

Perilous voyage



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An old woman, widowed for most of her life, living alone and enduring in a society which places little value on solitary, individual women... can her life have any meaning?

This fascinating novel by Lael Wertenbaker, author of the now classic *Death of a Man*, is about one such woman, Augusta Turnley, who asks

this terrifying question.

Born in an upper New York state town before the turn of the century, Augusta was gifted with vitality, a tart sense of humor, and modest psychic powers. She married blindly adoring Carter Turnley, who took her to a Montana mining settlement, then to an equally alien city in the Deep South where he was born. There, among her husband's relatives, Augusta and her young daughter were stranded when Carter was killed in World War I. Searching for a meaningful life, Augusta, now with neither man nor profession, moved on to New York City, to Hollywood, and back East again, determined to be independent-her own person-despite loneliness.

Now at eighty-four the victim of an accident that left her unable to move or speak, Augusta lies imprisoned in her own body. Yet her mind is anything but paralyzed. She relives the past in vivid flashes as she tries to confront the crucial questions about

her own existence. To young doctor Rob Martin, Augusta is absorbingly interesting, wholly alive. With the help of her only grandchild, he breaks through Augusta's sealed-off world, lending perspective to her passionate inquiry.

Perilous Voyage portrays a woman who dares to come to terms with loneliness and her individual identity. Augusta Turnley proves to be, despite her relative obscurity and unobtrusiveness in society, a magnificently vital, shatteringly human protagonist.

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