



by Michael Köhlmeier
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Fiction

🏆 Longlisted for the
German Book Prize.

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Occident *Abendland*

review

Aged ninety-five, Professor Carl Candoris is dying. Long predeceased by his wife, family and friends, he has only one person left to whom he can give his real love. This is the son of a brilliant but troubled and alcoholic jazz guitarist, Georg Lukasser, of whom the professor was a tireless supporter and to whose son Sebastian, now a writer, he was a second father. Sebastian it is whom he now asks to write his life, but this long and ambitious novel, which purports to be no more than a gathering of material, is much more than that. It is, in fact, the history of both the families, of their friends and lovers, and of the great events of almost a hundred years, from the pre-1914 German adventure in South-West Africa to the aftermath of Krystalnacht in Vienna, and from the bombing of Hiroshima to the liberation of the concentration camps. Themes of destruction and demise haunt these pages, with murders, suicides and fatal illness almost a commonplace. Many famous names crop up, and the settings range from Vienna, where the main action occurs, to Germany, New York, Tokyo and Moscow. The pace and tension never flag. Powerful, weighty and absorbing.

press quotes

'A book that demands to be read this autumn.' – Falter

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about the author

Michael Köhlmeier was born in 1949 in Hard, not far from Bregenz on the Austrian stretch of Lake Constance. He studied German and Politics in Marburg and Philosophy and Mathematics in Gießen and Frankfurt. Among the many prizes he has received are the Rauriser Literaturpreis for the best first publication, the bi-annual Johann-Peter-Hebel-Preis, and the coveted Austrian Anton-Wildgans-Preis. He lives in Vorarlberg, in the far west of Austria, and Vienna.

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