

The Train

TIMOTHY is an eleven-year-old boy who never does as he is told. He is travelling with his mother, father and sister on a train bound for the south of France. It is a long, hot journey and he is becoming bored and restless. When the train pulls into a station he persuades his father to let him climb down on to the platform in search of an ice-cream. Other people have had the same idea and the station is crowded with people running and pushing in all directions.

TIMOTHY: *(Speaking to his father)* Come on Dad – we have only got a few minutes before we have to get back on the train again! I'm so hot and thirsty. Aren't you? Phew! I think it's even hotter on the platform than it was on the train and we're not even halfway yet! Let's find those ice-creams. You go over that side and I'll try here. *(Looking around him)* There are so many stalls – newspapers, magazines. *(Forgetting that his father is no longer next to him)* Dad. Dad. Look at this comic. It's Tintin! We read about him in school. *(Picking up the comic book)* But it's in French! I can't understand a word. *(At that moment a group of noisy children push past him, knocking the comic book out of his hand and almost knocking him to the ground).* Hey, look where you're going. Now I've dropped my money! I've got to find it. Coins can roll anywhere. *(Scrambling down onto the floor and picking his way between legs on the crowded platform)* Sorry sir, I didn't mean to tread on you. Excuse me. *(Trying to make himself understood)* Excusez-moi madame, it's my money. I've dropped it!

(An elderly lady swipes him with her umbrella and he moves back very quickly) There's no need to hit me madame. I'm not trying to take your bag. I'm not after money. I want to find my own! *(Getting up and moving to the side, TIMOTHY suddenly notices a coin on the floor)* There it is! *(He swerves, weaves and pushes past people and picks his coin up)* That's my money! I didn't steal. I dropped it when I was pushed. *(The old lady has now caught up with TIMOTHY. She is still shaking her umbrella at him and is calling him a thief. A small crowd has begun to gather round him)*

Continued ▶

Oh I wish I was better at French. They just don't understand me. Please don't shake your umbrella at me again, madame! *(As TIMOTHY tries to explain to the group of onlookers what has happened, he mimes the actions to try and make them understand)* I was pushed by some children. They knocked the money out of my hand. *(Holding up the coin in desperation)* This is my money! Oh, what are you all staring at? All I wanted was an ice-cream. Ice-cream! Ice-cream! It doesn't matter anyway. *(Looking around him and beginning to panic)* I've lost my father now, too... Dad. Dad! *(Jumping up and down to gain attention)* I'm over here! *(Waving)* Here! *(Turning to the people around him)* You can't stop me from leaving. Take the money! I don't want one of your ice-creams anyway. It would make me sick! I hate it here... and I want my father.

(TIMOTHY suddenly hears the warning whistle of the departing train. He pushes free from the crowd and begins to run aimlessly, weaving his way through the crowd) The train! Oh no! It's going. Help! Stop it! I've got to get on. Mum... Dad... Susan. HELP! *(To himself)* Oh, it's no use. It's going! Stop the train! Please!

by Jacqueline Emery