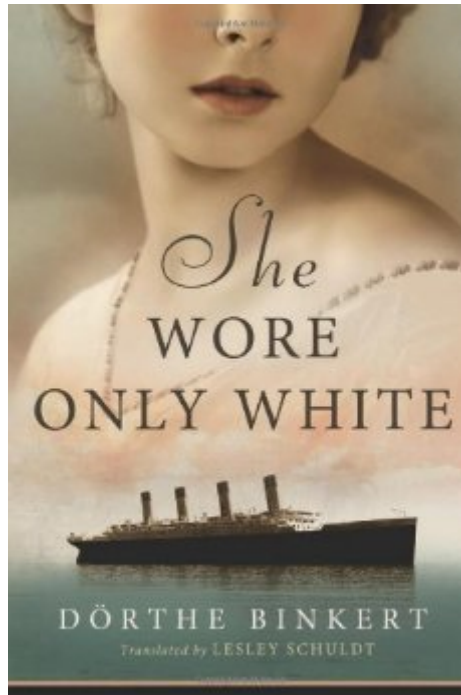


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# She Wore Only White



## Synopsis

At the turn of the twentieth century, five thousand people a day arrived at New York's Ellis Island, their journeys to America signifying a new beginning. But the ocean crossing also has a deeper symbolic meaning: there comes a time for us all when we find ourselves afloat, between phases of our lives, where we say goodbye to our past and move on to new horizons. For Valentina Meyer, harboring a deep secret of tremendous guilt and pain drives her to board a trans-Atlantic voyage as a stowaway, searching desperately for a new life on a distant shore. Accompanying her is a varied cast of eccentric and unique individuals, each in search of a new and better life. Finding solace—even love—in the companionship of their fellow guests, their arrival in America puts an abrupt end to their camaraderie as Valentina's future is immediately put in jeopardy. A probing, affecting exploration of the hidden corners of the human heart, *She Wore Only White* is literature at its finest.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A mysterious, beautiful woman without luggage, dressed in a gorgeous white evening gown, boards the S.S. Kroonland in 1904 for the transatlantic voyage to New York. She is escorted aboard by an

officer who assumes she has a ticket -- but she is in fact a stowaway. This incident, based on a true story, kicks off this diverting novel first published in Germany. We meet other voyagers inhabiting the first class cabins: Henri, a sculptor, haunted by memories of his lover Lisette; Billie, an American shop girl who is the companion of Mr. Brown, an older, married American businessman who loves his wife and four children back home; Thomas, a geologist traveling with his spinster sister who may be looking for love; Lily, a young girl who has been crippled by polio and has a sharp eye for her fellow humans and their foibles. In steerage, the author tells us, are 800 immigrants heading for a new life in America, squashed together in the dark and smelly hold, eating plain food and suffering together when the winds and waves get high. But we are not concerned with them (and the occasional references to their existence is actually jarring because it serves no purpose in the book.) Our world is in first class, where waiters with kid gloves ply us with delicious fare. The voyage progresses and the characters form relationships. Valentina, the mysterious woman in white, is attracted to Thomas. Billie and Henri start spending time together. A storm whips up, metaphorically as well as actually, and then subsides. The set-up is good but there are problems with this book. The construction is clunky. The author keeps whisking back in time in flashbacks that detract from the pace of the novel and supply us with back stories that are not that interesting.

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