Clangor of railway-station bell before curtain rises to discover legend: ‘Guellen’. Obviously name of small, skimpily depicted township in background: a tumble-down wreck. Equally ramshackle station-buildings may or may not be cordoned off, according to country, and include a rusty signal-cabin, its door marked ‘No Entry’. Also depicted in bare outline, centre, the piteous Station Road. Left, a barren little building with tiled roof and mutilated posters on its windowless walls. A sign, at left corner: ‘Ladies’. Another, at right corner: ‘Gents’. This entire prospect steeped in hot autumn sun. In front of little building, a bench. On it, four men. An unspeakably ragged fifth (so are the other four) is inscribing letters in red paint on a banner clearly intended for some procession: ‘Welcome Claire’. Thunderous pounding din of express train rushing through. Men on bench show interest in express train by following its headlong rush with head movements from left to right.


MAN TWO. The Racing Roland gets here at eleven twenty-seven. Venice-Stockholm.

MAN THREE. Our last remaining pleasure: watching trains go by.

MAN FOUR. Five years ago the Gudrun and the Racing Roland stopped in Guellen. And the Diplomat. And the Lorelei. All famous express trains.

MAN ONE. World famous.

MAN TWO. Now not even the commuting trains stop. Just two from Kaffigen and the one-thirteen from Kalberstadt.

MAN THREE. Ruined.

MAN FOUR. The Wagner Factory gone crash.

MAN ONE. Bockmann bankrupt.

MAN TWO. The Foundry on Sunshine Square shut down.

MAN THREE. Living on the dole.

MAN FOUR. On Poor Relief soup.

MAN ONE. Living?

MAN TWO. Vegetating.

MAN THREE. And rotting to death.

MAN FOUR. The entire township.

(Bell rings.)

MAN TWO. It’s more than time that millionairess got here. They say she founded a hospital in Kalberstadt.

MAN THREE. And a kindergarten in Kaffigen. And a memorial church in the Capital.

PAINTER. She had Zint do her portrait. That Naturalistic dauber.

MAN ONE. She and her money. She owns Armenian Oil, Western Railways, North Broadcasting Company and the Hong Kong — uh — Amusement District.

(Train clatter. Station-master salutes. Men move heads from right to left after train.)
MAN FOUR. The Diplomat.
MAN THREE. We were a city of the Arts, then.
MAN TWO. One of the foremost in the land.
MAN ONE. In Europe.
MAN FOUR. Goethe spent a night here. In the Golden Apostle.
MAN THREE. Brahms composed a quartet here.
    (Bell rings.)
MAN TWO. Bertold Schwarz invented gunpowder here.
PAINTER. And I was a brilliant student at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. And what am I doing here now? Sign-painting!
    (Train clatter. Guard appears, left, as after jumping off train.)
GUARD (long-drawn wail). Guellen!
MAN ONE. The Kaffigen commuter.
    (One passenger has got off, left. He walks past men on bench, disappears through doorway marked 'Gents'.)


How does the interaction between the Ticket Inspector and Claire Zachanassian effectively suggest ideas about power and authority?

**Ticket Inspector.** I'm waiting for an explanation. In my official capacity, I represent the Railway Management.

**Claire Zachanassian.** You're a simpleton. I want to pay this little town a visit. What do you expect me to do, hop off your express train?

**Ticket Inspector.** You stopped the Racing Roland just because you wanted to visit Guellen?

**Claire Zachanassian.** Of course.

**Ticket Inspector.** Madam. Should you desire to visit Guellen, the twelve-forty commuter from Kalberstadt is at your service. Please use it. Like other people. Arrival in Guellen one thirteen p.m.

**Claire Zachanassian.** The ordinary passenger train? The one that stops in Loken, Brunnhübel, Beisenbach and Leuthenau? Are you really and truly asking me to go puffing round this countryside for half an hour?

**Ticket Inspector.** You'll pay for this, Madam. Dearly.

**Claire Zachanassian.** Boby, give him a thousand.

All (murmuring). A thousand.

(Butler gives Ticket Inspector a thousand.)

**Ticket Inspector (perplexed).** Madam.

**Claire Zachanassian.** And three thousand for the Railway Widows' Fund.

All (murmuring). Three thousand.

(Ticket Inspector receives three thousand from Butler.)

**Ticket Inspector (staggered).** Madam. No such fund exists.

**Claire Zachanassian.** Then found one.

(The supreme Civic Authority whispers a word or two in Ticket Inspector's ear.)

**Ticket Inspector (all confusion).** Madam is Madam Claire Zachanassian? O do excuse me. Of course it's different in that case. We'd have been only too happy to stop in Guellen if we'd had the faintest notion, O, here's your money back, Madam, four thousand, my God.

All (murmuring). Four thousand.

**Claire Zachanassian.** Keep it, it's nothing.

All (murmuring). Keep it.

**Ticket Inspector.** Does Madam require the Racing Roland to wait while she visits Guellen? I know the Railway Management would be only too glad. They say the Cathedral portals are well worth a look. Gothic. With the Last Judgment.

**Claire Zachanassian.** Will you and your express train get the hell out of here?

**Station-Master (whistles, waves green flag).** Stand clear!

**Ticket Inspector.** I do trust you won't complain to the Railway Management, Madam. It was a pure misunderstanding.

(Train begins moving out. Ticket Inspector jumps on.)