



by György Dalos
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Fiction

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The Gargarin Club

Jugendstil

review

Here is an all-too-accurate picture of adolescence, evocatively drawn and often with a dark wit, but in an unusual situation, the conditions being those of 'really existing socialism' in a 1960s grammar school in Budapest. The narrator and protagonist, Robi Singer, is now a respected art historian in Vienna. But then he was a schoolboy and an enthusiastic young Communist. The school has been given the privilege of starting a youth club – the Gagarin Club – which will soon have its launch night. He is also in love with a girl in the form below him, Ilona Fenyvesi, the daughter of a surgeon. The first kiss has been postponed but Ilona tells him yes, now, tonight, it can take place. They slip off to an empty classroom, the lights go out, and when they come on again coats and jackets have disappeared. Suspicion falls on Robi, but how can he exculpate himself without compromising Ilona? Years later a disreputable-looking man, who was once a brilliant mathematician and a pupil at the same school, accosts him and thanks him for not having informed on him. But Robi has lost his girl long since. Ah, not so happy days! Be warned: once tasted, the appetite for Dalos grows.

NB Readers may also enjoy exploring Dalos's depiction of the meeting between Anna Akhmatova and Isaiah Berlin, Der Gast aus der Zukunft, and his short history of Hungary, Ungarn in der Nußschale.

press quotes

'Dalos is a tightrope walker, balancing himself between irony and melancholy. His prose is made of simple words about the complicated, a long anecdote about small people's history.' – György Konrad

about the author

György Dalos was born in Budapest in 1943. Today he works as a freelance author in Berlin. His awards have included the Adelbert von Chamisso Award of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts in 1995 and the Goldene Plakette of the Republic of Hungary in 2000. To date his books have been translated into eleven languages.

Previous works include:

Balaton-Brigade (Rotbuch, 2006); *Seilschaften* (DuMont, 2002); *Der Gottsucher* (Suhrkamp, 2001); *Die Beschneidung* (Insel, 1990); *Kurzer Lehrgang, Langer Marsch* (Rotbuch, 1985).

Translated editions of previous works have been published by:

Donzelli Editore, Italy; Farrar, Straus & Giroux, USA; France, Actes Sud.

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language crime fiction. Its authors include Birgit Vanderbeke, Heiner Müller, Hannah Arendt, Franz Xaver Kroetz, Mickey Spillane, Jerome Charyn, Peter Weiss, Gunter Gerlach and Nobel Prize winner Dario Fo.