A Walk In The Woods Essay, Research Paper

A Walk in the Woods

By Lee Blessing

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The setting of this play took place in the woods of Geneva on a park bench. The time span for this play included late summer, fall, late winter, and early spring.

Andrey Botvinnik is a 57 year old man that is a career Soviet Diplomat .Botvinnik is a light hearted man that always wants to talk about something other than the issues at hand. Botvinnik as a negotiator, was always known for rejecting the proposals that would encourage arms reductions. Botvinnik felt that by America and Russia agreeing to an arms proposal, Russia would be giving up their superpower, and Botvinnik felt that Russia would never put themselves into that type of a situation. Botvinnik felt that the most exciting thing in the world was knowing that we could destroy it instantly. Botvinnik preferred the negotiations between he and Honeyman be held on a park bench in the woods of Geneva. Botvinnik has grown tired of negotiations being held in little offices and speaking across tables. Botvinnik tries very hard to become friends with Honeyman, and to keep his own superiors happy at the same time. In the end Botvinnik does speak his mind to his superiors but has no better luck with coming to an agreement regarding the arms negotiations. Botvinnik feels that no progress will ever be made with negotiations, only the illusions of the negotiations. Botvinnik feels that weapons manufacturing will never cease, but increase in number and strength.

John Honeyman is a 45 year old male that is an American negotiator sent to Geneva to negotiate a nuclear arms proposal. Honeyman is convinced that this proposal would make a positive difference on the impact of the world. Honeyman is strictly a business man that does not like to digress from the subject at hand. Honeyman is very dedicated to his job, his country, and a proposal that would please both countries. Honeyman was usually frustrated with Botvinnik because of his lack of concern with the issues at hand. Honeyman did not feel that Botvinnik was doing everything that he could do to push negotiations faster and further along. Honeyman was not interested in a friendship with Botvinnik. The only time that Honeyman acknowledged any type of a friendship with Botvinnik was in the form of a guilt trip. For example, Honeyman was trying to get Botvinnik to push negotiations with his superiors, and in the end when Botvinnik announced his retirement.

I enjoyed this play considering that it was the first I had ever read. I was able to follow this play easily because their were only two characters and I could picture things like the park, being full of trees and the path that led up to the bench. Various comments were made throughout the play regarding the weather, they spoke of the leaves, flowers, and the types of clothing that they were wearing. I enjoyed the fact that the author made these two negotiators very different. Botvinnik was very laid back and enjoyed talking about everything but what he was suppose to be talking about. Honeyman on the other hand, was very professional and to the point. The bickering that went on throughout the play made the story funny. For example, Botvinnik wanted to buy Honeyman a tie. Botvinnik was trying to figure out what Honeymans’ favorite color was so that he could purchase a tie in that color. Honeyman would not tell Botvinnik the color, and Botvinnik would not give up. Honeyman blew up at Botvinnik telling him that he did not want a tie and if he was given one Honeyman would shove it down his communist throat. Honeyman only apologized for calling him a communist. I was very surprised to see that North Dakota was mentioned in the play. References of a missile site by Rugby, and that Rugby was the center of the North American Continent. What really surprised me was that fact that he told the Russian about its location. I agreed with a lot of things that were stated in the play, for instance that America was a quest without competition and Russia was a quest because of competition. Every time a proposal is made and agreed with concerning arms control, someone somewhere comes up with a bigger more dangerous weapon. In this case, the new proposed agreement is not good anymore and a new proposal must be made. To me it seems like a never ending battle.

This play was written in 1986, a few years after the Cold War. I believe that this play was being written either during the Cold War or nearing the end of it. I believe this play relates very deeply to the Cold War and the negotiations that were taking place during that time period.

The author, Lee Blessing is a 1971 graduate of Reed College. In 1992 he was honored by La Jolla Playhouse for the creation of Fortinbras. Lee Blessing has written for shows on television such as: Homicide:Life on the Street, Picket Fences, and has projects that were done for HBO, Showtime, and Fox. His film Cooperstown won a Humanities Prize and was nominated for Cable Ace Awards. He has won various awards throughout the years including, American Theatre Critics Award, the George and Elisabeth Marton Award, many Dramalogue Awards, Tony and Oliver Awards, and the Pulitzer Prize. http://www.artistsrep.org/artists/a\_lee\_blessing.html

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