

**Scene 1**

*(A train platform, circa 1910. A TRAIN WHISTLE blows. The TRAIN CONDUCTOR enters.)*

CONDUCTOR

TRAIN'S A' COMIN',  
ENGINE'S HUMMIN',  
SKY LOOKS BRIGHT AND CLEAR.  
WHISTLE'S BLOWIN',  
TIME FOR GOIN'.  
CLIMB ABOARD RIGHT HERE!

*(PASSENGERS 1, 2, and 3 bustle in, carrying bags for a journey. NOTE: If cast size allows, use additional PASSENGERS.)*

PASSENGERS 1-3

PACK A BAG.  
MAKE A PLAN.  
BRING A FRIEND  
IF YOU CAN!  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE NEW.

I COULD GO  
ANYWHERE.  
ON A WHIM,  
ON A DARE!  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE NEW!

TODAY IS LIKE A HOLIDAY.  
I BOUGHT MY TICKET OUT.  
I'M SO GLAD TO BE ON MY WAY,  
I WANT TO DANCE AND SHOUT!  
HOORAY!

*(THEY dance.)*

SETTLE IN.  
REST YOUR FEET.  
TAKE A RIDE.  
TAKE A SEAT!  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE...  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE...  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE NEW!

*(PASSENGERS disperse, continuing to prepare for their journey. AUNT FRANCES enters, well dressed, including feathered hat and boa. SHE drags along ELIZABETH ANN, 9, who is so bundled up we barely see her face.)*

AUNT FRANCES

I don't care what anyone says—March is still winter, even if the mercury does say sixty degrees!

ELIZABETH ANN

*(muffled beneath her scarf—timidly)*

Ammnt Frnmthsis—

AUNT FRANCES

Stay away from the tracks, darling. Watch out for the people. Hold on to my hand!

ELIZABETH ANN

Mthh Ammnt Frnmthsis—

AUNT FRANCES

Oh! *(noticing the girl's dilemma)* Darling...who will take care of you like I do?

*(SHE fixes the scarf.)*

ELIZABETH ANN

Aunt Frances—please don't make me go!

AUNT FRANCES

You know I would do anything to keep you right here beside me! But I have to take care of your Great-Aunt Harriet until she's well and strong again.

ELIZABETH ANN

*(terrified)*

But what if the train runs off the tracks? What if I never even get to Vermont! Or what if I do get there, and Aunt Abigail and Uncle Henry are these big, horrible—

AUNT FRANCES

*(taking out a hanky)*

Blow. Your Aunt Abigail and Uncle Henry are...nice people! Truly! When your parents passed away, they even wanted to become your guardians—but I got you first.

ELIZABETH ANN

You never told me that. You only said they were “odd.”

AUNT FRANCES

We’re city people—they’re farm people. They still use kerosene lamps, they won’t have a telephone, and they have all of those goats and pigs and chickens...oh darling, stay away from any creature with teeth...or claws...or a beak!

ELIZABETH ANN

What if a goat starts to chase me?!

AUNT FRANCES

Oh Elizabeth Ann...I’ve been like a mother to you for eight years—who will understand you like I do?

*(SHE weeps into her hanky.)*

*(A PORTER comes by, rolling his cart of suitcases.)*

PORTER

Luggage, luggage! Excuse me, Miss. May I take your bag for you? Looks pretty heavy.

ELIZABETH ANN

I guess so...

AUNT FRANCES

No, thank you, sir!

*(SHE yanks back the case. To the girl:)*

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU?

WE DON'T HAND OFF OUR BELONGINGS,  
WE DON'T TRUST A STRANGER'S FACE.  
HE COULD WHISK AWAY OUR BAGGAGE,  
THEN IT'S LOST WITHOUT A TRACE.  
HE MIGHT SNATCH YOU OFF AND TAKE YOU  
TO SOME GOD-FORSAKEN PLACE.

AUNT FRANCES (cont'd)  
NEXT TIME USE OUR SPECIAL WORDS  
IN ANY TRICKY SPOT:  
NO, DON'T, CAN'T, WON'T,  
WOULDN'T, SHOULDN'T, NOT!

ELIZABETH ANN  
NO, DON'T, CAN'T, WON'T,  
WOULDN'T, SHOULDN'T, NOT!

AUNT FRANCES  
You say, "no thank you, please don't take my train case, I will not chat with you a moment longer."

ELIZABETH ANN  
I know. I forgot!

AUNT FRANCES  
You cannot forget!

DON'T GO TRAIPSING THROUGH THE TRAIN CARS.

ELIZABETH ANN  
I know.  
ESPECIALLY NOT AT NIGHT.

AUNT FRANCES  
That's right!

ELIZABETH ANN  
I MIGHT TRIP AND BREAK AN ELBOW  
IF THERE ISN'T PROPER LIGHT.

AUNT FRANCES  
PLUS THE MICE PREFER THE DARKNESS,  
AND THEY'LL BITE YOU JUST FOR SPITE!

TELL YOURSELF, BEFORE YOU GO  
AND TAKE THAT LITTLE TROT:

ELIZABETH ANN  
NO, DON'T, CAN'T, WON'T,  
WOULDN'T, SHOULDN'T, NOT!

AUNT FRANCES  
NO, DON'T, CAN'T, WON'T,

AUNT FRANCES & ELIZABETH ANN  
WOULDN'T, SHOULDN'T, NOT!

CONDUCTOR  
Train for New England now boarding on Track 2!

AUNT FRANCES  
Can you remember these words? Can you?

ELIZABETH ANN  
I'm sorry, Aunt Frances.

AUNT FRANCES  
Don't be sorry. Be sure!

AT HOME YOU KNOW:  
MUSTN'T TOUCH THE STOVE--

ELIZABETH ANN  
OR WALK ALONE--

AUNT FRANCES  
OR PET A DOG--

ELIZABETH ANN & AUNT FRANCES  
WE HAVE OUR LIST.

ELIZABETH ANN  
I know it all by heart!

AUNT FRANCES  
NOW HERE MAKE SURE:  
DON'T GO NEAR THE TRACKS.

OR EAT THE FOOD.

OR TOUCH THE SEATS.

WHAT HAVE I MISSED?!

ELIZABETH ANN  
NO TRACKS.

NO FOOD?

NO SEATS.

AUNT FRANCES (cont'd)  
I DON'T WANT YOU SICK OR INJURED.  
SO PLEASE LISTEN TO YOUR AUNT.  
YOU CAN CONQUER ANY DANGER  
WITH THE WORDS "I CAN'T..."

AUNT FRANCES & ELIZABETH ANN  
"I CAN'T!"

AUNT FRANCES  
PROMISE ME YOU'LL SAY THESE WORDS  
BEFORE YOU'RE IN A SPOT!  
NO, DON'T, CAN'T, WON'T--

ELIZABETH ANN  
NO, DON'T, CAN'T, WON'T--

AUNT FRANCES  
NO, DON'T, CAN'T, WON'T--

ELIZABETH ANN  
NO, DON'T, CAN'T, WON'T--

AUNT FRANCES  
WOULDN'T, SHOULDN'T--

ELIZABETH ANN  
WOULDN'T, SHOULDN'T--

AUNT FRANCES  
NOT.

ELIZABETH ANN & AUNT FRANCES  
NOT.

*(AUNT FRANCES emphasizes her words with  
shakes of her feather boa, tickling ELIZ's nose.)*

NO, DON'T, CAN'T, WON'T,  
WOULDN'T, SHOULDN'T...

ELIZABETH ANN  
*(sneezing)*

Ahh choo!

AUNT FRANCES

Are you ill?

ELIZABETH ANN

I'M NOT!

AUNT FRANCES

There's no fever...no runny nose...my precious...

CONDUCTOR

All aboard!

AUNT FRANCES

It's time for me to put you on this train.

ELIZABETH ANN

No!

AUNT FRANCES

The conductor will look after you for the trip, I have it all arranged! I'll come and get you as soon as I possibly can. Just a couple of weeks. Maybe a bit longer. We'll have to see what the doctor says.

ELIZABETH ANN

Aunt Frances!

CONDUCTOR

All aboard! Final call!

AUNT FRANCES

Hillsboro, Vermont. One ticket, one way. Please see that she gets there safely.

*(AUNT FRANCES gets the girl seated,  
kisses her, and exits.)*

PASSENGER 3

STOWED MY BAG,

PASSENGER 2  
FOUND A SEAT.

PASSENGER 1  
HERE WE GO—

PASSENGERS 1-3  
WHAT A TREAT!  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE NEW.

PASSENGERS 2&3  
FEEL THE WHEELS  
ROLLING FAST.

PASSENGERS 1&2  
SEE THE TREES  
WHIZZING PAST!

PASSENGERS 1-3  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE...

ELIZABETH ANN P. 1-3  
GOATS AND PIGS AND CHICKENS— ...NEW.  
WILL I HAVE TO WASH OR FEED THEM?  
WILL THEY TRY TO BITE ME?  
I'VE HEARD CHICKENS PECK YOUR EYES OUT!

PASSENGERS 1-3  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE...

ELIZABETH ANN P. 1-3  
WILL MY AUNT AND UNCLE ...NEW.  
BE ALL WRINKLED UP AND SCARY?  
WILL THEY YELL AND SCOLD ME,  
WILL THEY MAKE ME SCRUB THE TOILET?

PASSENGERS 1-3  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE NEW!

CONDUCTOR  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania! Next stop, Reading!



PASSENGERS 1-3  
EACH BITE YOU TAKE,  
EACH SIGHT YOU SEE,

PASSENGER 3  
EACH BARN,

PASSENGER 2  
EACH HOUSE,

PASSENGER 1  
EACH DIVE,

PASSENGERS 1-3  
THEY'RE ALL BURSTING  
WITH NEW ADVENTURES  
WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVE!

ELIZABETH ANN  
WILL I SURVIVE?

CONDUCTOR  
Reading! Next stop, New York!

PASSENGERS 1-3  
WE'RE CLOSER...WE'RE CLOSER...

CONDUCTOR  
Miss, you're shivering. Take this blanket.

ELIZABETH ANN  
I can't. My aunt says "don't take anything from a stranger."

CONDUCTOR  
Then cover up with your coat. And get some sleep.

ELIZABETH ANN  
CAN I REALLY SLEEP HERE?  
STRANGERS ALL AROUND ME.  
WHAT ABOUT TOMORROW?  
WITH MY AUNT AND UNCLE?

PASSENGERS 1-3  
OF COURSE AHEAD THERE MAY BE PAIN  
AND TEARS FOR THINGS GONE WRONG.  
BUT FOR TODAY, WHILE ON THIS TRAIN,  
WE'RE ROLLING RIGHT ALONG!

CONDUCTOR  
Good morning! ...New York City! ...Stamford, Connecticut! ...Boston, Massachusetts!

ELIZABETH ANN  
I'M GOING...I'M GOING...I WANT TO GO...

ELIZ. ANN

HOME!

PASSENGER 3

GOTTA GO

PACK A BAG,

PASSENGER 2

HOME, NOW

TAKE A RIDE

MAKE A PLAN,

PASSENGER 1

GOING, I'M

GOTTA GO

TAKE A RIDE,

GOING

GOTTA GO TODAY.

PASSENGERS 1-3

NOW HERE WE ARE,  
STARTING FRESH,  
FINDING OUR WAY!  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE...  
I'M GOING...I'M GOING...I'M GOING...

ELIZABETH ANN  
OH NO, THE TRAIN IS SLOWING...

CONDUCTOR  
Hillsboro, Vermont!

PASSENGERS 1-3  
WE'RE GOING SOMEPLACE...

CONDUCTOR  
Excuse me, little girl, isn't this your stop?

*(ELIZ. ANN's mouth drops open in horror.)*

PASSENGERS 1-3  
NEW!