rhymes as they are now.

**PISO'S** is the name to remember when you need a remedy for COUGHS and COLDS