

Zoltán László

At the Top of the Ladder

(novel)

The Editor's Report

Zoltán László's novel is unique on the Hungarian book market. *At the Top of the Ladder* is an urban fantasy, but features like its fine humour, flesh and blood characters, carefully edited scenes and the precisely constructed historical background make it an outstanding piece of the genre. The story is entwined with elements of and references to science fiction (no wonder, as the author's previous works were marked sci-fis), which makes the novel even more exciting and unpredictable for the reader.

The protagonist of the story is a guy in his twenties, with a shadowed past, who, against his will yet not by chance, gets involved in power struggles fought under the surface of reality. Because the Budapest of *At the Top of the Ladder* is not the same Budapest as its inhabitants or the arriving tourists believe it to be. The buildings known from guidebooks, the famous Danube banks, the ruin bars and Hungarian people all serve as a means of hiding the forces working in the background. This *jeu d'esprit* is one of the main appeals of the novel. As the world of Hungarian folk tales and the descendants of popular characters appear at the most unexpected places in the city, we are pulled deeper and deeper in this exciting fictitious world, where we never know what to expect the next moment.

At one point, we read about our protagonist's clumsy romantic attempts, then the canvas of reality is torn, and a volubly changing chain of strange events follow, featuring even more strange but excellently created characters. Later, we find ourselves in a crime story involving a mysterious murder and an attractive detective.

People are not what they seem; the author plays an amusing game with us: there is no point in trying to find out how the plot goes on, he manages to surprise us every single time.

The novel is built on tightly edited, well constructed scenes, its manner is airy and the dialogues are witty throughout. Portraying the descendants of the uniquely rich Hungarian folklore, shaping their characters holds out great prospects, and Zoltán László doesn't miss a chance to surprise and dazzle us.

Contact: sullylasco@hotmail.com

Not only will the fans of the genre will indulge in *At the Top of the Ladder*, but also any reader who enjoys an exciting story full of twists, one which keeps our attention to the very end, and is renewed on each and every page. *At the Top of the Ladder* doesn't give unwanted explanations; its author knows exactly how and with which tools he can engage his readers with. It entertains on a masterly level and, most importantly, manages to remain fresh and relevant throughout, while the impression of novelty remains until the very last page. We never get the feeling we have seen or read it before. This is how an urban fantasy should be written in 2013.

Csaba Csurgó
Editor of the Hungarian edition, Agave Publishing