

NEMZETKÖZI SZÍNHÁZI INTÉZET MAGYAR KÖZPONTJA

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Blood Relations

A play in two parts

Place: Somewhere in Hungary

Time : Some time after the discovery of the railway.

This play is about passions. Accordingly, the heroes do not move in the space of reality, but in the magnetic field of their own obsessions. They do not know each other yet, but -if they raise their voices- they can hear each other and pass things to and fro. They can even meet freely if someone calls: "Hullo!"

The name of all characters is the same: Bokor. And they are all railway employees. Railways are the common target of their passion. They never speak about anything else, they live and die for it. Even if doing something else /e.g. eating eggs or buying red wine/ they do it in the interest of the railway.

As they all live for this common cause, everyone of them is right in his or her own way. The "Great Cause" for the success of which we are all rooting is represented for them by the railway.

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This should be possibly conveyed in such a manner that the spectators could substitute "railways" by anything they live or die for. Starting from their homeland through religion and political ideals up to football. To facilitate this substitution, the actors should not be clad in railwaymen's uniform and semaphores should not be set up on the scene. The play is for and about those who believe in something: let us make the spectators' identification with the actors easier.

In the first part the characters "introduce themselves" in the form of long monologues. In short, grotesk, clown-like jokes the two Bokor families and a railway-man's widow get acquainted with each other. We soon learn that Pál, a lonely old sleeping-car guard, is mortally ill and nothing but a few blood transfusions can save him. Pál himself is not too much attached to life, but the ambitious Judit Bokor decides to get "railwaymen's blood" for him. She goes through a lot of trouble to get it, first from the parents, then from a young couple. Everybody is willing to give blood of course only because it is needed by a fellow railwayman. This makes them all enthusiastic.

The second part describes the Bokor's meeting and reveals that none of them is so disinterested after all. Veronka, young Mrs. Bokor, wants to have a child. Her husband, a fanatic technocrate, needs Pál's help to get a job at the railway company. He feels that the incompetence of the older generation would kill this splendid institution. The young people see in Pál their saviour but so do the old ones. Mimi is willing to adopt Pál as her child, to replace in her heart husband and daughter who care for nothing except railways.

Miklós, the father, expects even more from Pál. Being too old to cope with his exacting job he seeks the help of the experienced, unruffled Pál. He has a complicated problem to solve: the switching to summer time-table coincides with a double holiday.

Pál is wary of all obligations. All he thinks about is to go a-fishing. He recommends young Peter to help Miklós in his predicament. Everybody is happy: this cooperation would solve the problem. The only hitch in the matter is that all Bokors, be they young or old, have their own ideas about how to save the railways. This includes old widowed Mrs. Bokor who is an informer and a Cassandra in the same person. Everybody proffers a monologue in the support of his or her own solution. The last one, Miklós, offers - almost on behalf of mankind - a heart-rendering vision of the railwaymen's suffering and self-sacrifice.

Peter, however, is bored to death by the heroes' voices. He falls asleep, putting an end to the friendship and cooperation among the Bokors. This also precludes blood-donation. While, in their impotence, they huddle together under an umbrella, Judit reveals in a grotesk monologue that everything went topsy-turvy during the double holidays on all railway lines. With great enthusiasm the Bokors decide to remedy the situation. And this should be done immediately after the holidays.

Till this is achieved - well, those who want to travel by train had better start on foot.