

## Gretel and the Great War



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### SYNOPSIS

Vienna, 1919. A once-mighty empire has finally come crashing down - and a mysterious young woman, unable to speak, has turned up on the streets. A doctor appeals to the public for information about her past and receives a single response, from a sanatorium patient who claims to be her father.

The man reveals only her name: Gretel. But he encloses a bedtime story he asks the doctor to read aloud to her, about an Architect whose radically modern creation has caused a great scandal. The next day a second story arrives, about a Ballet Master who develops a new position of the feet.

Twenty-four more stories follow in alphabetical order, about an Immunologist and a Jeweller, a Revolutionary and a Satirist, a Waif and an X-ray Technician and a Zionist. Crossing paths and purposes, their stories interweave until a single picture emerges, that of a decadent, death-obsessed, oversexed empire buzzing with the ideas of Freud and Karl Kraus. There are artists who ape the innocence of children, and scientists who insist that children are anything but innocent .



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. . . And then there's Gretel's own mother, who will do whatever it takes to sing onstage at the City Theater.

Is it any wonder that this world - soon to vanish anyway in a war to end all wars - was one from which Gretel's father wished to shelter her?...