

**GODFRIDA: A PLAY
IN FOUR ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649531585

Godfrida: A Play in Four Acts by John Davidson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOHN DAVIDSON

**GODFRIDA: A PLAY
IN FOUR ACTS**

By the Same Author

NEW BALLADS
BALLADS AND SONGS
FLEET STREET ECLOGUES
A RANDOM ITINERARY
PLAYS

©

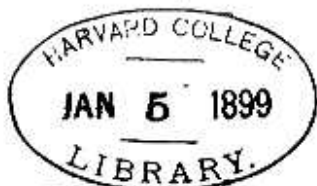
GODFRIDA

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS



JOHN LANE: THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK AND LONDON

23497.57.7



Denny fund.

All rights, including acting rights, reserved.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1898, by JOHN DAVIDSON,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

University Press:

JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.

2819

PROLOGUE



INTERVIEWER

POET

Interviewer. I understand you are about to publish a play which you have written for the stage.

Poet. Yes.

Interviewer. Pardon me, but do you think it wise to publish a play before it has been produced?

Poet. I intend to produce it before publication.

Interviewer. Ah, yes; to secure the dramatic rights. But I mean that people will not read a play which they have not seen.

Poet. I would not care to invite an audience to witness a play which I could not invite my readers to peruse.

Interviewer. Well. — Is it in verse?

Poet. Principally. There is some prose dialogue.

Interviewer. Then is it a continuation of your attempt to revive the Jacobean poetic drama?

Poet. My attempt to do so? I never made such an attempt.

Interviewer. I understood you had done so in your early plays, just as you attempted lately to revive the Elizabethan eclogue.

Poet. Nothing was further from my mind than either revival. My endeavour was always to write Victorian plays, Victorian eclogues.

Interviewer. Then, do you assure me that your early plays were written for the stage?

Poet. I had the stage in my mind, but constantly lost sight of it, except in "Scaramouch in Naxos;" it I hope to see performed some day.

Interviewer. But is not verse on the stage a lapse from modernity — a backsliding?

Poet. I think not.

Interviewer. You have expressed somewhere in your writings an intense admiration of Ibsen. Will his influence be found in your play?

Poet. I think not.

Interviewer. Have you ceased to admire Ibsen?

Poet. Oh, no! I share the opinion of those who regard him as the most impressive writer of his time, as the most expert playwright, and most original dramatist the world has seen.

Interviewer. But you are not a disciple?

Poet. No; nothing comes of discipleship except mis-

interpretation. That seems to me the history of all schools.

Interviewer. But if Ibsen is as great as you say, would it not be wise to follow in his steps?

Poet. No; it would be as foolish, as it is unnecessary, to attempt to do over again what Ibsen has done.

Interviewer. Can you not extend the path he has laid down, then?

Poet. No; any step forward from Ibsen would land me in some mystical abyss, or some slough of Naturalism. For me Ibsen is the end, not the beginning.

Interviewer. Do you propose your own play as a new beginning?

Poet. No. Before I sat down to write "Godfrida" I read over my early plays, and the lot was cast for Romance.

Interviewer. What do you mean by Romance?

Poet. A pertinent question. I mean by Romance the essence of reality. Romance does not give the bunches plucked from the stem: it offers the wine of life in chased goblets. I have moulded and carved my goblet to the best of my art; and I have crushed wine into it. To leave this Euphuism, I take men and women as I know them — the brain-sick, ISEMBERT, ERMENGARDE; the

healthy, GODFRIDA, SIWARD; but that I myself may realise them, and make them more apparent and more engaging to an audience, I place them in an imaginary environment, and in the colour and vestments of another time.

Interviewer. What is the main idea of your play? Can you tell?

Poet. It has been my companion long enough for that, I hope. You may find the poles of my play in this quotation:—

“ . . . no felicity

Can spring in men, except from barbèd roots

Of discontent and envy, deeply struck

In some sore heart that hoped to have the flower,”

and in this, —

“ I have had a vision of the soul of life,

And love alone is worthy.”

Interviewer. What was your object in writing this play?

Poet. My object was to give delight.

Interviewer. Do you consider that a high aim?

Poet. I consider it the highest aim of art.

Interviewer. To give delight?

Poet. Yes; to give delight is to impart strength most directly, most permanently.