



Image Owen Tuckett

**Ghost Gypsy ©
Sharon Muiruri Coyne**

GHOST GYPSY

By Sharon Muiruri Coyne

Introduction

Ghost Gypsy is a short community film looking at how a young traveller girl 'Violet' finds her way in world. *Ghost Gypsy* came about after working with a group of teenagers at St. Aldhelm's Academy Poole. They made me realise how hard it is for young travellers in the twenty first century, who belong to a rich ancient culture, but at times feel unable to talk about it because of fear of prejudice. One thing that one girl said stood out in my mind that people say; 'You're not a real Gypsy if you don't live in a caravan'. This became the inspiration of the play. Meeting with other members from the Travelling community groups I tried to think of a way of honouring their stories and making it relevant for the young girls at St. Aldhelms. In particular I heard several stories of how land had wrongly been taken away from people and how it was increasingly difficult for them to live as they would like.

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Source material beyond dialogue with the Gypsy /Traveller Community

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Ghost Gypsy

SCENES SCENE 1: A WAGON BURNING

**SCENE 2: BEFORE THE FAIR VIOLETS
BEDROOM**

**SCENE 3: THE PLATE IS SMASHED THE
WOOD**

SCENE 4 THE FLOWER SELLAR

SCENE 5:SUFFRAGETTES

**SCENE 6 :BEFORE THE FIRE ,THE
GYPSY WEDDING – EVICTION Past**

**SCENE 7: FIRST LIGHT PRESENT
MODERN**

SCENE 8:BOXING CLUB

SCENE 9:MODERN TRAILER

SCENE 10.THE FAIR MODERN

Fade in

Scene 1: A fire is burning.

There is an image through the flames we see Sara-la-Kali.

Scene 2: Before the Fair: I don't know who I am

Two girls VIOLET and Maggie are getting ready for the Fair in VIOLET's bedroom. Its morning 11 am

VIOLET

You're not a real Gypsy if you don't live in a caravan.

MAGGIE

Don't listen to them VIOLET.

VIOLET

I try not to but it gets to me.

MAGGIE

Pay no notice. Come on we're meant to be getting ready for the fair.

VIOLET

I don't feel like it.

MAGGIE

You know you'll love it when we get there and we meet up with everyone. It will be great and you'll feel like your own true self.

VIOLET

What is my true self?

MAGGIE

Oh stop it VIOLET. I'm getting ready.
Pricilla, Martina and Lisa will be here
soon. Once we get into

the trailer and start off for the fair
you'll be fine.

VIOLET

Alright then

VIOLET and Maggie get ready and start taking
'Selfies' then the mobile pings

MAGGIE

Don't look at it ignore it VIOLET. It
will

only upset you

VIOLET looks at the message on her phone. The
**camera focuses on the mobile phone screen 'filthy
Pikey scum '**. VIOLET is visibly shaken.

MAGGIE

I told you not to read it.

VIOLET

I'm not going to any Travellers fair.
Why should I?

Be called a chav for dressing up.

MAGGIE

It's only stupid words.

VIOLET

No it's not! You know it's not. It's
people not

wanting to sit by you. Making faces.
Staring.

Name-calling. Its people following
you down the street laughing at you.

The other girls come in, Lisa, Martina and
Pricilla. They are excited and are carrying
making up and bags.

Lisa

What's up? You're not ready VIOLET!

MAGGIE

VIOLET says she's not going to the fair.
They've been onto her again.

LISA

When?

MAGGIE

Just now texting her.

LISA

Let's see.

Lisa takes the phone out of VIOLET's hand and reads the message.

Lisa

I'd like to give them a slap. But you know it's ignorance VIOLET. They don't understand us.

VIOLET

What's there to understand?

Pricilla takes the phone and reads the message.

Pricilla

There's a lot to understand VIOLET and that's why they want to get to us. They're jealous. We have to be better than them.

LISA

Yeah DADDY says we have to show by example.

VIOLET

But it doesn't work. I have tried to ignore them. I have tried walking home different ways from school. Not eating near them. Hiding anything that might look a bit sparkly so they can't say 'what been choring again?' or 'Ahh wearing your Chav hair clips?'

MAGGIE

They keep telling her she is not a "real" gypsy cos she doesn't live in a caravan.

MARTINA

I hate it when they say gypsy instead of traveller.

PRICILLA

It's prejudice and we've got to rise above it. We're different. Deal with it.

LISA

Come on girl. We'll help you get ready.
(*laughing*) Sean will be there

VIOLET

Shut up!

MARTINA

That's more like it VIOLET. Stick up for yourself.

The girls get the clothes laid out. They put on some music and sing along and get excited as they prepare for the fair. Priscilla picks up one of VIOLET's tops.

PRICILLA (laughing)

Not sure about this top. It looks a bit "Gorger " More sparkles required!

They laugh. They put the music up louder. Finish off their make-up. MAGGIE combs VIOLET's hair. They take pictures of themselves. Then the phone pings again.

The girls all tell VIOLET not to pick up the phone.

LISA

Please VIOLET I'm begging you don't look at it!

VIOLET looks at the phone. VIOLET reads the message and gets very angry.

VIOLET

They say they'll get me. I'm not going to any fair. I'm not a traveller any more

PRICILLA (Angrily)

Like we have a choice?

LISA

Pricilla don't get angry with her. You know she's been going through it.

PRICILLA

But she's so annoying! A few idiots are ruining everything because VIOLET is letting them! (*Pointing at VIOLET with her hairbrush.*) You're not the first girl to get picked on for being traveller. How do you think I feel? I live in a trailer on a traveller site and every day when the bus drops me off outside the big sign with 'Council Site' they start on me. 'Going to your pikey caravan?' 'Where's your horses' 'Come on Pricilla tell our fortunes'. 'Why don't you move on to somewhere else and take your stinking rubbish with you?'

MAGGIE

Lay off Pricilla she's upset.

MARTINA

She's a little victim!

VIOLET crying goes over to Pricilla with the phone.

VIOLET

Read that and tell me if you wouldn't get upset?

Pricilla reads the message. She is visibly taken aback by the words.

PRICILLA

It's bad... Sorry VIOLET

Pricilla passes the phone around to the other girls. There is a hush

LISA

Have you told your parents? Maybe the gavers¹ should be involved

VIOLET

Yeah telling the gavers is really going to help! Everyone would call me a grass! Gavers cars outside the house! Looking like we'd stolen something! Dirty thieving gypos!

Her parents enter

MAMMAY

What in heavens name is going on!

¹ 'Gavers' slang for police.

MAGGIE

People have been teasing VIOLET cos
she's traveller

DADDY

We've talked about this. Its people's
ignorance. Just ignore them

LISA

That's what we said

PRICILLA

Uncle Sam ...it's bad.

DADDY

Our people have always been persecuted,
right through the ages. We have a
different way of being and some people
can't abide that.

MAMMY

` Believe in God, He made you who you
are for a reason so be proud of it'. Now
come on I want to get onto the road.

VIOLET

You and Mammy don't understand .I'm not going to the fair. I 'm not going. You're always going on about how it used to be. I seen you both in tears! But how it used to be isn't how it is now. Me and Maggie are told all the time we are not true traveller because we don't live in a trailer..and its not just the gorgies, the travellers are on my back if I ever get close to a non-traveller! Remember Jazz? I was really good friends with her. She was really nice to me. But just cos I went round her house they all went on to me till I broke friends with her.

MAMMY

Well that was wrong my VIOLET. They shouldn't have done that. I wish you'd told me at the time I'd have spoken to their Mums.

VIOLET

What would the point of that have been? You just don't get it, how it is at school. I wish we did live in our trailer and could get the hell out of here.

DADDY

It's hard for your generation girls I can see that. Believe me, I wish I could take you all in trailer and just keep moving. But no sooner had we found a stopping place they'd be moving us on. Like your Uncle Joey. He tries to keep travelling but it's constant evictions Gavers and bailiffs ...We can't do that to you. We're better settled. But when we can, we can get on the road and go to the fairs and see 'our' people and relax a bit. It's a compromise I know ...

VIOLET

Well, I don't want to compromise .I don't belong anywhere. I just don't fit in. Not settled not travelling. I spend most of my time in school being sent outside the classrooms cos I'm restless. At home I tell you everything's alright and I hear you and the Aunties, Uncles and cousins going on about how great it all was. How you'd swap your cars for horses any day. But what was it? I don't know? They say I 'm a pikey and that I'm not a proper traveller or a gorger lover. So where do I fit? I clean everyday, but I'm told we're dirty. We have a huge traveler in the front garden that the people next door hate!
(getting really uptight) I haven't travelled on the 'open roads' or slept in a bender or know all the freedom you lot are always going on about ...Getting emotional saying you've lost your freedom. Well I never had any!

VIOLET very distraught. Her Mammy goes to calm her down.

MAMMY

Calm yourself, next door will hear!

VIOLET

Is that the best you can say? They hate us. They talk about us...report us ... moan about us all the time.

MUMMY

I just don't want you upset VIOLET. You've been so much better recently. It's not good for you. (*short pause*) Now we all love the fair .Go wash your face. Come on you're embarrassing the girls. (*smiling*) Lets get moving. I want that trailer of ours hooked up at the fair by lunchtime.

Violet still upset and not shifting .

MAGGIE

She's been under a lot of pressure Aunty May. They are on to her all the time. Look ...

Maggie shows VIOLET's Mammy and DADDY the text. The DADDY is visibly saddened.

DADDY

I'll go up to the school, they're alright up, quite understanding. They'll sort it out for you. I promise darling. No one should have to put up with that. (*trying to change the mood*) Remember your great Granfer CALEB was a famous boxer.

VIOLET

Who cares? We don't live in the Wild
West

MAMMY

Don't talk to your DADDY like that

DADDY

It's alright May. She'd mean it.

VIOLET

Yes I did. No one is interested in bare-knuckle boxers. It's the twenty first century and we're a lost tribe. I'm not going to the fair and I'm going to cut my hair.

DADDY (*softly*)

Not your hair.

Mother tries to move towards VIOLET.

VIOLET

Don't come near me

The girls call out to VIOLET to calm down

MUMMY

VIOLET I just want to hold you and tell you to be proud of who you are. Its a gift to be a traveller

VIOLET

It's not a gift its a curse. I'm not
proud I'm ashamed I ashamed I'm ashamed.

VIOLET picks up a best bit of fine china from the
shelf behind her.

MAGGIE

No VIOLET put it down

LISA

Stop! You'll regret it!

DADDY

VIOLET put that down it's was your great
grandmother's.

VIOLET looks at them all and smashes the plate

Scene 3: The plate is smashed

Scene description

VIOLET smashes the plate. She is transported into
a wood. It is noon. There is bird song. She hears
in the distant faint singing. VIOLET is
frightened. She moves towards the singing and
finds Granny sitting in a clearing. Behind her a
vardo. By her side a pile a sticks. Crying,
VIOLET goes to her

VIOLET

Oh Granny I shouldn't have done that I
shouldn't

GRANNY

Tis only possessions maid. Everyone makes mistakes ...it's a good way to prove you're getting better. (laughing) but did you have to choose me favorite plate?

VIOLET

I upset everyone, that's what I do

GRANNY

You know that's not true. You're a good girl.

VIOLET (looking in her grandmother's eyes)

Am I alright Granny?

GRANNY

Yes child you're alright

VIOLET

I'm thirteen

GRANNY

I know. (pause) You're betwixt and between a child and women all in the same breath. Betwixt and between

Pause. Granny beings to place the wood to make a fire. VIOLET watches her build the fire.

VIOLET

Am I home?

GRANNY

Yes and no. When you're with your own,
you're home. But don't be looking for
houses or possessions. Your trailer is
where you sleep. Outside is your home.

VIOLET crying

VIOLET

I should be going to the Fair with the
others

GRANNY

I thought you didn't want to go to the
Fair.

VIOLET

I don't ...and I do

GRANNY (laughing)

What I said my maid betwixt and between

VIOLET

I don't know what I want Granny.

GRANNY

It's hard to know sometimes

VIOLET

I' m really sorry about the plate

GRANNY

You'll be able to tell them you're sorry and ask their forgiveness. Time is exactly what they say, a good healer. Your Mammy and DADDY are upset right now, but they love you with all their hearts.

VIOLET

Am I alright Granny?

GRANNY

As alright as any of us. But take a few deep breaths

VIOLET breathes in deeply

GRANNY

That's it VIOLET. Feel the evening air in your lungs. Place your hands palm down onto the ground.

VIOLET places her hands on the ground

Keep breathing and feel the earth beneath your fingers. That will steady

you. (pause) Here have a bit of bread. Do you know how to make a fire?

Granny gives VIOLET some bread.

VIOLET

No.

GRANNY

Well let's do that together.

VIOLET

I don't want to. It will ruin me nails.

Granny builds the fire as she speaks. Violet gradually begins to help her.

GRANNY

When we feel like doing nothing, we all feel like that sometimes. At those moments it's best to make something simple. Now a fire , 'yog' gives us all we need. Light, warmth a place to share our troubles and stories. When it dies down there are only ashes left. (*she picks up a handful of ashes*). It reminds us of how frail we are. So, we need to begin again, build another fire. A different fire. Making the new fire can be hard. But we Gypsies have always had to do that. Stopping and starting. We rise out of the ashes like the dawn follows the night and however hard 'they' try to stop us, shame us, crush us. Do you know what I am talking about VIOLET?

VIOLET nods. At this point the fire is built and Granny blows on the fire and the flames appear.

Well, whatever they do or say we always manage to get a spark going again.

VIOLET

But I don't even know what it means

GRANNY

Being a traveller?

VIOLET

Yeah...

A few people walk over to Granny with sticks for the fire

Isaac

What's that not sure if you're one of us?

VIOLET

I don't live in a caravan

Isaac

What's that to do with it? A caravan doesn't make you a traveller. It don't matter where you live it's in your blood. (*looking at her*) It's in your blood girl.

GRANNY

It's in your spirit. That's why you're so upset my Violet. No good fighting it. Be who you are. We travellers don't fit

in tidily like other people. We come in all sorts and sizes . (*short pause*) And sometimes it breaks my heart VIOLET when Gypsies fight against themselves, cos under the heavens, the night skies we're all equal.

ISACC

In fighting's the worst. But Granny has everyone round her fire. She has no time for prejudice.

FLORRIE

Housed or travelling, this clan or that tribe, we are all knitted together... one giant cobweb. We're all related. All connected to Mother Earth. (*Pause looking at VIOLET*) I knew you'd come today Violet. Give me your hand.

VIOLET gives Florrie her hand. Florrie looks carefully at VIOLET's palm.

FLORRIE

I wouldn't want to be in your shoes. You have been very low VIOLET. You're caught in the middle. Running and running. There's a crossroads VIOLET a fork. You need to decide which path to travel on.

VIOLET

How will I know which one?

FLORRIE

Be still and listen. Look inside your heart. (pause) For myself I speak to Sara-la-Kali;

'I love to come and find you here, to tell you all that I have in my heart and in you confide my sorrows and joys.'

NELSON

Bit more kindling for the fire VIOLET.
(pause) Granny's right .We come in all sorts and sizes (*laughing*) especially sizes...Romany, Welsh, Irish, English, Bargees - water Gypsies. (*earnestly looking at Violet*) You have to know Violet we have deep roots

FLORRIE

Roots, veins spreading into the soil.
Veins, Violet carrying **our** stories **our** blood from India, Egypt, Europe reaching downwards into the heartbeat of the earth, moving, flowing.

A few more people walk over to Granny with sticks for the fire. MASSEY comes carrying twig baskets she sits and continues making her baskets.

MASSEY (*looking at Violet*)

Florrie said you'd be coming this day. A lost purple flower she said.

NELSON

Nothing like a fire, sitting with friends.

VILOET

That's the kind of thing DADDY is always saying. He makes fires sometimes in the yard. But he always has to put them out cos of the neighbours. All this old times stuff... like a fairy tale. (*getting cross*) I'm from Dorset.

RAY

Plenty of travellers are Gypsies from your way, stopping, staying, moving on... the New Forest, Purbecks, Dorset Parkstone, Canford Heath. They had beautiful names back then Violet, Heavenly Bottom, Cuckoo Bottom and this will make you smile- Monkeys hump Lane. See years back people relied on the gypsies they were part of the rhythm of the seasons, working on farms hedging and picking fruit and vegetables. Some folk sharpen up blunt knives and scissors. We knew not to waste anything, we mended and repaired chairs, stools and tables and whatnot and sold pots and pans. There were Penfolds, Whites, Hughes, Smiths Turners Johnsons all from your way.

VIOLET

My name is Smith

RAY

There you are then A Traveller name.

VIOLET

No one relies on us now. I don't know anyone who gets scissors sharpened! Just chuck out stuff that doesn't work

MASSEY

You've got to be resourceful Violet. Gypsies are good at that. Tell her Granny about Betsy.

GRANNY

Blow on that fire now VIOLET. Get the flames going

They continue to build the fire and set it alight Granny Sings as she sings more people gather around the fire,

GRANNY

Oh Betsy Smith was resourceful enough.
Now

let me comb your hair Violet.

Granny takes a wooden comb out of her pocket and combs VIOLETS hair.

FLORRIE

Never cut your hair VIOLET.

Granny still combing Violets hair.

GRANNY

Keep your hair long. So I was saying there's all sorts that are Gypsies. It's nonsense when folk talk about 'true' Gypsies ..that kind of talk is to divide us. We are honest and good people what ever others may say and we love animals especially horses

VIOLET

I can ride. Daddy had me ridding before I could walk. But we had to get rid of the horse. She was white and I loved her.

MASSEY (getting impatient)

The story about Betsy Granny!

More people enter and sit around the fire.

GRANNY

Oh yes...

FLORRIE (*prompting Granny*)

The story of how Betsy came to be famous in Bournemouth

VIOLET

I come from near there

GRANNY

Indeed you do Violet. The story of the
flower girl

Scene4: The Flower Seller Betsy Smith

Granny throws ash into the fire. The fire melts into an image of Betsy. Betsy Smith the flower seller aged ten is standing with her mother and younger sisters Tillie, Annabelle and Caroline near Bournemouth Square . She is selling flowers while the others sort and bind the flowers together. When Betsy 's Mother sees Granny she hands Betsy a posy for her. Betsy with the posy of flowers goes over and hands the flowers to Granny. Violet watches.

BETSY

For you.

GRANNY

You'll never make a living Betsy Smith if
you give

your flowers away.

BETSY

I know well enough who I sell my flowers
to.

BETSY'S MOTHER

Listen, Betsy even sells her flowers to
gentry. (*proudly*) Not sure what we'd
have all done without our little girl
selling her posies. Probably starved.
But I knew our Betsy would do well with

her pretty face (*proudly*) and her sisters are learning the trade.

TILLY

I'm learning how to make pretty button holes and Annabelle she's making fancy flowers out of crepe paper

CAROLINE (*proudly*)

Don't forget me ! I'm selling white heather

BETSY

Remember Caroline its "Lucky white heather".

BETSY

See that gentleman over there

BETSYS MOTHER

Poor soul not long back from war. He was in France

BETSY

He always buys a bunch of flowers for his ladylove.

TILLY (*jumping in*)

Roses and forget-me -knots. That what he gets her everyday.

The couple Charlie and Helen move over to the flower seller.

CHARLIE

Good morning Betsy. Roses and forget-me-knots for my girl. The world should be full of flowers.

HELEN

Thank you Charlie dear.

VIOLET

Were you in the actual war?

CHARLIE

Yes in France...

HELEN (interrupting quickly)

But Missy we don't talk about it.
Charlie's been through enough

Charlie gets increasingly distressed.

CHARLIE

France. Yes I was in France only one to return from my group the ... The Pals battalion that's what they called us and

we were Pals friends you know ...everyone
one. Pals...

HELEN

Charlie we need to get on its nearly
teatime. Thank you Betsy we will be here
tomorrow.

BETSY

Good day to you both.

VIOLET

I upset them

BETSY'S MOTHER

You didn't upset them. The war did. The
war upset us all. (pause) Plenty of our
Traveller Men went off fighting
including our BILL who was killed in
action.

GRANNY

What flowers will you give VIOLET

CAROLINE (*laughing and trying to
be clever*)

As her name is Violet you should give
her Violets !!

BETSY

Thank you Caroline .Now , let me think

VIOLET

You're all too small to be out working!

BETSY

And you're too old not to be! (*looking Violet up and down*) I can tell you're one of us.

VIOLET

How?

BETSY

Just can. So best give you some lucky white heather.

VIOLET

I'm not one of you!

Both Granny and the Betsy smile. Betsy gives VIOLET a small bunch of heather

BETSY'S MOTHER

Now go and sell your wares. (*calling out*) 'Lucky white heather.

GRANNY and Betsy and her Mother laugh.

VIOLET

It's not funny. Stop laughing.

BETSY

Don't be frightened of what you are.
Nothing to be ashamed of.

ANNABELLE

Deny yourself VIOLET and you will be
lost.

Violet upset moves away from them

BETSY

Where are you going VIOLET?

VIOLET

I don't know. I don't like being laughed at!
Flower girls? No offence but I'm not going to
be selling "lucky" white heather. Its like I
said a lost tribe. I'm going.

GRANNY

Careful VIOLET. I know you're angry.

VIOLET

This story isn't helping! None of this is
helping. They said you were a great
storyteller but this story is telling me
nothing!

GRANNY

Put a bit more wood into the fire. Watch the
flames for a bit it will calm you down.

VIOLET angrily throws some wood on the fire.

VIOLET

Can I go now?

GRANNY

Look deeper in the fire my Violet. Can you see her? Pricilla she's a bit like you. Always having something to say. Not taking no for an answer.

Scene 5 Suffragettes

Through the flames or the 'yog'²we see a wagon and a Suffragette Georgina dressed as a gypsy getting out of the vardo. She is followed by Lottie also dressed as a rather flamboyant gypsy. Pricilla a true traveller, looks at the two Suffragettes as they come out of the vardo with distain. VIOLET and Granny watch with curiosity.

GEORGINA

How do I look? Do I look the part?

LOTTIE (laughing)

Yes indeed!... and myself?

GEORGINA

Mystical ...come on and tell my fortune.

PRICILLA

Well you look like Gypsies alright, just don't open your mouths

GEORGINA (disheartened)

Really? Too ... posh?

PRICILLA

We may ask folk to cross our palms with silver but we aren't born with a silver spoon in our mouths

LOTTIE

Oh dam. Class always gets in the way of everything. Georgian and I, like the

^{2 2} Yog: Romani word for fire.

sisterhood, truly believe in an equal society. This Pricilla is part of our mission -equality.

VIOLET

Posh idiots. Don't patronize Pricilla

GEORGINA

We are not patronizing anyone. We are merely trying to make women's voices heard.

VIOLET

What are you doing? All dressed up like Gypsies when your definitely are not Gypsies

LOTTIE

Dear girl no need to shout. We are using gypsy wagons to hide in, so we don't have to fill in the census and so the police won't catch us.

VIOLET

Why would anyone want arrest you lot?

GEORGINA

Do you know nothing about our coure? Women are not allowed to vote. That means we do not have a say, or representation in parliament. Which means we don't have a voice.

VIOLET

Why not?

GEORGINA

Purely because we are women and the so-called 'weaker sex'. VIOLET we are not allowed to make decisions

VIOLET

But that's stupid!

LOTTIE

Exactly. And that's why we are getting our voices heard. Women have gone on hunger strike to obtain the vote

VIOLET

Starved themselves?

GEORGINA

Yes non-violent protest. You see people feel that strongly about Rights for Women they are willing to risk their lives.

PRICILLA

You have a big mission. But how about trying to be a woman and traveller!

VIOLET

I don't get what a census is

LOTTIE

The census? It's a count of all the people who live in this country. So women have organized a demonstration to

refuse to have their names put down on the 1911 census .To refuse to be counted until we get the vote. The vote is everyone's right.

"If women don't count, neither shall they be counted",

GEORGINA

One of our organisers, Annie Kenney of WSPU... that's The Women's Social and Political Union says 'No Vote, No Census'

LOTTIE

Simple and effective 'No Vote, No Census'

PRICILLA

Gypsies never get counted. (pause)
Although some officials looking folk turned up on the site a few days ago asking us ...in some cases telling us to put our mark on papers for the census. Not sure how they will account for those on the road. (Pause) Look at both of you ... you won't have to worry about using those silver tongues of yours cos I'll be coming with you

LOTTIE

I didn't know you were a sympathizer

PRICILLA

You may be educated with books, but my education is of the road and I know all

about discrimination. I've been tossed about by the law from the moment I was born. (pause) I think I'll make me own moto

"If women and Gypsies don't count, neither shall they be counted",

GEORGINA

Bravo! So you are really coming with us? ... that's splendid (*slightly awkwardly*) Sister!

PRICILLA

Did you think I'd let you loose with my wagon and my horse?

GEORGINA

Lottie knows all about horses. I am sure we could manage

PRICILLA

(*aggressively*)

Got a problem with me coming sister? Ever ridden bare backed?

LOTTIE

Not exactly bare backed. (*apologetically*) side saddle actually.

PRICILLA

Know how to drive a wagon?

LOTTIE

Hadn't thought through the challenges of the road. To be honest Pricilla, I have always wanted to travel in a gypsy caravan, the wind in my hair. So

romantic ...and here we are with a real gypsy. I've fantasied about such an adventure. All that freedom ...the true bohemia life.

PRICILLA

Freedom? that's what all this 'votes for women' is about?

GEORGINA

Absolutely! Well done Pricilla

PRICILLA

Really? Thank you Georgina for your condescension. Freedom *hmm* I'll tell you what's it really like . Imagine, having to cope in the rain with nowhere to dry your clothes. Your children sleeping under the wagon on the earth , mud and stone .Poverty... not hunger strikes ... real grinding hunger. Many don't survive on the road, especially the infants. Being driven hounded out from place to place. We aren't welcome... strangers, some are good to us , but most think of us as dirt to be kicked around... nothing but vagrants.(pause) So yes I'm coming with you for my people. You play at being Gypsies we live it.

LOTTIE

I'm sorry, so sorry I didn't mean to offend I just.. ...

PRICILLA

I know you meant no harm. But other people have written our history usually so-called scholars and romantics -but

they don't have a clue how hard it is on the road.

LOTTIE

I am embarrassed by my ignorance.

GRANNY

Pricilla, don't be too heavy with these ladies. They 've good hearts. And they have paid you well for loan of the wagon.

VIOLET

But they deserve it. They have no idea.

PRICILLA

There's no space for sentimentality.

GEORGINA

Look here, I know Lottie got a bit carried away ... And she will never say this herself but she has given up everything, so that women like you and I will one day have the vote. She has been cut off from her family. Her husband, a highly respected banker in the city has disowned her. She doesn't have a penny to her name. Lottie knows pain and hardship. She was imprisoned after one protest. Can you imagine what prison is like for a woman? She has been humiliated and shamed...

PRICILLA

I see... well. That took courage. I admire you for that Lottie. But if you want to fight for equality it needs to be everyone. We all need to have a voice and be counted. (pause) Come on its getting dark. We have work to do ladies!

The Wagon begins to move away with Pricilla Lottie and Georgina. VIOLET watches them with Grannie. Then Pricilla turns back and looks at VIOLET.

PRICILLA

VIOLET make sure you're counted you are the future and our hope.

VIOLET

Wait for me I want to come ...

The Wagon draws off and VIOLET finds herself back at the fireside.

Scene 6: Before the fire and the gypsy wedding

More people including Massey with her baskets and some young children all dressed up join the fireside including a fiddler .A song is played.

VIOLET

Pricilla was talking about **me** being the future. Me. (pause) I think we've all been living in the past. Like ghost gypsies. Mammy says God made you who you are for a reason so be proud of it.

GRANNY

That's right my VIOLET your Mammy's right. Understand where you've come from, your roots and it'll gives you strength to live in the present.

LOUISE

The past can be cruel. Cruel enough to create Gypsy camps.

BILLY

LOUISE don't go telling Violet about that. She's a young gal...it's wicked for upsetting her.

VIOLET

No I'm not too young! Tell me !

LOUISE

Well in the second world war. They build concentration camps especially for gypsies.

(Short pause, as LOUISE speaks the camera shifts to the fire we are shown and images of the holocaust appear)

Thousands of gypsies just like us were murdered. All comes back to the same thing. We're our own people and we want to live by our own rules. At heart we're nomads.

VIOLET

I didn't know that Gypsies were killed in the holocaust. Why do people do such terrible things. Why not stop being gypsies.

MASSEY

As if you've got a choice.

RAY

Can't do that. We are who we are. If we did that what would our ancestors who went through so much think. We have an ancient culture that is built on freedom and the deep love we have for our families. We may scrap at times but family is everything. We work through troubles together.

MASSEY

All we have ever-wanted VIOLET is peace but some people won't let us be.

VIOLET

It's all wrong we should be able to be ourselves.

BILLY

Why do you want to go telling the dear gal that for.

MASSEY

Knowledge is power

BILLY

True ...but we know to have a good time. Come on no more sorrow. Let's sing. Come on Freddy lets have a song. We can let out our anger with a good old fight and some money on it.

People cheer and two men get up and fight. CALEB and SONNY.

VIOLET

Is that Great Granfer CALEB?

GRANNIE

That's enough you two (*with authority*) I said stop now. CALEB you should know better. SONNY you'll do your self-real damage if you're not careful!

They stop fighting and people laugh and cheer.

That's it now calm down by the fire. If we didn't have a sense of humour and stories we'd go mad.

VIOLET

I thought maybe I was going mad.

GRANNY

Nothing wrong with you my Violet.

A troupe of show people/Fair People arrive.

Theo

We saw your wagons and heard about young
Daisy and Freddie.

GRANNY

Theo you know you're always welcome here
by the fire.

THEO

Bless you Granny. The people of the town
were as tight as a tight rope, hardly
any money did they give us for our
performance. What we do to entertain the
gaugies ... tempt fate... play with our
lives and they can't even put their
hands in their pocket. But one fellow
gave us a rabbit he hadn't been able to
sell it at market. So it will do as part
of the feast.

Angelo

For Daisy and Freddie's wedding!

There is a lot of laughter. The fire-eater blows
flames into the night sky. Everyone chants Daisy

and Freddie. They appear from the Vardo. The fiddler plays.

PRIEST

Now Daisy and Freddie you have already been wed this morning in St. Pricilla's Church. But as requested by both of you ,I have come to bless you again in the presence of your people.

The Priest holds their hands.

I bless you in the name of God and Saint Sara-la-Kali.

DAISY

Amen. I bless my husband Freddie Ike
White

FREDDIE

Amen. I bless my wife now called Daisy
Rosalie White

Florrie stands and breaks a loaf.

FLORRIE

Now Daisy and Freddie White give me your hands . With this thorn I will prick your thumbs.

Florrie pricks their thumbs

let a drop of blood from each of you drop onto this bread. Now give each other your bread and eat,

Florrie then sprinkles the crumbs of the left over bread over the couples heads

Now we celebrate

People start to clap and first Freddie jumps across the fire and then Daisy. Then they hold hands and jump through the fire together. Then two brooms are held together and they jump across them together. A child gives Wild flowers to the bride.

GRANNY

Now they are wed they must sweep out the old. New beginnings. New life.

A little bit of fiddle music is played and Ray lifts up a drink and looks at Freddie.

RAY

"Tell her stories and laugh in the firesides hot glow

Whisper sweet nothings tell her you love her just so

Whilst we can whisper our prayers till the stars start to fade "³

Drinking and dancing commences. They come and sing and tight rope walk. Then people start to dance while the fiddle is played. VIOLET is visibly enjoying the entertainment

It is now very dark. A group of men with flares enter. They are very hostile. One is a constable

CONSTABLE

Now stop your noise all of you. You need to be off this land and quickly. I need you off before first light tomorrow

³ Excerpt from Ray Wills Campfire Nights p137

MASSEY

Wait we're not going anywhere this is our land. We've been on this land for hundreds of years !

CONSTABLES

Where's your papers?

MASSEY

We don't have papers. We don't need any! This is our land and we're harming no one !

CONSTABLES

But I have papers saying this land no longer belongs to you.

MASSEY

But how?

CONSTABLE

Ask your granfer, he kindly signed your land away.

MASSEY

But he can't read or write.

CONSTABLE

But he made his mark.

MASSEY

Oh granfer

Is this true?

GRANFER

I ... they came, that one with the torch,
when you were all away from the site and
I was on me own ... They said if I made my
mark it would protect our land for ever.
(*pause looking at Massey*) What have I
done Massey ?

MASSEY

Granfer didn't understand! you can see
that !

You mislead him, tricked him. You have
robbed him of his own land.

CONSTABLE

The law is law. He signed and you are
now trespassing. Out by morning

BILLY

But how will we see to pack up its dark!

Constable

I don't care if you can see or not just
get off.

FLORRIE

But we have young children and we need
to prepare
them

Constable

Private land. You can see I don't come
alone.

Man 1

You heard him we're sick of you all
didycoys. Now clear off!

Jack

You can't treat us like this. Its
granfer's land

Man 2

Vagabonds the lot of you !

Man 3

Now clear off!

CALEB

I could knock you out. In fact I will
knock you out. Come on SONNY lets sort
um out

GRANNY

You wont CALEB and SONNY. Thank you sir
we'll be off this land, God's land by
tomorrow first light. Now leave us in
peace

The constables and men leave

BILLY

Granny how could you? We could have
fought them

GRANNY

There was an army of them. You'd have
lost. Maybe got yourselves killed. Words
would be all twisted about us and next
thing they would come again and you'd end
up in prison. Now clear the fire.

CALEB

Why should we? Leave it for them to
clear up

GRANNY

No! we will leave it as we found it as
we always leave places. Put the turf
back carefully, as if we'd never been
here. Nature will repair the land as she
always does. Nature will repair us all.
Now all of you pack away our camp!

FLORRIE

Granny is right we have to keep our
dignity.

(pause)I saw coming. And I can see it
will happen to our people over and over
again. Packing up and moving on. Packing
and moving on until we have nowhere to
go.

Scene 7 Things don't change. (Eviction Modern)

Modern day. Granny and Violet are staring at the burnt-out fire .There is an eviction order plastered on a trailer.The camera shows us the eviction order. **Notice of Eviction :Persons Unknown from Privately Owned Land, You are required to vacate immediately.** A group of protesters are seen making and holding banners. They give Violet a banner to hold. They are chanting, "We shall not be moved". The protesters are facing a group of Bailiffs THE SAME ACTORS AS BEFORE BUT NOW WITH MODERN COSTUMNES . One Activist Bernadette with a mega phone and clipboard comes forward.

CONSTABLE /Bailiff MODERN

Now stop your noise all of you. You need to be off this land and quickly.

MASSEY

Wait we're not going anywhere this is our land. We've been on this land for hundreds of years

CONSTABLE /Bailiff MODERN

The law is law. You are now trespassing.
Private land!

Man 1

You heard him we're sick of you all didycoys. Now clear off!

Man 2

Pikeys the lot of you !

Man 3

Now clear off!

ACTIVIST Bernadette

We will stand together. This is the last trailer! You have bulldozed all the rest. You have destroyed the path to this trailer. But we will not go quietly. We have Human Rights. We have a culture we have a voice .We want a peaceful life .We want our freedom back. We want to be able to live together with our families not separated and into rented houses. You have taken everything from us. In 94 the government let the councils abandon us. We want to live our lives according to our culture. We want our freedom. Our way of life has been persecuted, the jobs we used to have gone. You put us on sites that aren't fit for us to live on ...where we can't keep horses or make fires You are trying to wipe out our way of life . You have ruined the country side and made nearly all the common ground-places we could stop on- private . Now you are pushing us off the land we own or pay rent for. You have created lies about us. I'm going to read the words of Gratton Puxon of the Gypsy Council

"Gypsies are being squeezed on all sides in this wave of intolerance and racism which is unlike anything I've ever seen before,". That's what it is racism!!!

VIOLET takes the loud speaker.

VIOLET

But we are still here and we are remaking ourselves. We have a voice and we will be listened to. We can't be bullied any more.

ACTIVIST

Violet is right! We can't be silent anymore. We need to know our power. That is why fellow travellers we urge you to exercise your vote and be counted.

CROWD

Yeah but what if you don't have a permanent address?

ACTIVIST

It doesn't matter all you need is to be on the Electoral Register. You need to fill in one form called 'Electoral Registration Form '. There're people like myself out here to help and support you .

VIOLET

Yes you have to vote .You really do! Women fought so hard to have their say. Some even went on hunger strike. We need to vote so we have someone to speak for us in parliament.

GRANNY

Well-said VIOLET.

Violet looks again at the burnt-out fire. She picks up a handful of ash.

VIOLET

Just ashes Granny.

Granny begins to sing. There are images of the brunt out site. Violet see how sad her Granny is

VIOLET

Best cover this fire pit... So that the grass will come back. Then ... then we can start to build a new fire.

GRANNY

That's it my Violet. That's it.

Violet puts the turf on the burnt-out fire then brings a new one. A couple of others come and help her and as she lights the new fire we see a scene of boxing.

Scene 8: VIOLET goes to the boxing club.

It's now morning and we are in another place and time.

GRANNY

If you know how to make fire you can survive

You need to find your way in your world.
~~Go on show me how to cut out a bit of turf.~~

As VIOLET cuts the turf and as she pulls it up she finds herself transported to the boxing club.

VIOLET

Those girls-look my age...Are they travellers?

GRANNY

Go and talk to them

MARTINA

What you doing here VIOLET? I thought you'd gone to the fair.

VIOLET

I lost my way

MARTINA

Well you're here now. Want a go? Coach?
can you help VIOLET out here !

COACH (Clive)

Course I can MARTINA. Always good to see
a new person at the club. Ever done any
boxing before?

VIOLET

No

COACH (Clive)

Tell you what I'll get a few of the
others over , they'll go through a few steps
with you .

Now Tiff she's a champion of this club. Tiff
Michael come over here a moment and meet Violet

VILOET

Dad?

DADDY/MICHEAL

I thought you'd never come here. The times I said
to come up to the club and have a go.I am always
saying "it'll do you good Violet"

(Violet is confused and as the others punch the
bags in slow motion they say "it'll do you good
Violet")

VIOLET

But Dad I am not sure where I am ...

TIFFANY

Want me to go through a few moves with you .

VIOLET

Alright

The coach Tiffany and Martina show Violet a bit of boxing. Whilst boxing MARTINA speaks to Violet.

MARTINA

Did you get fed up with all the names they called you ?....no one likes that .That's why I come here-I get my anger out

The girls keep punching

MARTINA

That's it VIOLET one two three. And the good thing is this is non-contact fighting. So no one gets hurt outside and inside you get better.

TIFFANY

You're doing great Violet!

A sequence of training follows. We see that Violet is really enjoying herself.

MARTINA

I got all my anger out here. Punching that bag and then I found I got so involved that I really couldn't care

less what others said, because I'm good at this and those around me ...well we're mostly travellers here and girls and we just understand each other

COACH (Clive)

You're doing well Violet.

VIOLET (proudly)

My great Granfer was a famous bare-knuckle fighter

DADDY /MICHEAL

In deed he was Violet a famous bare-knuckle fighter

MARTINA

Well it's in your blood then!

VIOLET

Yeah I suppose. It's in my blood
They continue boxing.

MARTINA

You can tell people here what your problems are. It's like a family. You can be your true self.

VIOLET

Yes my true self.
She turns and then she is back in a field.

Scene 9: The modern trailer.

GRANNY

Someone is calling for you VIOLET

VIOLET climbs up into Emily 's trailer. Emily hands her a mug of tea.

EMILY

Tea?

VIOLET

Thank you ... Your little baby's beautiful

EMILY

I am dressing her up for Christening.
Her name is Mary-May

VIOLET

Mammy did that for me. I have a picture of me all dressed up. Mary-May is so very sweet.

EMILY

You ready to get back VIOLET?

VIOLET

Yes. But I'd like to help you here first if that's OK. I love this trailer.

EMILY

I wouldn't live any other way ...You going to help me do a bit of cleaning?

They smile at each other and start dusting the trailer.

VIOLET

It feels safe here.

VIOLET keeps cleaning then sees the same plate as the one she broke.

VIOLET

That plate is the same as the one I broke.

EMILY

Would you like it?

VIOLET

I can't take it Mammy is always saying how precious it is, the most precious thing in the house.

EMILY

We have the same great grandmother. We all link up you see. The plate's yours. Good luck VIOLET. We all need a bit of luck.

Outside Granny is waiting for her.

GRANNY

Come on then let's get you to that fair. You'll need a wagon

VIOLET

(laughing) you make it sound like Cinderella

GRANNY

Do you want me to find you a prince?

VIOLET

That's the last thing I need

(Emily looking out of her trailer window.)

EMILY

Absolutely you be your self-girl. Not all traditions are good ones. Look forward VIOLET. Make your own traditions. Remember who you are, a traveller, you'll get ill again if you try and hide it, your true self. Hold your head up high. You're part of thousands of years of travelling! Good luck!

Granny and VIOLET travel off in the wagon

VIOLET

Are we in the next life?

GRANNY

we are betwixt and between.

Scene 10: The Fair

They arrive at the Fair. There are lots of people moving around dressed up in their very best clothes for the Fair. VIOLET finds herself on a deckchair outside of their modern trailer. Maggie comes running over to her.

MAGGIE

VIOLET we've been so worried about you.

LISA

You got very upset. You've been in a deep sleep all the way to the fair. Aunty Pricilla said you needed to sleep.. and if you didn't perk up soon she'd get Uncle to take you to the hospital.

VIOLET

Where is Mammy? I haven't been asleep. I have been travelling miles and miles. And Daddy he was at the boxing ..Where is great Granny and the Vardo and the horse?

Pricilla

There's no Vardo. Just modern trailers here

LISA

There's some show wagons on the other side of the fair.

MAGGIE

You passed out VIOLET we all got such a fright.

VIOLET

I've been on the open road.

Mammy rushes over to VIOLET very relieved.

MAMMY

There she is got a bit more colour in
your cheeks. Thank God

VIOLET

I'm sorry about the plate. I love you
all.

MAMMY

Plate?

VIOLET

Grandmother's plate I smashed it I was
so angry.

MAMMY

You tried, but DADDY got there first.

DADDY

Couldn't have you smashing your great
granny's plate .

VIOLET

Oh ... but I thought... and Emily ...

LISA

Emily?

VIOLET

Great Granny told me everything

MAMMY

But you never met your Great Grandmother
love

VIOLET

I did. She gave me this comb and said I
wasn't to cut my hair and Florrie said
the same...

DADDY

That's my granny's comb sure enough I
remember her combing long black hair
outside the trailer when I was a child.
..one of my earliest memories .

MAMMY

How did you...?

VIOLET

We've been through so much

MAGGIE

Who ?

VIOLET

Our people. Always moving packing and
unpacking. But we always rise up out of
the ashes. And I know who I am now. Wait
...All of you ..Wait Look over there the
Vardo and Great Granny

They all look and see Great Granny and Vardo
slowly fading away into the distance

THE END.

