

**GRISELDA: A
NOVEL IN THREE
VOLUMES; VOL. III**

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Griselda: a novel in three volumes; Vol. III by Alice M. Diehl

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ALICE M. DIEHL

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NOVEL IN THREE
VOLUMES; VOL. III**

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GRISELDA.

A NOVEL.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE GARDEN OF EDEN,"

ETC., ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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GRISELDA.

CHAPTER I.

HEW would ever forget that eventful night at Crowsfoot Station, after the terrible news had been telegraphed that the 6.20 train from London was run into by an express, and was smashed, telescoped, crushed.

The crowd of villagers—parents, children, or wives, and their relatives—who had beloved ones in the doomed train, still wailed and cried, a surging ungovern-

able crowd upon the platform. Doctor Mayne and the station-master tried in vain to calm and to disperse them.

Hugh Blunt — who had sickened to faintness at the sight of his love Griselda coming in to learn that not only her beloved father, but Hal Romaine, whom she so dearly loved, was a passenger in the wrecked train — speedily recovered. For Griselda glided through the crowd like a ghost, and laid her hand upon his arm.

‘Tell me, please,’ she said.

She was perfectly composed. Hugh marvelled—wondered.

‘Mr Black—may not—perhaps—most likely, has not come by this—we don’t know—I should think not,’ he faltered and stammered out.

‘Papa was coming by this train. What-

ever has happened, he is there. Now, what is to be done?’

Those great eyes looked searchingly into his out of that beautiful face—oh, so deadly pale!

‘How can we get to him?’

‘We cannot! It is forty miles down the line!’ cried Hugh.

‘Forty miles! Cannot we catch a down train to Cowbrook Junction, and get a special?’

‘By that time he might be here—then the traffic is suspended—then’—Hugh drew a deep breath before he could stab his darling to the heart. ‘Griselda,’ he said, miserably, and for once the tears ran plentifully from his eyes, ‘dear Sir Hubert is in there—the waiting-room—struck down, poor father—he came to meet his son.’

Griselda was only a girl. She swerved;

then Hugh caught her. She had fainted. But her strong will overcame impressions. In a few moments she struggled up.

‘I know — I understand,’ she said pantingly. ‘There is the doctor. We must not think of ourselves. Doctor Mayne—Sir Hubert—poor Sir Hubert! Let me help—’

‘She knows all,’ said Hugh.

‘It will do her good to help,’ said the little doctor. ‘Now, *Griselda*, my dear, you will very likely have to be nurse for some time to come; so, before you really perform—before the wounded and those to help them arrive—you may have a little practice. Sir Hubert is in there. Come along!’

‘Action is everything,’ he thought. ‘In such a crisis, in such suspense, to pause to think means madness.’

He supported Griselda into the waiting-room. There, on an improvised couch of a mattress and blankets, hastily furnished by the station-master, lay Sir Hubert Romayne.

The old man looked grander in the semblance of death — stretched out stiff and straight, his hands lying limply at his sides, his regular features sunken, livid, his grey hair wet with the cooling lotion the station-master's wife, kneeling at his side, was gently dabbing on his pale brow—than in ruddy life, when he had a half-shy, half-proud, and somewhat undignified presence, born of his subservience to his imperious wife.

'Miss Black will take your place, Mrs Wright. We shall want you and your house directly,' said Doctor Mayne, in a low tone. So Mrs Wright gave her