



**Kari Catton**

Norman Maine Publishing

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*To the Orphan Train Riders  
and their families.*

*To Iles School  
for teaching the students  
about the Orphan Train history.*

*To my wonderful siblings,  
Kathi, Kim, Kris, Kraig, and Kurt.  
I couldn't imagine life without you all in it!*

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*The Track Home* was first presented by Wildloon Productions at Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site, January 11, 2002: Kate Lowrey and Debi Iams, costumes; Nancy Miller, props and stage manager; Mary E. Myers, music; Dave Flickinger, lighting; Steve Button, set construction.

**ANDALUSIA:** Amalia Mathewson  
**ARVIL:** Sam Germann  
**BENJAMIN:** Alex Kapp  
**BIT:** Eliot Sill  
**CASEY:** Talor Lutz  
**COLEEN:** Nickel Hayes  
**CONDUCTOR:** Joe Bunch  
**DAUGHTER of ST. JAMES:** Nikki Lynn-Rebekkah Prosperini  
**EVELYN ST. JAMES:** Heather Bean  
**FERDINAND:** Conor O'Brien  
**FRANK:** Peder Sill  
**JEREMIAH:** Matt Grant  
**MAN 3:** Bill Burgess  
**MARTHA RAMPLEWEED:** Michelle Burgess  
**OLD ARVIL/MAN 2:** Rob Huck  
**OLD BENJAMIN/WOMAN 1:** Pat Anderson  
**OLD COLEEN/WOMAN 1:** Linda Schneider  
**OLD FERDIE:** Kirk Yenerall  
**OLD FRANK/MAN 6:** Gregg Tichacek  
**OLD ROSE/WOMAN 5:** Tara McClellan McAndrew  
**OLD THERESA/RUSSIAN WOMAN:** Nancy Miller  
**REV. ASHLAND/MAN 4:** Bob Grant  
**ROSE:** Allison Midden  
**RUSSIAN MAN/MAN 1:** Steve Button  
**THERESA:** Laurel Neposchlan  
**THOMAS FISHBURN:** Dennis O'Brien  
**MAN 7/OLD JEREMIAH:** Jan Laymon  
**WOMAN 2/WOMAN 7:** Jennifer Midden  
**WOMAN 3/WOMAN 6:** Shelly Huck

## *The Track Home*

**DRAMA.** It's 1910, and in an effort to clean the streets of New York City of abandoned children, agents with the Children's Aid Society transport children on the Orphan Train with the hope that they will be adopted by Christian families in the West. With a limited amount of milk and only jam sandwiches and apples to eat, 11 children and two agents board a train for the 4-day journey from New York City to Missouri. Agents confiscate all things that remind the children of their former homes like the addresses of their birth parents or family photos. The children are told to learn a song or practice juggling or dancing to increase their chances of adoption. When the Orphan Train reaches Rolla, MO, the children disembark and are paraded through town, hoping to meet their future parents and families. Strong boys are adopted by families who need help with farm work while older girls go to families who need help with household chores and rearing children. Families are broken up as siblings are adopted into different homes. Audiences will love this gripping play based on the stories of real Orphan Train survivors.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 90 minutes.

## *About the Story*

The Orphan Train transported more than 250,000 children from the East Coast to families in the Midwest from 1854-1929. Characters are composites taken from real Orphan Train survivors and their descendants and reflect the history, heartache, and hope of these children.

## *Characters*

(22 M, 18 F, opt. extras)

(With doubling: 15 M, 13 F. Tripling possible.)

**MARTHA RAMPLEWEED:** Agent for the Children's Aid Society for 14 years; takes hundreds of children to be placed out in western states; wears a uniform; female.

**EVELYN ST. JAMES:** 20s, agent for Children's Aid Society; her first trip on the Orphan Train; wears a uniform; female.

**REV. ASHLAND:** Reverend who oversees Children's Aid Society agents; male.

**THOMAS FILBURN:** Middle-aged, gruff, dirty train engineer; thinks the orphans are street urchins, vagabonds, and thieves but has a bit heart; male.

**ANDALUSIA:** Casey and Bit's older sister; eldest sibling; female.

**CASEY:** Andalusia and Bit's sister, a tomboy who doesn't like to wear dresses; middle sibling; wears a well-worn shirt and pants; female.

**BIT:** Andalusia and Casey's younger brother.

**FERDINAND "FERDIE":** Frank's younger brother; adopted by a German couple in Rolla, MO; male.

**FRANK:** Ferdie's older brother; adopted by a man in Marshfield, MO, who needs him to work in a livery stable and who plans to send him to school with Arvil; male.

**ARVIL:** Boy who keeps a pet frog wrapped in a damp handkerchief in his pocket; prospective parents don't want to adopt him because they think he's wet his pants; adopted by a schoolteacher with a dog in Marshfield, MO; male.

**BENJAMIN:** Big, strong lad who has lived in New York City his whole life; wants to run away and go to California and see the ocean; adopted by a farmer in Rolla, MO; male.

**JEREMIAH:** Street-smart and tough; lies to people so they don't want to adopt him; adopted by Filburn; male.

**COLEEN:** Teen girl who had to steal to survive on the streets; adopted by a family in Rolla, MO, to help with their five children; female.

**ROSE:** Young girl who has a prearranged adoption; wears a worn dress with a cloth patch with her name and birth date and a big number 5 on it; female.

**THERESA:** Young Russian girl whose real name is Svetlana Slotzakiva; speaks with a thick Russian accent; adopted by a Russian couple in Marshfield, MO; female.

**OLD ARVIL:** Arvil as an adult; male.

**OLD BENJAMIN:** Benjamin as an adult; male.

**OLD COLEEN:** Coleen as an adult; female.

**OLD FRANK:** Frank as an adult; never knew what happened to his brother Ferdie after he was adopted; male.

**OLD ROSE:** Rose as an adult; female.

**OLD THERESA:** Theresa as an adult; female.

**OLD JEREMIAH:** Jeremiah as an adult; dressed as a train engineer; male.

**OLD FERDINAND:** Ferdinand as an adult; male.

**DAUGHTER OF ST. JAMES:** Miss St. James' adopted teenage daughter who was named after Rose.

**WOMAN 1:** Married to Man 7 and adopts Ferdie; female.

**WOMAN 2:** Adopts the baby; female.

**WOMAN 3:** Wants to adopt Andalusia to look after her five children; female.

**WOMAN 5:** Interested in adopting Arvil; female.

**WOMAN 6:** Married to Man 6 and is interested in adopting Rose.

**WOMAN 7:** Adopts Rose; female.

**MAN 1:** Adopts Benjamin; male.

**MAN 2:** Wants to adopt Colleen to be a cook for his work camp of miners.

**MAN 3:** Wants to adopt Jeremiah to work on his farm and live in the barn; male.

**MAN 4:** Adopts Frank to work in his livery stable; male.

**MAN 5:** Wants to adopt Bit; male.

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**MAN 6:** Wants to adopt a strong boy; male.

**MAN 7:** Married to Woman 1; adopts Ferdie; male.

**RUSSIAN MAN:** Adopts Theresa; male.

**RUSSIAN WOMAN:** Married to Russian Man; female.

**CONDUCTOR:** Train conductor; male.

**EXTRAS (opt.):** As Orphans and Townspeople.

## *Suggestions for Doubling*

CONDUCTOR/OLD FERDINAND (male)

OLD ARVIL/MAN 2 (male)

MAN 1/RUSSIAN MAN (male)

OLD BENJAMIN/MAN 5 (male)

OLD FRANK/MAN 6 (male)

REV. ASHLAND/MAN 4 (male)

MAN 7/OLD JEREMIAH (male)

WOMAN 2/WOMAN 7 (female)

WOMAN 3/WOMAN 6 (female)

OLD COLEEN/WOMAN 1 (female)

OLD ROSE/WOMAN 5 (female)

OLD THERESA/RUSSIAN WOMAN (female)

## *Costumes*

Characters wear turn-of-the-century clothing appropriate for their age and character. Girls wear worn dresses, and boys wear worn shirts and pants. Girls wear new dresses, and boys wear new knickers or pants with shirts and vests. Casey, a tomboy, wears knickers or pants with a shirt.

## *Setting*

The Orphan Train, 1910.

## *Set*

**Train car/various stops.** Seven benches at least 3' wide are used to represent a train car. There is a small table behind the back bench. A water bucket with a ladle sits in the front. There are two exits. Benches are rearranged to represent a church and City Hall.

## *Synopsis of Scenes*

### **ACT I**

**Scene 1:** Prologue.

**Scene 2:** Orphan Train, New York City, mid-morning.

**Scene 3:** Orphan Train, second day, noon.

**Scene 4:** Orphan Train, third day, morning.

**Scene 5:** Church in Rolla, MO, third day, mid-morning.

**Scene 6:** Orphan Train, third day, later.

**Scene 7:** Train station in Lebanon, MO, third day, afternoon.

### **Optional Intermission**

### **ACT II**

**Scene 1:** City hall in Marshfield, MO, fourth day, mid-morning.

**Scene 2:** Orphan Train, fourth day.

**Scene 3:** Epilogue.

## Props

Passenger list	Butter knife
Baby doll	Tray
Small plastic toad or frog	Picture of a woman, for
Cloth patch that has Rose's	Casey
name, birth date, and a	Papers
large number 5 on it	Flyer
White handkerchief	String
Water bucket	Address paper
Ladle	Bible
11 Bags/luggage	2 packages of cakes
Basket of 20 apples	Burlap sack filled with
2 Clipboards	supplies
12 Slices of bread	2 Letters
Jar of jam	

## Sound Effects

Loud mechanical noise  
Train starting to move  
Train whistle

"In time,  
they will forget  
their former lives."

—Miss Ramplweed

# ACT 1

## Scene 1

(AT RISE: Seven benches are on the stage. Old Arvil, Old Theresa, Old Frank, and Old Rose enter and remain standing. Spot up as characters speak.)

OLD ARVIL: *(To audience.)* My name is Arvil McCain. I was an orphan. I never knew who my birth parents were. All I know is that I was born in New York City on December 18, 1903 and was left on the doorstep of the Children's Aid Society on December 19th. No note. No nothin'. I could have froze to death, exceptin' the agents heard me crying from underneath a few scraps of cloth. I was the fourth child that week to be left to the nuns. They gave me food and shelter, but little else. They had a lot of children to tend to. I was left under their care until I was seven years old. *(Arvil enters and stands a few steps beside Old Arvil.)* One day, we were eating lunch at the orphanage — you know, boys on one side of the room, girls on the other — and this lady came in and announced this trip on a train. That's all I heard above the noise following the announcement. I wasn't sure what was going on. Anyway, I raised my hand and was chosen to be a rider. They scrubbed us up, gave us some new hand-me-down clothes, and a nice pair of shoes. We walked down many streets carrying all we owned in little suitcases. We climbed up on a train not knowing where we were going or what we were doing. But I'm sure glad I went. I found a home and a stepbrother.

*(Arvil sits on one of the train benches.)*

OLD THERESA: *(To audience, with a Russian accent.)* My real name was Svetlana Slotzakova. My parents were Russian

immigrants in New York City in 1906. I was 10 years old. We were Jewish. We were very poor. My father worked in a brick factory. He was killed when a furnace exploded. There were no safety guides for factories in those days. He was replaced rather eagerly by another starving immigrant worker. My mother could not support me. She finally got a job as a servant in a big fancy house. She had to live there with the family. But there was one stipulation: she couldn't have her own children live with her. She didn't have a choice. (*Theresa enters and stands beside Old Theresa.*) She put me in the orphanage and swore she would be back to get me when she saved enough money to find an apartment. I can still remember her face, with tears streaming down her cheeks, as she whispered my name, walked down a few steps, and disappeared from view. I looked up at a kind lady in a black dress. She mumbled something to me. I couldn't understand her. I spoke only Russian. She smiled and pulled me inside a big door. I never saw my mother again. I grew up in Marshfield, Missouri, with a new name, Theresa Ames, and a new religion, Catholic.

(*Theresa sits on one of the train benches.*)

OLD FRANK: (*To audience.*) My name is Francis Thompson. I had a brother, Ferdie Ferdinand. (*Frank enters and stands beside Old Frank.*) I was five years older than he was. On the streets of New York, my brother and I made a few pennies a day shining shoes. We bought bread to eat. After my mother died in childbirth, my father didn't know how to raise us. I suppose he did the best he could. One day, I was on the streets and this woman asked if my brother and I would like to come with her to the Children's Aid Society. She talked to my father about us finding a new home. My father said that would be okay. He gave me his address on a white piece of paper as we left our house. When we reached our new home, he wanted us to write him. I believe he

loved us, but he couldn't care for us. My brother and I rode the orphan train together from New York to Missouri. A family adopted my little brother. He was one of the first kids to leave the train. A big burly woman scooped him up in her arms and kissed him. He laughed when the man tickled him, but he kicked and screamed as they pulled him out the door. He didn't want to leave me behind. He was my little brother, and I don't know what ever happened to him.

*(Frank sits on one of the train benches.)*

OLD ROSE: *(To audience.)* In my mind, I never was an orphan. It's true, my parents died when I was five, but my aunt and uncle took me in. They cared for me as best they could. I got the feeling they didn't really like me, though. If I didn't do my chores, they'd throw me in the dark cellar without any food to eat. It was pitch black down in the basement. I could hear the rats crawling around in the dark. I'd sleep on the stairs. One night, I woke up and felt something tugging my hair. A rat had gotten all tangled up, and I screamed and screamed. Nobody came to help me. I shook my head as hard as I could until that rat came flying out! *(Rose enters with a big number five clipped to her turn-of-the-century clothing. Rose stands beside Old Rose.)* I was glad when my aunt and uncle said they had to move from New York and couldn't take me with them. They gave me to the Children's Aid Society and arranged for me to be placed with a couple in Marshfield, Missouri. I wore a cloth patch with my name and birth date on it and a big number five. The couple in Missouri had a big number five, too. We matched. I was special because someone was waiting for me. I couldn't wait to board that train. My name is Rose Ribordy and the Orphan Train sent me to paradise.

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*(Rose sits on one of the train benches. Older Actors exit as lights dim.)*

## Scene 2

(AT RISE: Casey, Andalusia, Bit, and Ferdie enter followed by Miss Rampleweed, Rev. Ashland, and Miss St. James. Miss St. James is holding an infant. Children take their seats on a bench.)

ASHLAND: Come, children. Sit down. Sit down, please. The list, Miss Rampleweed. Where is the list?

RAMPLEWEED: I have it right here, Reverend. Twelve children will ride in this car. Forty-three will ride in the other car.

ASHLAND: Do you have enough agents to help you?

RAMPLEWEED: Yes, sir. We have three agents in the first car; one agent in this car with the older children. I will be going back and forth as needed.

ASHLAND: May I see the list, please?

RAMPLEWEED: Yes, sir.

(*Rampleweed presents Ashland with a list.*)

ASHLAND: Miss St. James, have you counted the children?

ST. JAMES: Yes, sir. We have nine, with another three on the platform waiting to board.

ASHLAND: Go get them. We cannot allow any further delays.

ST. JAMES: Yes, sir. (*Exits.*)

ASHLAND: You know your duties, is that correct, Miss Rampleweed?

RAMPLEWEED: We shall make the first stop in Rolla, Missouri, followed by stops in Lebanon, Marshfield, and Springfield, Missouri.

ASHLAND: And supplies?

RAMPLEWEED: I have a four-day supply of bread and jam along with fresh water and apples. I have a limited amount of milk.

ASHLAND: Why aren't these children dressed in their new clothing, Miss Rampleweed?

RAMPLEWEED: The four-day ride is exhausting, Reverend. Their new clothes get dirty if worn too soon. I will distribute their new clothes before the first stop: new dresses and pinafores with matching hats for the girls; knickers, white shirts, and ties for the boys.

ASHLAND: Do you have hats for the boys?

RAMPLEWEED: Yes, sir, one hat for each boy. The suitcases will be given to them to hold their old clothing.

ASHLAND: But only if suitable to keep.

RAMPLEWEED: The ragged clothing will be thrown out, sir.

ASHLAND: I see they are wearing their shoes.

RAMPLEWEED: Yes, sir. Too many of the children did not have shoes. We thought we could give them their shoes to wear.

*(Jeremiah, Coleen, and Benjamin enter, followed by St. James. The Children take their seats. St. James sits in the back row USL, holding the baby. Coleen sits in a seat USR. Benjamin and Arvil sit across from Coleen. Frank and Ferdie are in the next seat. Theresa and Rose sit across from Frank and Ferdie. Casey, Andalusia, and Bit sit in a seat DSR. Jeremiah is seated across from them in a seat DSL.)*

ST. JAMES: All present, sir.

ASHLAND: Fine. Children, we will do a quick roll call. Jeremiah?

JEREMIAH: Yes.

ASHLAND: Coleen?

COLEEN: Here.

ASHLAND: Francis?

FRANK: Here.

ASHLAND: Ferdinand?

FRANK: *(To Ferdie.)* Say "here."

FERDIE: Here.

ASHLAND: Theresa?

THERESA: Current.

ASHLAND: Andalusia?

ANDALUSIA: I'm here.

ASHLAND: Casey?

CASEY: Here.

ASHLAND: James?

*(James doesn't answer.)*

CASEY: His name is Bit.

ASHLAND: His name is James. James?

*(Andalusia elbows Bit.)*

BIT: *(To Andalusia.)* Ow. *(To Ashland.)* Here!

ASHLAND: Arvil?

ARVIL: Here.

ASHLAND: Rose?

ROSE: I am here, sir.

ASHLAND: Benjamin?

BENJAMIN: Here.

ASHLAND: *(To St. James.)* And you have the baby. That's 12.

We're ready. Everyone, bow your heads for God's blessing.

*(Waits for Jeremiah to fold his hands.)* God, we ask that you look down upon these children as they begin their journey to new homes and new families. Keep them safe from harm's way and guide them into loving arms. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

RAMPLEWEED: *(To Coleen, who has not prayed.)* Amen.

*(Thomas Filburn, the engineer enters. He is dirty and gruff.)*

FILBURN: The Union Pacific is late! I can't hold her up any longer! Are we goin'?

ASHLAND: We can leave, sir.

FILBURN: Are we clear on the rules?

ASHLAND: Rules?

FILBURN: I don't want none of these ruffians exiting the train unless at scheduled stops! Understood?

*(Jeremiah laughs and a few giggles are heard.)*

RAMPLEWEED: Ruffians?!

ASHLAND: *(To Filburn.)* You cannot use such names to refer to these children, sir.

FILBURN: It's what they are, sir! Street urchins, vagabonds, orphans! I don't want 'em sneakin' off and gettin' killed under the tracks. Understand?

ASHLAND: There will be no trouble, sir. I assure you. We are members of a highly respectable organization. These children have been properly raised.

FILBURN: Ha! You keep to this car only! If I see you wanderin' about, I'll throw you in the stoker! *(Exits.)*

ASHLAND: What an atrocious man!

*(Ashland exits. St. James sits in the back with the baby.)*

RAMPLEWEED: Jeremiah?

JEREMIAH: Yes, ma'am.

RAMPLEWEED: You kneel and pray for forgiveness.

JEREMIAH: Forgiveness for what?

RAMPLEWEED: For laughing at profanity.

*(Jeremiah gets up from his seat and kneels to pray.)*

JEREMIAH: Yes, ma'am.

RAMPLEWEED: You. *(Points to Bit.)* You are riding on the girls' side. Get over to this side. *(Points to boys' side.)*

CASEY: Can't he ride next to us?

RAMPLEWEED: No, he can't. Girls on one side, boys on the other.

BIT: I want to ride next to my sisters.

RAMPLEWEED: You will sit over here!

*(Rampleweed yanks Bit by the ear over to the boys' side next to Jeremiah.)*

BIT: Ow!

CASEY: *(To Rampleweed.)* He's just scared. We never rode on a train before.

RAMPLEWEED: There will be no backtalk! Is that understood?

ANDALUSIA: Yes, ma'am.

RAMPLEWEED: I wasn't referring to you. Casey?

CASEY: Yes, ma'am.

*(Rampleweed sits down in the back near St. James. Rose leans over the top of the wooden bench to speak with Andalusia and Casey.)*

ROSE: *(To Andalusia.)* Hi.

ANDALUSIA: Hello.

ROSE: My name's Rose. I'm going to live with a new family in Rolla, Missouri. My aunt and uncle arranged it.

ANDALUSIA: Oh.

ROSE: I'm not an orphan, you know, like you. See my big number five? *(Points to it.)*

ANDALUSIA: I see it.

ROSE: When we get to Rolla, my new parents will have the number five. We'll match. Then I go live with them. They live in a big farmhouse. I even get my own room.

ANDALUSIA: How do you know?

ROSE: They wrote to my aunt and uncle. They have cows and chickens. I might even get a horse of my own. They'll buy me new dresses with matching bonnets. Who are you going to live with?

ANDALUSIA: My sister, Casey, and my brother, Bit.

ROSE: That is not how it works. You will all go live with different families.

CASEY: We can't.

ROSE: How come?

CASEY: We want to live with each other.

ROSE: People don't adopt three children at one time...unless, of course, it's all been arranged, like in my case.

CASEY: We're staying together.

ROSE: Does Miss Rampleweed know that?

ANDALUSIA: We were told to go on the train and new families would welcome us into their homes. That's what we were told.

JEREMIAH: They'll tell you a lot of things to get you on this train.

ANDALUSIA: What do you mean?

JEREMIAH: I mean, they'll say what you want to hear to get you to ride the Orphan Train.

ANDALUSIA: What is the Orphan Train?

JEREMIAH: This is the Orphan Train.

THERESA: This train goes to better place, no?

JEREMIAH: Dummy on board.

ROSE: *(To Theresa, loudly.)* My name is Rose. What's yours?

THERESA: Christian name, Theresa.

ROSE: Christian name?

THERESA: True name, Svetlana Slotzakova. Born in Russia. Change name to Theresa.

ROSE: I can see why.

BENJAMIN: What's goin' to happen to us?

ANDALUSIA: They told us we will ride the train to Missouri and find a new home.

BENJAMIN: We're stuck on this train for three days?

ANDALUSIA: Where do we sleep?

JEREMIAH: Right here.

ANDALUSIA: On these wooden benches?

ROSE: They feel comfortable enough.

BENJAMIN: Let's see how they feel after a few days.

BIT: When do we eat?

JEREMIAH: They'll feed us.

ANDALUSIA: How do you know so much?

JEREMIAH: I've heard stories.

ANDALUSIA: What stories?

JEREMIAH: How hot it can get in these cars. How noisy it gets rumbling down these tracks with kids cryin' and wailin' all night long. I'm glad I'm not in the other car.

ANDALUSIA: Who told you about the Orphan Train?

JEREMIAH: I've heard the rumors. Most kids find homes. Some kids never find a home.

ANDALUSIA: We will find a home.

BENJAMIN: But what if you don't? What happens? You come back here?

JEREMIAH: You come back marked "incorrigible."

ROSE: What does that mean?

JEREMIAH: Means no one wanted you.

BENJAMIN: I'm never coming back here. I have a plan.

ROSE: What sort of plan do you have?

BENJAMIN: People want me 'cause I'm big and strong. I can work on their farms. So someone takes me in, gives me a place to sleep in their barn, I stay for a while, and— whoosh!—I run away.

ROSE: You just can't run away like that.

BENJAMIN: Yes, I can. I'll run away and go to California.

JEREMIAH: There's no gold there anymore.

BENJAMIN: I didn't say I'd pan for gold. That's where I'd like to go.

JEREMIAH: The place to go is to the ocean.

BENJAMIN: There's an ocean in California.

JEREMIAH: Yeah, but you have to cross the mountains to get there. You'll die tryin'.

BENJAMIN: I will not!

JEREMIAH: I heard the mountains have some fierce snowstorms. People freeze to death right there on the trail.

BENJAMIN: I'd rather freeze than go back and live off the streets in New York. I was always cold, always hungry, always tired. I'm going to California.

JEREMIAH: You're better off headin' south. Go down to the ocean. You could find a job unloadin' ships. Big crates of stuff from other countries. I heard it never gets cold down south along the ocean. You won't need a coat.

BENJAMIN: Well, maybe I'll run away to there.

ROSE: But what if you like your new family? Won't you want to stay with them, then?

BENJAMIN: Sure, if they give me a room in their house and make me their son. But I heard they just want boys to work their farms. *(To Andalusia.)* You won't have any problems finding a new home. You'll be taken on to help raise someone else's kids.

ANDALUSIA: I won't do that.

JEREMIAH: Or maybe someone would want to marry you!  
*(Laughs.)*

ANDALUSIA: I'm too young to get married!

CASEY: *(To Jeremiah.)* You go talk someplace else!

JEREMIAH: Scared, are ya?

CASEY: No, I ain't scared. Just don't like your kind of talk.

JEREMIAH: It's the truth.

CASEY: We ain't listenin'.

*(There's a loud noise and train noises are heard. Bit runs to Casey and Andalusia.)*

BENJAMIN: We must be headin' out.

JEREMIAH: Here we go to the promised land.

BENJAMIN: Have you ever seen where we're goin'?

JEREMIAH: Nope.

ROSE: My aunt and uncle say there's green grass and big beautiful trees all over.

JEREMIAH: Lotta deer.

BENJAMIN: I don't think I ever seen one.

JEREMIAH: You're kiddin'?!

BENJAMIN: I've lived in New York City my whole life. I only seen 'em hangin' from the rafters.

JEREMIAH: They are good eatin'. I can't wait to shoot one, right between the eyes.

BENJAMIN: Squirrel and rabbit, too.

JEREMIAH: But the best is a wild turkey.

BIT: You're makin' me hungry.

JEREMIAH: Too bad. It's goin' to be awhile before we eat.

THERESA: Look! (*Points out the "window."*)

ROSE: Sure are a lot of buildings, aren't there, Theresa?

THERESA: Look! People wave! (*Waves.*)

JEREMIAH: They are glad to see us go. I'm glad to be leavin'.

ANDALUSIA: Why would you say that?

JEREMIAH: I take it you've never lived in the streets. "Street urchins," they *politely* called us. We had no food, no place to sleep. I thought the orphanage was great.

ANDALUSIA: I thought it was awful.

JEREMIAH: Then you are no street urchin.

*(Train whistle blows. Ferdie cries. Frank tries to quiet him down. St. James gets up to help.)*

ST. JAMES: What's the matter, Ferdinand?

FRANK: I think he's just scared of the train, Miss St. James. He'll be okay.

ST. JAMES: You're perfectly fine, Ferdinand. The train won't hurt you.

FERDIE: It's loud. We're going fast.

ST. JAMES: Trains move very fast. Nothing will hurt you.

JEREMIAH: 'Ceptin' maybe Miss Rampleweed.

*(Benjamin laughs. St. James moves up to the others.)*

ST. JAMES: How are we doing up here?

BENJAMIN: Fine.

ROSE: I like the people waving to us.

THERESA: Da.

ANDALUSIA: How long will it take to get there, Miss St. James?

ST. JAMES: A few days.

BIT: I'm hungry.

ST. JAMES: You just lie back and take a nap. We will eat soon.

*(Ferdie wails again.)*

JEREMIAH: *(To Frank.)* Can't you shut him up?

FRANK: I'm tryin'.

ARVIL: *(Looking over the seat.)* Would he like to see my frog?

FRANK: You got a frog?

ARVIL: Yup, found him yesterday. I'm keepin' 'im.

FRANK: Ferdie, do you want to see a frog?

FERDIE: Okay.

FRANK: You have to stop cryin'. Then you can see a frog.

*(Ferdie wipes his eyes with his sleeve.)*

FERDIE: There. I ain't cryin'.

ARVIL: Okay. If I show 'im to ya, you can't go sayin' nothin', okay?

FERDIE: I won't say nothin'.

ARVIL: *(Reaches into his pocket.)* Here he is.

*(Arvil pulls out a small toad and holds it in his hand. Frank and Ferdie look into Arvil's cupped hands.)*

FRANK: Hey, that's a nice frog, ain't it, Ferdie?

FERDIE: Yup. It's little.

ARVIL: I'm takin' 'im all the way to my new home.

FRANK: What if they don't let you keep him?

ARVIL: I just won't tell 'em.

FERDIE: Can I hold him?

ARVIL: Sure, but ya gotta promise you won't drop 'im.

FERDIE: I won't.

*(Arvil drops the frog into Ferdie's cupped hands.)*

ARVIL: Don't squish 'im, neither.

FERDIE: He's tickling my hands.

FRANK: *(To Arvil.)* What are you goin' to feed him?

ARVIL: Flies, I guess. I need water for him, though. He looks kind of dry now from my pocket.

FRANK: He sure does. Hey, I got a handkerchief. We could get it wet and you could wrap him up in that and stick him in your pocket.

ARVIL: That's a good idea. *(Frank digs in his pocket for a white handkerchief and hands it to Arvil. Sticks it in his pocket. To Miss Rampleweed.)* Could I have a drink of water?

MISS RAMPLEWEED: You thirsty already?

ARVIL: Yes, ma'am.

MISS RAMPLEWEED: Go ahead.

*(Arvil crosses to a bucket. He draws up the ladle as if to take a drink. He pulls the cloth out of this pocket and dunks it in the water as he puts down the ladle. He smiles at his success. He walks back with the cloth balled up in his hand.)*

FRANK: *(To Arvil.)* Did you do it?

ARVIL: I did it!

FRANK: Give him back the frog, Ferdie. It needs water.

*(Ferdie and Arvil manipulate the frog into the damp cloth. Arvil rolls the frog up and puts it back in his pocket.)*

ARVIL: He should be okay now.

FRANK: He'll be fine.

ARVIL: (*To Frank and Ferdie.*) I think I've seen you both at the orphanage. I'm Arvil.

FRANK: I'm Francis, or Frank. This is my brother, Ferdinand. "Ferdie" for short.

ARVIL: You both got nicknames? Gee, I wish I had a nickname. There isn't a nickname for "Arvil." Just plain ol' Arvil.

FRANK: How long have you been an orphan?

ARVIL: My whole life. You?

FRANK: Our ma died givin' birth to our younger sister. They both died.

ARVIL: And your pa?

FRANK: He just couldn't take care of us, I guess. He gave us both over to the orphanage. He gave his address so I can write to him.

ARVIL: Do you know how to write?

FRANK: Enough to write him a letter and tell him about our new home.

JEREMIAH: Don't let Miss Rampleweed know about that piece of paper.

FRANK: Why not?

JEREMIAH: She'll take it away from you.

FRANK: Why would she do that?

JEREMIAH: Because they want you to forget your old family and start with a new family. Hide that paper. Don't bring it out again.

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**