

Extract from *Ghost Gypsy* by Sharon Muiruri Coyne

VIOLET, a young Traveller, and her GRANNY, Ghost Gypsy, are now in the modern day in the middle of a protest about Gypsy and Traveller families being evicted from the land they are living on in their trailers. VIOLET joins ACTIVIST BERNADETTE in this peaceful protest.

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. "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. One Activist Bernadette with a mega phone and clipboard comes forward.

CONSTABLE /Bailiff: 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 countryside 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.

DISCUSS:

1. What rights young people should have under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC)?
2. What rights are being threatened by this eviction of Gypsy and Traveller families? Look at Articles 12, 27 and 30
3. What methods of protest can they use to disagree with this eviction?
4. What difference might voting make to the lives of Gypsies and Travellers at local and national level?
5. Write a manifesto for Violet, or yourself demanding change

Useful websites:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/peace-protests-dallas-response/>

<http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/>

https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/02/schools-of-sanctuary-pack_National_printer-friendly-version.pdf

<https://www.parliament.uk/education/>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/standing-democracy>