

# Zelda Dameron

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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## CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

"Mr. Balcomb, over there," remarked, casually, "He sings doesn't he? Don't you think it being used to her?" and she looked at him, and, indeed, with a provoking air, as if she were a De Reszke in her incarnation, said Morris.

"It was just what I was thinking," said Zelda, "and I don't think it is a very good thing to be called 'the words to express it,' with a mockery of joy at the fact that we can agree on something, even when we're both wrong."

"I don't like to think that I can be called Zelda," she said, "and I don't like to have you suggest that I shall have to speak to you as 'Miss Merriam'."

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MR. BALCOMB, said Pollock, at his elbow, "may I speak to you a moment."

"Certainly," said Balcomb, in his usual amiable fashion. "Only I'm engaged for this dance and have lost my partner."

"That's my own fix," declared Pollock, "but my errand is brief. Let us step out here."

He led the way to a door opening upon the main stairway of the building and they passed there, Pollock with his back to the door, facing Balcomb. He carried one glove in his hand and was very trim and erect in his evening clothes.

"Mr. Balcomb, I was so unfortunate as to overhear your conversation of a moment ago—with some one I didn't know, but that doesn't matter—in which you referred to a young lady—a young lady who came here to-night under your escort, in terms that a gentleman would not use."

"As a confessed eavesdropper I don't believe it is necessary for you to say anything further," said Balcomb, with heat, and he took a step toward the door of the assembly-room.

Pollock touched him on the shoulder with the tip of his fingers very lightly. Balcomb was half a head taller and much bulkier, but the tips of Pollock's fingers seemed to carry a certain insistence, and Balcomb drew back.

"I shall hold you responsible for this, you—"

"I certainly hope you will. As I was saying, you referred to a young lady, who was here under your protection, in terms which no one but a contemptible cur would use of a woman—"

Balcomb's arm went up and he struck at Pollock with his fist. The glove in his right hand slapped smartly upon Balcomb's face, and Balcomb took an involuntary step backward down the stairway.

"In the part of the country that I came from, Mr. Balcomb," Pollock continued in an easy conversational tone, "we do very pleasant things to bright and captivating people of your stripe—he took another step forward, and Balcomb, a little white in the face, retreated again—"but in this instance"

Pollock lifted his left hand to his shadowy moustache and gave it a twist; he took another step and Balcomb yielded before him—"I shall let you off with unwarranted leniency."

Balcomb, forgetting another step downward, had grown red with fury, and again struck at Pollock, but with the result that Balcomb stumbled and retreated two steps instead of one, reaching a landing. With this more secure footing he gained courage.

"You little cur, you little—" he blustered, drawing his face down so that he could glare into Pollock's eyes.

"Yes," said Pollock, calmly; "I have been called little before; so that your statement lacks novelty. As I was saying—and he leaned against the stair-rail with the tips of the fingers of his gloved hand thrust into his trousers pocket, and holding the other glove in his right hand—"I haven't time now to go into the matter further, but I am always at your service. It will give me great pleasure to make your excuses to Miss Merriam, or to any other friends you may be leaving behind you—owing to an illness that made it necessary for you to leave—suddenly. Now you will oblige me by continuing on down to the coat room—unattended. There are probably some gentlemen below there that I should very much dislike to explain matters to."

Balcomb leaped lightly forward as though to make a rush for the door of the assembly-room.

"Try that again," said Pollock, seizing him by the collar, and throwing him back, "and I'll drop you over the banister."

Some men had entered the lower hall from the smoking-room, and Balcomb greeted them cheerily as he turned and went below as though to join them. Pollock stood above waiting for Balcomb to reappear, and as he waited he resumed his glove and buttoned it with care. The waltz was nearly over, but he stood there leaning against the stair-rail and beating time to the music with his foot, until he saw Balcomb come out of the coat room clad for the street. When Balcomb looked up, Pollock waved his hand to him graciously, and turned and went back into the hall.

"Miss Merriam," he said, bowing before Olive, "I very much regret to present Mr. Balcomb's compliments and to say that he has been unexpectedly called away—pressing business—and he asked me to do myself the honor to see that you don't get lost. This is our dance."

(To be continued.)

## CAUGHT BY ITS TONGUE.

Story of a Remarkable Capture of a Wild Beast in Nebraska.

In the winter of 1896-97, says a contributor to the Wide World, I was deputy agent at Duncun, Neb., a small town on the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad, ninety-nine miles west of Omaha. The weather was bitterly cold. One morning shortly after day-break, while a man I knew, called Herman Ernst, and his assistant were hauling hay a short distance from my station, the former's attention was attracted to a gray wolf standing between the rails on the main line, and as he did not leave the spot, on the approach of Herman's wagon, he (Herman) grabbed his fork and ran up to the wolf, which had its head close to the rails, as if in a trap.

After killing the wolf Herman tore the animal from the rail and was astonished to note that its tongue was left attached to the metals. Subsequently I investigated this curious incident and evolved the following explanation:

The morning passenger train had passed that point only a few minutes before Herman saw the wolf and had run over a jack rabbit, leaving the blood on the rail. The wolf had either been chasing the rabbit or had happened by soon afterward, and in trying to lick the blood from the rail his tongue, owing to the intense cold of the metal, froze to it, while the saliva from his mouth became a cake of solid ice over an inch thick, attaching him to the rail as securely as though in a vise.

## IN WAR ON INSECTS

Dr. Howard Kills Crop Destroyers by Scientific Methods.

Parasites Cultivated to Prey Upon Injurious Bugs—Washington Hears Miss Elkins Will Become Mrs. William Hitt.

Washington.—The history of crop failures due to the effect of harmful and destructive insects is a well-known one. For many years the growers of wheat, cotton, fruit and other produce have been harassed and even defied by these parasites that eke out their existence by destroying millions and even billions of dollars' worth of the harvests of the country.

The destruction and blighting of the crops caused by harmful insects has long been made a study by the agricultural authorities at Washington, and the results in the direction of ridding the country of such pests have been very favorable in every way. Dr. L. O. Howard, head of the bureau of entomology at Washington, the largest and most efficient organization of its kind in the world, has become the leading exponent and the acknowledged expert of the cult of setting an insect to kill an insect—the science of parasitology.



Dr. L. O. Howard.

The method used by Dr. Howard is to suppress the harmful insects and to foster the useful ones, that is to destroy the destroyers by abetting the destroyers of the destroyers. Thus has arisen a new and ingenious branch of scientific endeavor, the expert culture of insect parasites. Already a number of the most important pests have been reduced to innocuousness by the insects of prey which have been set upon the trail; and while many others must still be combated imperfectly by artificial methods, relentless science is scouring the world for the tiny many-legged hounds which shall eventually hunt them down.

Theoretically every insect has its own specific enemy or enemies. These may prey upon it directly as certain beetles prey upon the larvae of the foliage-destroying moths; or they may feed upon its eggs, as is the case with many ladybirds, or they may deposit their own eggs either within the body or the egg of the victim, thereby destroying the immediate or prospective generation. Always these enemies tend to keep the insect pests within normal limitations. Doubtless in many cases the parasite would wholly destroy a species were it not for the existence of hyper-parasites which prey upon it and keep it from overexpansion. In a state of nature this balance between the various species is automatically preserved until man with his ignorance of their nature enters and disturbs the whole status.

Insect immigration has been the curse of American agriculture. Of our 72 important destructive species—those whose destructive powers amount up to millions of dollars annually—35 have come to us from other countries. The codling moth, the curse of apple and pear orchards, is of European origin. The dreaded cotton boll-weevil hails from Mexico. The San Jose scale comes from the immemorial east. The gypsy moth and the brown-tail moth, twin plagues of New England trees, were brought in by accident from the old world.

As soon as an imported insect shows signs of becoming formidable, experts trace it from country to country until they find a region where it has never been known for a long time, but has never reached the proportions of a pest. In such a place they are pretty sure to find a parasite which is keeping the depredator down. If they can acclimatize that parasite and establish it side by side with the importation, the problem is solved. Such was the method in the case of the white or futed scale invasion of California. The scale was imported by a collector of plants at San Jose, probably from Australia. In a few years it had spread enormously, and was simply wiping out the orange crop wherever it gained a foothold. Working in conjunction with the progressive state authorities of California the United States bureau of entomology sent an emissary to Australia, where the scale was discovered in what was then supposed to be its original environment. With the Australian scale, and preying upon its eggs, was found a small red-and-black ladybird, the Novius cardinalis. One hundred of these were brought back to California, bred and distributed. To the terrified and skeptical orange growers

## DEATH IN HOT SAND

SURVIVOR TELLS OF DEATH STRUGGLE ON THE DESERT.

Find Dead Rattlesnake in Well Containing Salty Water—One Man Dies and Others Are Rescued by Auto.

Berkeley, Cal.—His condition bordering on nervous collapse and hardly able to tell the story of his terrible experience, G. Herbert Masters, a young mining engineer, who was a member of a Borax lake expedition in which Charles Stracher Davidson, a graduate of the University of California Mining college, lost his life in the intense heat recently, has returned to his home in this city. He left five others of the party at Randsburg after the burial of Davidson in a rude desert grave on the shore of the lake, where he met his death. All of the others suffered terribly, but reached camp after twenty-four hours of torture in the broiling sun.

"We arrived at Randsburg and started on our trip across Borax lake," said Masters. "The lake is a mud deposit covered by a heavy crust. Our objective point was an old camp on the opposite shore, where we believed we would find prospectors. When we began drawing our line Davidson was prostrated with the heat, which was terrific. A little later he collapsed. Then he broke from us, and, running about fifty feet, fell on his face. One of the boys went back to him. He died shortly afterward.

"One by one we followed a course toward the opposite shore. When I arrived I discovered that there was no water. After several hours we found an old well, but the water was sulphurous and salty and at the bottom was a dead rattlesnake. Two of the original party of seven had gone to Randsburg for batteries when we started on the trip across the lake and that left four of us huddled together—Thomas A. Graves, a mining expert of Olean, N. Y.; David Bunkers, Norman Stein and myself.

"In the morning before sunrise we took a roundabout trail skirting the lake. When halfway across we met an automobile party and were carried the rest of the way in the machine.

"That afternoon we went on the seething mud lake again and got the body of Davidson. The boys made a rough pine box and we gave George the most decent burial we could give. His grave is out there in the sun, near the place where he died. The others of the party are used up, but they will recover. It was a terrible experience and I am through with the desert."

## SAYS GHOST ATE A BISCUIT

Former Medium Tells Strange Stories of His Experiences at Seance of Spiritualists.

London.—Ghost stories of a highly interesting nature to believers and skeptics alike were related at a meeting of the City Temple Debating society.

The stories were told by George Spriggs, at one time a spiritualist medium, and now the president of the Psycho-Therapeutic society. Every story, he said, was well authenticated. His own conviction was "that spirit communion is not only a possibility, but an actual and realized fact."

On one occasion, he said, a seance was held round a table at the residence of Rees Lewis of Cardiff. All the "sitters," including Father Butcher, a priest, and Rev. David Jones, kept their hands on the top of the table. In about five minutes raps were heard, and on looking under the table there were found small bunches of grapes, a branch from an apple tree, one from a pear tree, bunches of wheat and barley and some peas. One of the reverend gentlemen exclaimed: "This is as near a miracle as possible."

Describing some of his experiences in Melbourne, Mr. Spriggs said that at one seance a spirit form, dressed in a white gown and red girdle, drank half a tumbler of water and ate a biscuit.

Weighing machines were used to ascertain the distinguishing features between the medium and the materialized forms, "and," said Mr. Spriggs, "I found that as a result of the seance I had lost about three pounds in weight." The first spirit form who stepped on the scales turned the beam at 100 pounds, but subsided so rapidly in weight as to prevent a successive record being taken. Indeed, falling to turn the scale at 80 pounds, he hurriedly retreated. Returning again, his weight was registered at 104 pounds, then 102 pounds, and then under 100 pounds.

Doctor Mueller, who was present, distinctly felt the pulsation of the forms, the medium being shown sitting on his chair immediately afterwards. Doctor Motherwell also found the beating of the heart to be quite natural.

One of the "sitters" contrived to smear his hands with printer's ink before grasping that of the materialized form. When the medium was examined, however, the skeptic was grievously disappointed to find no traces whatever of the ink which he had impressed upon the hand of the form.

A Tinge of Suspicion. "That speaker always starts off," said Farmer Cornstossel, "by telling what the country needs."

"Naturally and properly."

"I s'pose so. Only I notice that when a man goes out of his way to tell me what I need it's always somethin' in his particular line o' goods."

Worse. Dick—There's one thing about Louisa, she never repeats stories about her woman friends.

Ethel—Repeats! No, indeed; she starts them.—Boston Evening Transcript.

## MISS ELKINS TO WED AMERICAN.

Washington.—To see married the girl it was thought would be his bride, is the luck of the duke of the Abruzzi.

William F. Hitt, who seems to have made a greater hit than his dukeship, is the luckier man, and the kind of luck he is in is plain to appreciate.

Katherine Elkins is the girl in the case. She is the girl whose name for two years past has been linked with that of the duke, and to forget his sorrow in not winning her it was said he went to Africa to hunt tigers. And now he is coming to Washington to see the girl he lost won by another man.

The wedding is promised for the early days of the next social season.

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