

Letters from the Shadowlands

(Levelek az árnyékvilágból)

“Dangerous liaisons in 19th century Hungary”

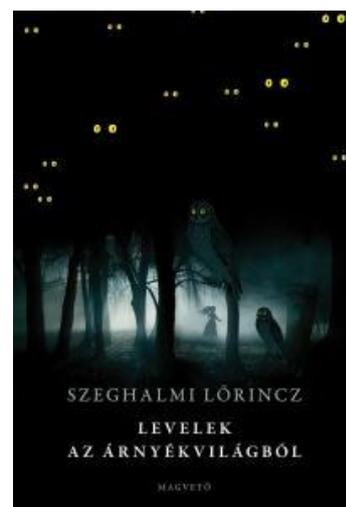
A medical-criminal investigation and a thrilling journey into the unknown: a 19th century, *literary* version of the X-Files and Doctor House meets Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain and Ambrose Bierce!

AUTHENTIC, HIGH-STANDARD LITERATURE: a masterful, highly entertaining plot AND a captivating tale, written in a rich, beautiful, classical language – it is the ultimate page-turner.

You simply cannot put it down!

Beautifully written, passionate, thrilling – with the occasional, discreet pinch of humour.

Science, crime, love and dark mystique blend into great literature in the hands of a masterful writer!



The story

In the year 1839, strange and disturbing occurrences disrupt the calm and peace of Ung county, in the historic settings of 19th century Hungary.

The eerie events which take place in the years 1839-1840 are recorded in a series of letters by the person who experienced them first-hand: a man of science, a physician who finds himself at the center of many puzzling occurrences and mystical, unexplainable incidents which challenge and gradually break down his strict, rational, scientific reality, and ultimately take him down a road where the man of science that he is will also become a man of faith.

**A mystical thriller
written as an epistolary novel**

At the outset of a series of mystical events, the physician, doctor Lőrincz Szeghalmi – the author of the letters from which the story gradually unfolds –, is called upon when a young woman comes down with a mysterious disease: she is tormented by horrible spasms and is only relieved by the local medicine man's healing powder – even if that temporary relief comes through giving birth... to a toad. The ominous case finds its way onto the pages of a renowned medical review, while inexorably, doctor Szeghalmi is more and more deeply entangled in an investigation which will take him into the dark realms of the unknown... and beyond.

Adventure, murder, revenge and true love

As one mystery deepens and entirely new ones arise, his mission to unveil the truth turns into a struggle where he ultimately has to hang on to dear life in the midst of hideous murders, dead people rising, vengeful spirits and sinister highwaymen.

On his difficult road to uncover the truth behind the mysteries, he finds good people to assist him in his mission: an “unlearned” medicine man – an expert in alternative healing, and the mysterious and

beautiful woman, Ilona, at whose side Szeghalmi will discover true love.

As the investigation unravels the truth, Ilona also finds herself in mortal danger – and their life, their love itself is now at stake.

About the Author of the letters

As his letters left behind for posterity attest, if Lőrincz Szeghalmi had taken a different professional turn, he could have become a remarkable writer. His style and his vision are entirely his own: this exceptionally gifted wordsmith and storyteller records the events with surgical precision, but at the same time, passion and the constant torments of doubt permeate his seemingly unimpassioned relation of the facts.

Lőrincz Szeghalmi was born in a well-situated family, in the year 1807. He started his studies at the faculty of medicine at the age of 20.

He studied internal medicine from Ferenc Bene, surgery from Ignác Stáhly and János Veleczky, theoretical medicine from Pál Bugát. As a university student, he saw the 1831 cholera outbreak which killed more than 200.000 people in Hungary.

He graduated as a medical doctor in 1832, after he had authored case histories on the treatment of malaria and pneumonia, which earned him his title. His quest for professional self-development lead him to Vienna where he studied surgical techniques for one semester. He returned to Hungary in 1834 and graduated as a surgical doctor and a master ophtalmologist in the same year. He then started his own medical practice in the city of Ungvár – he originally contemplated spending there no more than two or three years but he eventually prolonged his stay.

The period spanning autumn 1839–spring 1840 was to be extremely eventful in Szeghalmi’s life. The strange events which he experiences then are related by him in a series of letters which were not found until a few years ago in an old vicarage being renovated in the town of Kaposvár. These same letters constitute the material of “*Letters from the Shadowlands*”, now brought to the readers.

The life of doctor Szeghalmi following this period is veiled in mystery. The existence of further records or letters written by him cannot be excluded – some yet undiscovered documents might exist on the shelves of various archives. Time and further research are necessitated to provide us with a more detailed description of his life and career.

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