

Eva – German, aged 9

KINDERTRANSPORT DIANE SAMUELS

First produced by the Soho Theatre Company at the Cockpit Theatre in 1993, and at the Vaudeville Theatre in 1996. Between 1938 and 1939 nearly ten thousand children, mostly Jewish, were sent from Germany to Britain. One of these children, EVA Schlesinger, arrives in Manchester, expecting her parents to join her later. When her parents fail to escape the holocaust she changes her name to Evelyn and begins the process of becoming an English schoolgirl.

In this scene **EVA** is at the window of a railway carriage surrounded by other refugees, waving goodbye to her mother and father as the train moves out of the station. From then on she passes through the German border and on to Holland. We see her leaning over the rail of the boat bound for England and finally disembarking at Harwich.

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Eva

(On the train bound for England) Mutti! Vati! Hello! See. I did get into the carriage. I said I would. See, I'm not crying. I said I wouldn't. I can't open the window! It's sealed tight! Why've you taken your gloves off? You're knocking too hard. Your knuckles are going red! What? I can't hear you! *(Train noise)* Louder! Louder! What! I can't hear! I can't . . . See you in England. *(The train starts to move. EVA sits down)* I mustn't stare at that cross-eyed boy. What if he talks to me? *(A young child starts to cry)* You mustn't cry. There's no point. Stop it! . . . We'll all see our muttis and vatis soon enough . . . And don't look at that cross-eyed boy. *(The crying continues. EVA starts to sing)*

Hoppe, hoppe Reiter/Wenn er fällt dann schreit er/
Fällt er in den Graben/Fressen ihn die Raben
*(Hop hop hop hop Rider/Do not fall beside her/
If into the ditch you fall/The Ratman gets you all)*

(Announcing to everyone in the train) Did any of you know? In England all the men have pipes and look like Sherlock Holmes and everyone has a dog. It's the border! The border! Can't get us now! We're out! Out! Stuff your stupid Hitler!

(Sounds of train stopping. EVA is eating greedily) You know what? That Dutch lady said we can have as many cakes as we want. And sweets. And lemonade. I'm going to stuff my pockets for later. Who says it's naughty? They all want us to be happy, don't they? Well, that's what I'm doing. Making myself happy.

(Sound of ship's horn) You know what? If you lick your lips you'll taste the salt. Sea salt. What d'you mean, Hook of Holland? It can't be. It's nothing like one. It isn't. Look at it. How's that a hook? *(Coughing)* Excuse me . . . *(About to be sick)* . . . it won't come . . . No, I'm fine . . . Really . . . It's just nothing . . . Nothing will come out of me.

(Ship's horn) This is Harwich, you know. It really is England . . . *(Sounds of disembarkation)* Can you go through just like that? Don't they search you? *(She picks up a penny)* A penny. They have big money here. It must be a sign of good luck.