

Being Esther: A Novel

Miriam Karmel

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Esther Lustig, anti-Golden Girl and heroine of *Being Esther*, is coping with senescence. Her children are dismissive. Her late husband haunts her. Her friends have died, deteriorated, or moved away. “She considers the infinite frustrations of living in an aging body.” Welcome to old age.

As she navigates her days, counting time, Esther longs for a life of deliberation, of adventure, of autonomy. “She wants to wake up each morning with a sense of purpose ... She wants to be something other than the object of concerned looks and condescension.”

Yet *Being Esther* is no heavy novel. Esther’s quirky anguish is gently humorous, as when she conflates the ineffable with the mundane. In a flashback, when Esther’s mother refused to store a fur at young Esther’s home, the girl yearns, “Tell me you love me ... Tell me my closets are good enough,” but says nothing. Indeed, throughout the story Esther confronts what was left unsaid in her life, examining memories and settling scores in a journey to reveal the woman inside—the real Esther.

Being Esther is journalist Miriam Karmel’s first novel. The author writes the story of Esther past and present with remarkable tenderness. Readers of any age will long for more Esther.

LEIA MENLOVE (Summer 2013)

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