

Document Citation

Title	Ébredés - Awakening
Author(s)	Piers Handling
Source	<i>Toronto International Film Festival</i>
Date	1995
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	333
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Elek, Judit (1937), Budapest, Hungary
Film Subjects	Ébredés (Awakening), Elek, Judit, 1994

TIFF 1995



Ébredés

Awakening

Judit Elek

HUNGARY/FRANCE/POLAND, 1994

110 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Budapest Filmstúdió/Scarabee Films/Zebra Studio Filmowe**

Executive Producer: **András Ozorai**

Producer: **Ferenc Kardos**

Screenplay: **Judit Elek**

Cinematographer: **Gábor Balog**

Editor: **Judit Elek**

Production Designer: **Tamás Banovich**

Sound: **György Kovács**

Music: **László Melis**

Principal Cast: **Fruzsina Eszes, Petra Köves, Judit Hernádi, András Kern, Sándor Zsótér**

Print Source: **Magyar Filmunió, Városligeti fasor 38, 1068 Budapest, Hungary. Tel: (36-1) 351-7760. Fax: (36-1) 351-7766.**

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Judit Elek has made over half a dozen feature films since her debut, few of which are well-known in North America, and all of which deserve wider attention. *Awakening* is one of her finest efforts, a beautifully understated, wonderfully observed tale about the painful awakening of a 13-year-old Jewish girl in early-fifties Hungary. Stalin is still alive, so, by implication, the society in which Kati lives is deeply oppressed. One day, while in class, Kati is told her mother has died. Her father lives in another city, so she ends up moving in with her uncle. The two do not hit it off. Kati returns to her old apartment, which she is forced to share with another family due to Budapest's housing shortage.

All the while Kati dreams of her mother, the one person who gives her guidance and comfort. The image fortifies her, and they carry on a series of conversations. But, inevitably, this escape is not enough. Elek shows Kati's stumbling efforts to reach out in the real world. Trouble follows her as she hosts a drunken birthday party and her teacher discovers her diary, filled with her erotic thoughts. One day, she meets a young man with whom she decides to share her apartment, even though he's involved with another woman. With him, she takes another step toward womanhood.

Driven by the wonderfully wide-eyed Fruzsina Eszes, *Awakening* is full of penetrating observations of Kati's tremulous attempts to bring love into her life. Elek clearly remembers the defining moments in

the life of a young girl, and sensitively transfers those memories to the screen.

— *Piers Handling*

Judit Elek was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1937. After graduating from the Academy of Theatre and Film in 1961, she joined Mafilm as an assistant director. She is also one of the founding members of the Béla Balázs Studio of young filmmakers. Her films include: *How Long Does Man Matter?* (67), *The Lady From Constantinople* (69), *Maybe Tomorrow* (79), *Martinovics* (80), *Maria's Day* (83), *Memoirs of a River* (88) and *Awakening* (94).

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