

János Székely  
*Temptation*

Published by Diogenes as *Verlockung*  
Original title: *Kisértés*



## János Székely *Verlockung*

Roman · Diogenes

Hungary between the wars. Bela has just escaped his village childhood, sleeping on straw and working for his supper. Now, at fourteen, he moves to Budapest to stay with his young mother, a woman as hungry for life as he is. His decision stands firm: he wants to leave poverty behind and conquer the fairytale world he is now getting to know as a lift boy in a grand hotel. When the mysterious wife of His Excellency rings for him one night, Bela thinks his hour has come.

### Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature  
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#### Translation rights currently sold:

English/world (Pushkin)  
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Spanish/world (Lumen)  
Turkish (Yapi Kredi)

#### 📌 Bestseller

Spiegel Bestseller

#### Praise

##### *Temptation*

»So captivating that you'd like to devour these more than 800 pages in one single day? A gripping detective novel, as it is called in the first line? Well, yes. And a coming-of-age story? Also. An adventure, a popular tale like ›Simplicissimus‹. A proletarian version of ›Felix Krull‹. Bittersweet love comedy and pre-revolutionary pamphlet. This very entertaining read has something of it all.« – Volker Müller / Berliner Zeitung

»An incredible book!« – Elke Heidenreich

»This book can be read as a wonderful example of genre writing, in the tradition of *Oliver Twist* and *Felix Krull*.« – Fritz Göttler / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

»A truly great novel that brings everything together: narrative force, social history, wit, anger, grief, love and idealism.« – Angela Wittmann / Brigitte, Hamburg

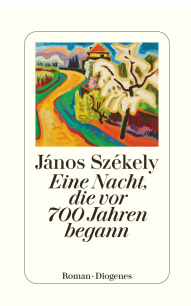
»[...] a novel which is most effective when it dramatizes the routine events of the peasant life in the country villages or the hounded existence of the Budapest workers.« – Frederick Brantley / The New York Times Book Review

»The densely packed story is, in genre terms, a racy, filmic cross between a picaresque and Bildungsroman. [...] The writing, as translated by Mark Baczoni, is full of vigour, a product of the author's own anger, patience, truthfulness and wonder.« – George Szirtes / Times Literary Supplement, London

»It can make you want to storm the barricades, red flag in hand, belting out *The Internationale*. [...] Planned as a trilogy, this first volume is Dickensian in scope and character.« – Madeleine Johnson / The American, Rome



János Székely (1901 - 1958) was born in Budapest and moved to Berlin at the age of eighteen to escape the Horthy regime. He wrote numerous screenplays for silent movie stars such as Brigitte Helm, Willy Fritsch and Marlene Dietrich. In 1934 Ernst Lubitsch invited him to work in Hollywood and Székely finally emigrated in 1938. Under the pen name John S. Toldy he was awarded the 1940 ›Academy Award for Best Story‹ for *Arise, My Love*. Persecuted again during the McCarthy era, he lived in Mexico with his wife and daughter for several years, before accepting an offer from DEFA in East Berlin in 1957, where he died a year later.



*A Night That Began 700 Years Ago*  
704 pages  
2023