

**GRISELDA: A
DRAMATIC POEM
IN FIVE ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649738724

Griselda: A Dramatic Poem in Five Acts by E. Prentiss

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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E. PRENTISS

**GRISELDA: A
DRAMATIC POEM
IN FIVE ACTS**

GRISELDA:
A DRAMATIC POEM
IN FIVE ACTS.

TRANSLATED FOR THE Y. W. C. A.

FROM THE GERMAN OF
FRIEDRICH HALM,
(BARON MÜNCH-BILLINGHAUSEN.)

BY
MRS. E. PRENTISS.

PUBLISHED BY
THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,
7 EAST FIFTEENTH STREET, NEW YORK.

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24-7

M=

PERSONS.

KING ARTHUR.

KENNETH OF SCOTLAND,

LANCELOT, a Frenchman,

GAWAIN,

PERCIVAL OF WALES,

TRISTAN THE WISE,

THE KING'S SENESCHAL,

RONALD, Percival's servant.

CEDRIC, a charcoal-burner (called collier for sake of euphony.)

A BOY.

GENEVRA, wife of King Arthur.

ORIANA,

MERCIA,

} Her Maids of Honor,

ELLINOR, wife of Kenneth.

GRISELDA, Cedric's daughter, wife of Percival.

KNIGHTS AND LADIES.

PERCIVAL'S VASSALS.

GRISELDA'S WOMEN.

N. B. The author having, occasionally, varied his metre, it was thought best to follow him in the English version.

GRISELDA.

FIRST ACT.

KING ARTHUR'S castle in Karduel—A brilliantly illuminated, highly ornamented saloon—In the background, music—In the foreground, a throne under a canopy.

SCENE I.—*Richly-dressed Servants and Pages hasten across the stage with golden cups and glasses—Knights and Ladies move up and down in showy garments, among them KING ARTHUR, the SENESCHAL, TRISTAN THE WISE, PERCIVAL OF WALES.*

KING ARTHUR approaches the SENESCHAL.

KING ARTHUR.

I AM well pleased, most worthy Seneschal!
Thou rob'st from night the shimmer of its stars,
From the damp sea the silvery gleam of pearls,
From the earth's bosom the carbuncle's glow,
This festival with splendor to adorn:
I have no more to ask, I am content.

(1)

SENECHAL.

No lesser pomp I thought besceméd, Sire,
The royal host, besecated the royal guests,
Who, of this kingdom, are the path and flower;
For see, not one of all thy knights has failed;
Ev'n Percival, the son of forest rude,
Leaves, at thy call, the bosom of the wilds
And ventures in the palace of his king,
To wear the shaggy bear-skin on his shoulders,
And the rough doublet from the buffalo won.

KING ARTHUR.

What of his robe! A warrior's scars adorn him,
Bright as the stars he shines in his renown.
Far from my court three years have seen him absent;
And he is welcome, even in a bear-skin.
But now away! too long our guests await us!
Inspire the servants' footsteps, do not suffer
The melody of music's sighs to die.
The wine-cup's golden ground let no man see,
And only let this feast's gay tumult cease
When daylight dawns apace.

SENECHAL.

On that depend!

Daylight, alone, shall desolate this hall.

[*KING ARTHUR and the SENESCHAL disappear among the guests. In the meantime PERCIVAL and TRISTAN come forward.*]

PERCIVAL.

Know you yon lady upon Kenneth's arm,
Who sweeps the flooring with her satin's hem,
While the proud heron's feather on her head
Reaches the gilded wainscot of this hall?

TRISTAN.

It is Dame Ellinor, and Kenneth's wife,
From Fingal's ancient royal race she sprang,
And unrestrained as Fingal over Erin,
In Kenneth's house the royal sceptre bears.

PERCIVAL.

And he, poor simpleton, the sceptre yields her?
Wears he no doublet but a woman's gown?
And who, with magic wand and girdle, yonder
In dreary meditation silent broods,
As to this throng a stranger; who is she?

TRISTAN.

'Tis the king's sister; she is called Morgana,
For her great knowledge she is world-renowned.

And for her insight into hidden things;
In the black art 'tis even said she deals.

PERCIVAL.

Better for her in household arts to deal!
Silent obedience from my wife I claim,
Submission to her husband's despot law;
Wisdom, like strength, is our inheritance,
And but a plaything in a woman's hand.

TRISTAN.

A plaything, Percival?

PERCIVAL.

Yes, Tristan, yes!

Would you a woman picture to the life,
Just as the Lord for our refreshment made her?
She sits and spins; unto her swelling breast
She fondly clasps her child; her pious glance
Devoutly turns away from earth to heaven,
What this transcends is but superfluous.
What time is it?

TRISTAN.

'Tis very nearly midnight.