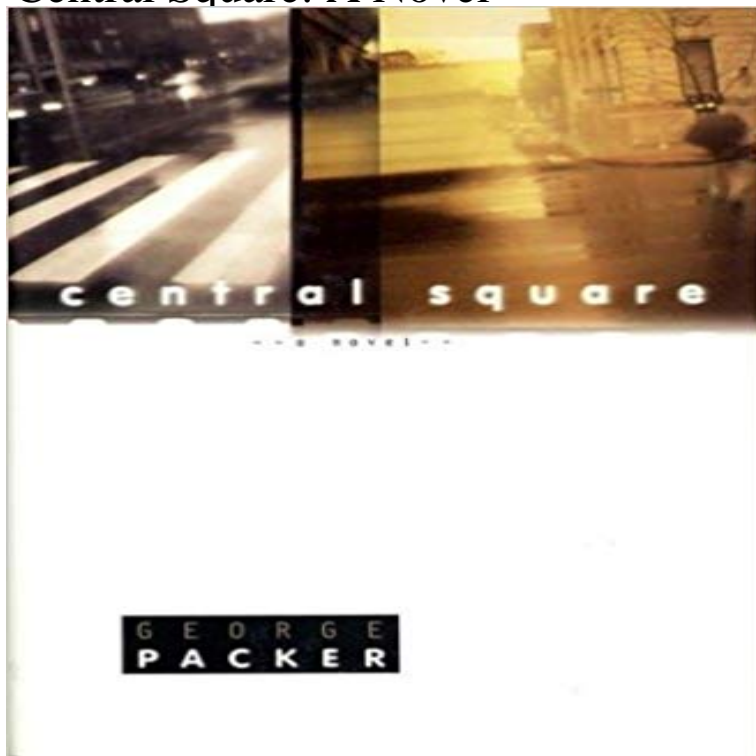


## Central Square: A Novel



When Joe arrives in Boston and is mistaken for African-- rather than African American-- he quickly discovers that letting the illusion stand generates magic. A job, a place to live, even a kind of deference he's never known before are suddenly casually endowed upon him, a man who surely must have a closer connection to life's hidden possibilities. Central Square bustles with the complexities and contradictions of today's urban existence as it tells what happens when the enigmatic Joe meets up with several other disparate characters. There is Paula, the social worker whose loneliness is intensified with each sad story she hears; Eric, the writer who struggles in a world that ignores his work and whose wife has abandoned him for pregnancy; the mysterious community group that has posted titillating feel-good signs around the city. As characters collide with circumstances, and each other, George Packer's bold novel explores the conflict between personal desires and social constraints, and the unattainable balance between private life and the life of a community. Unafraid to expose the difficult truths about contemporary society, Central Square asks how we can find something decent to which to commit our lives.

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