

**FROM 18 TO  
20: A NOVEL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649589623

From 18 to 20: A Novel by Elizabeth Jaudon Sellers

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**ELIZABETH JAUDON SELLERS**

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BY  
ELIZABETH JAUDON SELLERS.

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THIRD EDITION.  
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PHILADELPHIA:  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.  
1888.



THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
**280758A**  
ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS  
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in our fresh white muslins, I fairly feel my heart stop within me. However, like most things, we invariably suffer more in anticipation than in realization; and after the first chord was struck, I think I rather enjoyed the excitement than otherwise: therefore, by the time my solo came, my tongue had stopped cleaving to the roof of my mouth, and I stood up like a little soldier and sang out to my uttermost,—and even to myself (partial judge though, I grant, I was) I know my voice never sounded louder or more sympathetic,—consequently I was in a radiant frame of mind, and that our last night at school was spent in exchanging vows of eternal friendship and in speculating as to what Dame Fortune had in store for us, each one picturing herself the heroine of some thrilling romance.

Well, the teachers have wept over me, and we girls have had our last embrace, and the door has closed upon me forever,—*i.e.*, as an inmate of its kindly walls,—and for the moment I feel inexpressibly sad as the thought flashes across me that I am no longer a careless, happy child, and, though still as young, on the morrow I shall be looked upon as a woman with all her experience and knowledge. Even now I feel morally sure I could never again sit for hours holding a *girl's* hand (hot with youth's young blood) building



*châteaux en Espagne* and peopling them with impossible characters. *Tout se passe*, and my school days are simply a chapter in the past.

It is remarkable how we can stay from home for years and, after the first few weeks, have no feeling of homesickness, but, on the contrary, become interested and happy in our surroundings. Yet, the instant we turn our steps towards home, moments lengthen into hours until we reach our destination.

I was welcomed as I never had been before: friends came hourly to congratulate me on my release from school. I was pronounced greatly improved, and assured I should make the boys' hearts jump. At that I recalled Cæsar's remark, *Veni, vidi, vici*, and in my mind's eye saw conquest after conquest. It was determined that I should spend the summer quietly in the country with my somewhat large family (there being seven of us), but I could not make them appreciate my age and dignity. In truth, at times it was a difficult matter for me to remember them myself, as I constantly found that impulse led me into a thousand romps and frolics that my respected parents deemed unlady-like; but youth, like murder, will out, and after a spell of unnatural goodness I had a relapse, and, glorying in my liberty, headed all the frolics, and was myself once more.

Had it not been for my buoyant disposition I should probably have been taken to some gay resort, but 'twas considered wise for me to tone down a little before being officially introduced. This was somewhat of a damper, but we had a glorious old country-place, and, with my horse and dogs, the outside world bothered me but slightly. Moreover, what member of a large family ever has time to feel lonely? for, as I before remarked, and now repeat with Jean Ingelow, "we are seven," and I had the honor to be the second, arriving before infants became monotonous, for, as Goldsmith says, the first child is a poem, but the tenth is prose of the prosiest nature. Consequently I am led to believe that my birth was hailed with pleasure, though I am told there was some regret that I wasn't a boy; but even that they have long since forgotten, and I believe, upon the whole, they are rather satisfied with me,—*i.e.*, as far as parents ever are.

I went through everything that most children "to the purple born are heir to,"—chicken-pox and measles not excepted. Only cried a little at my christening, in spite of receiving a very pretty name, for I like Beatrice, notwithstanding having heard it considerably; but my last name, though substantial, is not so pretty, and when told is Hamilton. My oldest sister is the prop and staff

of my existence, and her head is so full of secrets (for we all confide in her) that at times I wonder it don't burst, or that she don't make the mistake that I frequently do, by forgetting what I am and what I am not to tell. As for the rest, taken collectively, I love them all, and fight with them all, and perchance I'll give you an opportunity to judge of them for yourself.