

**BERTHA GARLAN:  
A NOVEL**

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Bertha Garlan: a novel by Arthur Schnitzler & J. H. Wisdom & Marr Murray

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**ARTHUR SCHNITZLER & J. H. WISDOM & MARR MURRAY**

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BERTHA GARLAN

# BERTHA GARLAN

A NOVEL

BY

ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY J. H. WISDOM AND

MARR MURRAY

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# BERTHA GARLAN

## I

SHE was walking slowly down the hill; not by the broad high road which wound its way towards the town, but by the narrow footpath between the trellises of the vines. Her little boy was with her, hanging on to her hand and walking all the time a pace in front of her, because there was not room on the footpath for them to walk side by side.

The afternoon was well advanced, but the sun still poured down upon her with sufficient power to cause her to pull her dark straw hat a little further down over her forehead and to keep her eyes lowered. The slopes, at the foot of which the little town lay nestling, glimmered as though seen through a golden mist; the roofs of the houses below glistened, and the river, emerging yonder amongst the meadows outside the town, stretched, shimmering, into the distance. Not a quiver stirred the air, and it seemed as if the cool of the evening was yet far remote.

Bertha stopped for a moment and glanced



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about her. Save for her boy, she was all alone on the hill side, and around her brooded a curious stillness. At the cemetery, too, on the hill-top, she had not met anybody that day, not even the old woman who usually watered the flowers and kept the graves tidy, and with whom Bertha used often to have a chat. Bertha felt that somehow a considerable time had elapsed since she had started on her walk, and that it was long since she had spoken to anyone.

The church clock struck—six. So, then, scarcely an hour had passed since she had left the house, and an even shorter time since she had stopped in the street to chat with the beautiful Frau Rupius. Yet even the few minutes which had slipped away since she had stood by her husband's grave now seemed to be long past.

“Mamma!”

Suddenly she heard her boy call. He had slipped his hand out of hers and had run on ahead.

“I can walk quicker than you, mamma!”

“Wait, though! Wait, Fritz!” exclaimed Bertha. “You're not going to leave your mother alone, are you?”

She followed him and again took him by the hand.

“Are we going home already?” asked Fritz.

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“ Yes; we will sit by the open window until it grows quite dark.”

Before long they had reached the foot of the hill and they began to walk towards the town in the shade of the chestnut trees which bordered the high-road, now white with dust. Here again they met but few people. Along the road a couple of wagons came towards them, the drivers, whip in hand, trudging along beside the horses. Then two cyclists rode by from the town towards the country, leaving clouds of dust behind them. Bertha stopped mechanically and gazed after them until they had almost disappeared from view.

In the meantime Fritz had clambered up on to the bench beside the road.

“ Look, mamma! See what I can do! ”

He made ready to jump, but his mother took hold of him by the arms and lifted him carefully to the ground. Then she sat down on the bench.

“ Are you tired? ” asked Fritz. ?

“ Yes, ” she answered, surprised to find that she was indeed feeling fatigued.

It was only then that she realized that the sultry air had wearied her to the point of sleepiness. She could not, moreover, remember having experienced such warm weather in the middle of May.

From the bench on which she was sitting she could trace back the course of the path

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down which she had come. In the sunlight it ran between the vine-trellises, up and up, until it reached the brightly gleaming wall of the cemetery. She was in the habit of taking a walk along that path two or three times a week. She had long since ceased to regard such visits to the cemetery as anything other than a mere walk. When she wandered about the well-kept gravel paths amongst the crosses and the tombstones, or stood offering up a silent prayer beside her husband's grave, or, maybe, laying upon it the few wild flowers which she had plucked on her way up, her heart was scarcely any longer stirred by the slightest throb of pain. Three years had, indeed, passed since her husband had died, which was just as long as their married life had lasted.

Her eyes closed and her mind went back to the time when she had first come to the town, only a few days after their marriage—which had taken place in Vienna. They had only indulged in a modest honeymoon trip, such as a man in humble circumstances, who had married a woman without any dowry, could treat himself to. They had taken the boat from Vienna, up the river, to a little village in Wachau, not far from their future home, and had spent a few days there. Bertha could still remember clearly the little inn at which they had stayed, the