



The Fisher King: A Novel (Phoenix Fiction)

Anthony Powell

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Aboard the *Alecto*, prolific romance author Valentine Beals ruminates on the ship's most seemingly incongruous couple: a graceful, ethereal, virginal dancer named Barberina Rookwood and her lover, Saul Henschman, a crippled, emasculated war hero and photographer. Fancifully, Beals imagines Henschman to be the reembodiment of one of the most mysterious Arthurian legends, the Fisher King—the maimed and impotent ruler of a barren country of whom Perceval failed to ask the right questions. A myth with many permutations—and a blurred borderland between them—the Fisher King legend dovetails the various explanations Powell offers from his competing narrators as to why a talented young dancer would forsake her art to care for a feeble older man.

Ostensibly a novel about gossip on a cruise ship, *The Fisher King* is much more: a highly stylized narrative infused with Greek mythology, legend, and satire.



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