



Satantango

By László Krasznahorkai

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From the winner of the 2015 Man Booker International Prize

At long last, twenty-five years after the Hungarian genius László Krasznahorkai burst onto the scene with his first novel, *Satantango* dances into English in a beautiful translation by George Szirtes.

Already famous as the inspiration for the filmmaker Béla Tarr's six-hour masterpiece, *Satantango* is proof, as the spellbinding, bleak, and hauntingly beautiful book has it, that "the devil has all the good times."

The story of *Satantango*, spread over a couple of days of endless rain, focuses on the dozen remaining inhabitants of an unnamed isolated hamlet: failures stuck in the middle of nowhere. Schemes, crimes, infidelities, hopes of escape, and above all trust and its constant betrayal are Krasznahorkai's meat. "At the center of *Satantango*," George Szirtes has said, "is the eponymous drunken dance, referred to here sometimes as a tango and sometimes as a csardas. It takes place at the local inn where everyone is drunk. . . . Their world is rough and ready, lost somewhere between the comic and tragic, in one small insignificant corner of the cosmos. Theirs is the dance of death."

"You know," Mrs. Schmidt, a pivotal character, tipsily confides, "dance is my one weakness."

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Satantango By László Krasznahorkai Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Bookforum

A bleakly absurdist, voluptuously written saga of abject disintegration on the muddy nowhere-ville of the Hungarian puszta, *Satantango* had a sardonic prescience. Supposedly structured on the forward-backward steps of the tango, the novel glides from one consciousness to another, ultimately revealed as a kind of Mobius strip. —J. Hoberman

Review

“[...] irresistible, unforgettable and required reading.” (Eileen Battersby - The Irish Times)

“Krasznahorkai has studied humanity, our weakness and folly. In his wry, engaging disenchantment lingers hope in the lucid pursuit of salvation. “Something is going to happen today,” remarks one of the characters in *Satantango*, and to read Krasznahorkai is to experience that frisson of anticipation and excitement, knowing that an intoxicating adventure really does await us.” (Eileen Battersby - The Irish Times)

“Like something far down the periodic table of elements, Krasznahorkai’s sentences are strange, elusive, frighteningly radioactive. They seek to replicate the entropic whirl of consciousness itself and, in the case of Eszter, to stop its “onward rush” entirely.” (Jacob Silverman - New York Times Book Review)

“The excitement of Krasznahorkai’s writing is that he has come up with his own original forms ? and one of the most haunting is his first, *Satantango*. There’s nothing else like it in contemporary literature.” (Adam Thirwell - The New York Review of Books)

“He is obsessed as much with the extremes of language as he is with the extremes of thought, with the very limits of people and systems in a world gone mad ? and it is hard not to be compelled by the haunting clarity of his vision.” (Adam Levy - The Millions)

“What prevents *Satantango* from devolving into a mere exercise in clever derivation, however, is Krasznahorkai’s fervent mission to thoroughly mine the mysteriousness, and potential miraculousness, of a seemingly corrupt physical reality. His wry, snake-like sentences produce?or unspool?layer upon layer of psychological insight, metaphysical revelation, and macroscopic historical perspective.” (The L Magazine)

“On occasion, Krasznahorkai’s sentences seem to swell and deflate; each clause seems to twist in its own direction. His sentences are, by turns, lovely, brutal, bombastic, ironic, and precise.” (Bookslut)

“Krasznahorkai produces novels that are riveting in their sinewy momentum and deeply engaging in the utter humanity of their vision.” (Dublin Review of Books)

“His prose is formed like a fractal: self-similar patterns where every sentence exceeds its topological dimensions to become a microcosm of the entire work. We definitely hear Beckett in him.” (Full Stop Magazine)

“Think of *Satantango*, then, as an Eastern European blues album that looks to affirm the coarse texture of life rather than auto-tune it into something smoother or more amendable to wish fulfillment.” (Salon)

“Krasznahorkai’s sentences are snaky, circuitous things, near-endless strings of clauses and commas that

through reversals, hesitations, hard turns and meandering asides come to embody time itself, to stretch it and condense it, to reveal its cruel materiality, the way it at once traps us and offers, always deceptively, to release us from its grasp, somewhere out there after the last comma and the final period: after syntax, after words.” (The Nation)

“Linguistically [*Satantango*] is a stunning novel, but it's tough going, an hours-long slog through mud and meaninglessness and superstition that will leave an indelible mark on anyone who gets through it.” (Telegraph)

“A writer without comparison, László Krasznahorkai plunges into the subconscious where this moral battle takes place, and projects it into a mythical, mysterious, and irresistible work of post-modern fiction, a novel certain to hold a high rank in the canon of Eastern European literature.” (The Coffin Factory)

“László Krasznahorkai’s novel *Satantango* is an argument for the vitality of translation. It is bold, dense, difficult, and utterly unforgettable.” (The Daily Beast)

“Krasznahorkai is a poet of dilapidation, of everything that exists on the point of not-existence.” (The Independent)

“Whether he's inside the minds and machinations of his characters' scheming heads, tramping through the muddy streets from one ruined destination to another, or speculating on the value of existence under such Godless conditions, Krasznahorkai proves himself to be capable of bringing anything to life, *Satantango's* pages are teeming with it.” (Critical Mob)

“His textual ambiguities make any concrete reading of *Satantango* nearly impossible, and we are put in the same befuddled, liminal state of mind as the fictional residents themselves: missing the thing by waiting for it.” (Los Angeles Review of Books)

“Utterly absorbing—it dramatises with great invention the parching of the human imagination and wrings an almost holy grandeur from a tale of provincial petulance.” (New Statesman)

“The serpentine motion that is neither progress nor repetition, the forward and backward steps of the 'tango' explicitly structure *Satantango*.” (The Quarterly Review)

“I love Krasznahorkai’s books. His long, meandering sentences enchant me, and even if his universe appears gloomy, we always experience that transcendence which to Nietzsche represented metaphysical consolation.” (Imre Kertész)

“Krasznahorkai is the contemporary Hungarian master of the apocalypse who inspires comparisons with Gogol and Melville.” (Susan Sontag)

“The universality of his vision rivals that of *Dead Souls* and far surpasses all the lesser concerns of contemporary writing.” (W. G. Sebald)

About the Author

László Krasznahorkai, described by James Wood in the *New Yorker* as an “obsessive visionary,” was born in Gyula, Hungary. This is his seventh book published by New Directions.

George Szirtes is a Hungarian-born British poet and translator who has translated works by Sándor Csoóri,

Dezső Kosztolányi, and László Krasznahorkai.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marcy Ontiveros:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or even read a book called Satantango? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have additional opinion?

Marvin Gamez:

Reading a guide tends to be new life style in this particular era globalization. With reading you can get a lot of information that may give you benefit in your life. Along with book everyone in this world can certainly share their idea. Books can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire their particular reader with their story or maybe their experience. Not only the storyplot that share in the publications. But also they write about the information about something that you need illustration. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your young ones, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors in this world always try to improve their skill in writing, they also doing some research before they write with their book. One of them is this Satantango.

Jessie Davis:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray you, why because this Satantango reserve written by well-known writer whose to say well how to make book which can be understand by anyone who else read the book. Written with good manner for you, dripping every ideas and writing skill only for eliminate your own hunger then you still hesitation Satantango as good book not merely by the cover but also through the content. This is one book that can break don't judge book by its handle, so do you still needing yet another sixth sense to pick this particular!?! Oh come on your examining sixth sense already said so why you have to listening to one more sixth sense.

Nancy Barry:

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