

Károly Szakonvi: The butcher

One-act play

Characters: 1 man, 1 woman

First performed: Reflector Stage
Budapest, 22nd January 1989.

Middle-aged, average married couple on the stage. Everyday evening talk. Dialogue is mostly parallel monologue: husband and wife only seem to talk to one another. They want to give an account of their day but they're apparently used to the fact that they remain locked up within themselves with their problems. The woman, however, had a peculiar day. In the morning she suddenly felt she couldn't suffer the grip and the grind of the ordinary day after day. She tells her husband or rather remembers just for herself that she came away from work before midday for she felt suffocated. A little relief came from the nameless overpowering feeling when she caught sight of the butcher through the sopwindow as he was chopping up meat. No sooner did she come home than there was a ring at the doorbell: it was the butcher bringigng a little fresh meat as present. "He saw me in the doorway", says the woman, "and so he dropped in." She prepared the meat, they had lunch together, had a nice chat, listened to some music and felt they were doing something which would never ever would be possible with anybody else. The husband listens more and more carefully to the story of his wife but

understands the absurd thing less and less. He wants to treat his wife's idyll like dirt, keeps harping on the bloody butcher's apron the butcher left the shop in. The undeniable presence of the bloody apron apparently confuses the woman too, but she keeps repeating more and more wildly: I was free and happy...