



# **Erich Segal: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)**

*Linda De Roche*

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From *Love Story* in 1970 to *Prizes*, his most recent bestseller, Erich Segal has created a body of fiction that testifies to the importance of traditional values and virtues in contemporary life. To drive home his views, Segal revitalizes the sentimental novel, which evokes emotion to assert moral precepts. This study, the first full-length examination of his work, explores the development of his art and analyzes each of his seven novels in turn. Pelzer shows how Segal's novels explore the parent-child relationship, the price of success, the importance of love, marriage, and human commitment, and the temptations and pressures that make it difficult for the individual to live rightly.

A biographical chapter discusses Segal's career as a novelist and an academic. A chapter on genre examines his fiction in the tradition of the sentimental novel. Each novel is discussed in a separate chapter and analyzed for plot structure, characterization, thematic elements, literary devices, and style. In addition, Pelzer defines and applies a variety of alternative critical approaches to the novels to widen the reader's perspective. A complete bibliography of Segal's work as well as selected reviews and criticism complete the volume. In this study Pelzer shows how both Segal's short, sentimental tales of love and loss and his multi-character sagas, which range wide in time and place, tap into the deeply held beliefs of his readers and assert traditional values. It is this reaffirmation of values that is the source of his popular appeal to American readers.

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