



Skylark (New York Review Books Classics)

By Dezso Kosztolanyi

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It is 1900, give or take a few years. The Vajkays—call them Mother and Father—live in Sárszeg, a dead-end burg in the provincial heart of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Father retired some years ago to devote his days to genealogical research and quaint questions of heraldry. Mother keeps house. Both are utterly enthralled with their daughter, Skylark. Unintelligent, unimaginative, unattractive, and unmarried, Skylark cooks and sews for her parents and anchors the unremitting tedium of their lives.

Now Skylark is going away, for one week only, it's true, but a week that yawns endlessly for her parents. What will they do? Before they know it, they are eating at restaurants, reconnecting with old friends, attending the theater. And this is just a prelude to Father's night out at the Panther Club, about which the less said the better. Drunk, in the light of dawn Father surprises himself and Mother with his true, buried, unspeakable feelings about Skylark.

Then, Skylark is back. Is there a world beyond the daily grind and life's creeping disappointments? Kosztolányi's crystalline prose, perfect comic timing, and profound human sympathy conjure up a tantalizing beauty that lies on the far side of the irredeemably ordinary. To that extent, *Skylark* is nothing less than a magical book.

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Skylark (New York Review Books Classics) By Dezso Kosztolanyi Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This alternately hilarious and melancholy classic of Hungarian literature plumbs the psyches of a husband and wife burdened with a homely daughter. After Ákos Vajkay and his wife, Antónia, dispatch *Skylark*, their stifling, unattractive and overbearing daughter, to visit with relatives, they revitalize their lives in Szarszeg, their backwater village, and recapture their youth with the Panthers, a schnapps-swilling men's social club. During their daughterless week, Ákos and Antónia rekindle their joy in living, taking in a transformative production of *The Geisha* and engaging in a drinking binge and epic meals at the local tavern. With their health and happiness returned to them, the disquieting realization of *Skylark*'s return sets in, leading to an inevitable confrontation. The author slyly depicts a smalltown life that remains curiously relevant today with his exploration of the tension between the politics of the left and the right, atheism and Christianity, and parents and their children. Though written 80 years ago, this remains a deftly executed, thoughtful meditation on mortality and the passage of time. (Mar.)

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Review

"Dezso Kosztolányi belonged to a remarkable generation of Central European writers. This novel is a masterpiece. From the opening sentences, he is drawing on nuance and subtle detail; comedy and pathos. Every gesture speaks volumes.....for all the humour and the easy comedy this lively study of small life is as profound as a prayer, as subtle as a lament." –*The Irish Times*

"This short, perfect novel seems to encapsulate all the world's pain in a soap bubble. Its surface is as smooth as a fable, its setting and characters are unremarkable, its tone is blithe, and its effect is shattering."

–Deborah Eisenberg, *The New York Review of Books*

"The risks of projects like the Central European Classics is that some of the books will prove to be worthy rather than interesting novels which one reads out of duty rather than pleasure. This is not at all the case with Dezso Kosztolanyi's *Skylark*; I cancelled a dinner engagement because it was too gripping to put down."

–*The Guardian* (London)

"Kosztolanyi's precise description of his chosen microcosm has produced a gem of a book that is completely convincing in its depiction of characters and the society they move in...The language is invigorating and at times hilarious." –*The Independent* (London)

"Beneath this gentle satire, Kosztolanyi is steadily subverting the arrogant certainties of his times, from the vainglory of the Austrian hierarchy and its rural quislings to the loud but empty boasting of the oppressed intelligentsia." –*The Observer* (London)

"Examining the unaddressed tensions of the Vajkay family, *Skylark*...depicts the closed, debilitating atmosphere of provincial life in the dying days of the Austro-Hungarian empire...Richard Acze's line version of *Skylark* catches its author's irony and sharp, atmospheric nuance. This hidden masterpiece is now being presented to a wide audience, an event to be celebrated." –*The Irish Times*

"*Skylark*, published in Hungarian in 1924, is the most original, economical and painful novel I have read in a long time." –*The Times* (London)

“..a superb, deeply poignant short novel, but also of a gifted translator...I believe that anyone can enjoy, say, *Skylark* as literature in English, even if they have no special knowledge of, or interest in, Hungary and the lost world of the Habsburg monarchy...Kosztolanyi’s writing is good enough to transcend the cultural difference that does exist.” –Timothy Garton-Ash, *The Independent* (London)

“Kosztolanyi was a ringleader in the 20th-century flowering of Hungarian literature, a poet who reformed the language, and a fiction writer of world class.” –*The Guardian* (London)

“Deszo Kosztolanyi simultaneously sustains a line of complex political paradoxes alongside a strikingly convincing human narrative.” –*The Herald* (Glasgow)

“...[an] alternately hilarious and melancholy classic of Hungarian literature...The author slyly depicts a smalltown life that remains curiously relevant today with his exploration of the tension between the politics of the left and the right, atheism and Christianity, and parents and their children. Though written 80 years ago, this remains a deftly executed, thoughtful meditation on mortality and the passage of time.” –*Publishers Weekly*

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Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: Hungarian

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rose Waldman:

Reading a reserve can be one of a lot of pastime that everyone in the world adores. Do you like reading book and so. There are a lot of reasons why people enjoyed. First reading a book will give you a lot of new information. When you read a publication you will get new information since book is one of numerous ways to share the information or perhaps their idea. Second, examining a book will make a person more imaginative. When you examining a book especially fictional book the author will bring one to imagine the story how the figures do it anything. Third, you may share your knowledge to some others. When you read this *Skylark* (New York Review Books Classics), you are able to tell your family, friends along with soon about yours publication. Your knowledge can inspire the mediocre, make them reading a reserve.

Allison Devore:

The publication with title *Skylark* (New York Review Books Classics) contains a lot of information that you can learn it. You can get a lot of gain after read this book. This particular book exist new information the

information that exist in this reserve represented the condition of the world right now. That is important to you to learn how the improvement of the world. This book will bring you in new era of the internationalization. You can read the e-book on your smart phone, so you can read it anywhere you want.

Kurt Bohnert:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or go to the outside with their family or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity that's look different you can read any book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent all day every day to reading a publication. The book *Skylark* (New York Review Books Classics) it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can more very easily to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book possesses high quality.

David Baker:

This *Skylark* (New York Review Books Classics) is fresh way for you who has attention to look for some information given it relief your hunger associated with. Getting deeper you in it getting knowledge more you know or you who still having bit of digest in reading this *Skylark* (New York Review Books Classics) can be the light food for you personally because the information inside that book is easy to get simply by anyone. These books create itself in the form that is certainly reachable by anyone, yeah I mean in the e-book web form. People who think that in book form make them feel tired even dizzy this e-book is the answer. So you cannot find any in reading a publication especially this one. You can find actually looking for. It should be here for you actually. So, don't miss it! Just read this e-book kind for your better life and also knowledge.

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