

In the Rue Bel Tesoro

This is the beginning of a play about children living in a country where soldiers are fighting and ordinary people are struggling to survive.

SCENE 1

(A busy train station crowded with travellers. Sasha and Omar arrive pushing an old fashioned pram and carrying a bag stuffed with belongings.)

SASHA: Don't say anything, Omar, let me do the talking.

OMAR: *(into the pram)* You've got to keep quiet, Valentine, we're in the station now.

(They approach a soldier checking documents at the entrance to the platform.)

SOLDIER: Papers?

SASHA: *(handing over the papers)*

We're going to meet our mother. She's waiting for us.

SOLDIER: The baby – his pass?

SASHA: He's ... a new baby, he doesn't have one.

SOLDIER: No papers, I can't let you through.

(Fran arrives with a huge suitcase and pushes in.)

FRAN: Please – let an old woman by! My bad hip! My feet!

SOLDIER: *(unmoved)* Papers?

(Fran gives him her papers as the children watch.)

SOLDIER: Go through.

(Fran hurries through the barrier. Sasha grabs Omar and drags him after Fran, getting away from the soldier.)

SOLDIER: Hey you! Come back!

(Sasha and Omar disappear into the crowd.)

SCENE 2

(Fran staggers into the train compartment with her bundles.)

SASHA: Please, madam, if we could stay with you, we're on our own ...

FRAN: Oh no – impossible, I must have my space.

SASHA: The soldiers don't stop old people so much when they have children.

FRAN: I don't like babies.

OMAR: It isn't a baby – it's a dog. *(Sasha looks at him furiously.)*

Lin Coghlan



Do you remember?

Copy these sentences. Fill each gap.

- The names of the children in the play are _____ and _____.
- A _____ tries to stop them getting on the platform.
- He says he wants to see their _____.
- They ask _____, the old lady, to help them.
- They have hidden a _____ in the pram.

More to think about

- Write a sentence to answer each question.
 - Where are the children going?
 - What reasons does Fran give for not wanting to travel with the children?
 - Why are the children so keen to stay with Fran even though she doesn't want to be with them?
- Make a list of words to describe each character. Use the stage directions to help.



Fran	Sasha	Omar

- Which of the children do you think is the oldest? Explain your answer.

Now try these

- Why do you think the children are so anxious to get on the train even though they don't have the money for tickets?
- Describe how you would feel if you had to go on a long journey by yourself.
- Write Scene 3 of the play using these characters and two others that get on the train. What happens next? Try to give your play an unexpected twist! Remember to include stage directions.