Peter Henisch

THE NOVEL OF THE CENTURY

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A wonderfully wry story about a young woman, an old man and the power of literature.

As a bookseller, elderly Mr Roch has always been surrounded by books. Now he's written his own "novel of the century". It's all about literature, from Musil and Roth through to Bachmann and Handke – stories in which the notion of possibility often overrides reality. Mr Roch asks Lisa, a student and waitress in his favourite café, to type up the manuscript for him. As she can't read his writing, he decides to read it out to her, but his papers are in a dreadful mess. An ambivalent relationship develops between the old man who's brimming with stories and the young woman who doesn't believe everything he says. But Lisa has other worries too – her friend Semira is due to be deported. Can Roch's storehouse provide a refuge for her?

PETER HENISCH

Born in Vienna in 1943. A post-war childhood and an adolescence shaped by reconstruction. Studied philosophy and psychology. In 1969, he co-founded the literary magazine “Wespennest” with Helmut Zenker. He has worked as an independent writer since the 1970s. Henisch’s first novel, “Die kleine Figur meines Vaters”, was published in 1975, followed by numerous other novels, including “Die schwangere Madonna” (2005), “Eine sehr kleine Frau” (2007), “Mortimer und Miss Molly” (2013) and “Suchbild mit Katze” (2016). He has received numerous honours, including the Austrian Art Prize. His most recent books published by Residenz Verlag are “Der Jahrhundertroman” (2021), “Nichts als Himmel” (2023) and “Muttersuchen” (2026).

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