

FRAU SCHMIDT: Don't let the Captain hear you say that.
(*The CAPTAIN whistles offstage. FRAU SCHMIDT stops short, bristling.*) He didn't whistle for us when his wife was alive.

FRANZ: He's being the captain of a ship again.

(*The CAPTAIN whistles again.*)

FRAU SCHMIDT: I can't bear being whistled for—it's humiliating.

FRANZ: In the Imperial Navy, the bo's'un always whistled for us. (*We hear the doorbell.*)

FRAU SCHMIDT: But I wasn't in the Imperial Navy.

FRANZ: Too bad. You could have made a fortune. (*He exits into the hallway toward the outer door. FRAU*

SCHMIDT comes down the stairs and exits into the library D.R. FRANZ re-enters, followed by MARIA.) You will wait here. (*He exits D.R. MARIA is wearing a dress that has been designed by an enemy of the female sex, and an unbecoming hat. She is carrying a small carpet bag and a guitar in its case. She comes down into the room timidly and looks around in awe at the handsome embellishments. She puts the guitar case down on the floor and starts toward the windows, touching the porcelain stove admiringly as she passes it. In the distance we hear the Abbey bells. She kneels and bows her head in a brief prayer. The CAPTAIN enters from the library D.R., the letter still in his hand. As he sees MARIA in prayer, he stops. MARIA crosses herself and rises.*)

CAPTAIN: I'm Captain von Trapp. You are Fraulein. . .

MARIA: Maria—Maria Rainer.

CAPTAIN: Now, Fraulein, as to your duties here—(*He suddenly becomes aware of her dress.*) Would you mind stepping over there? (*He indicates a spot in the center*

of the room. MARIA slowly moves to it.) Before the children meet you, you will put on another dress.

MARIA: I haven't any other dress. When we enter the Abbey our worldly clothes are given to the poor.

CAPTAIN: What about this one?

MARIA: The poor didn't want this one.

CAPTAIN: This is what you would call a worldly dress?

MARIA: It belonged to our last postulant. I would have made myself a dress but I wasn't given time. I can make my own clothes.

CAPTAIN: Good. I'll see that you're given some material—today if possible. Now, you will be in charge of my children. There are seven of them. You will find out how far they have progressed in their studies and carry on from there. Each morning will be spent in the classroom. Each afternoon, they march. You will see that at all times they conduct themselves with decorum and orderliness. The first rule in this house is discipline.

MARIA: Yes, sir.

(*The CAPTAIN takes out his silver whistle and blows a siren-like summoning blast which continues while his children enter from both sides of the balcony, the outside door, the French windows and the library, and end by forming a single line with GRETLE and MARTA on the stairs, KURT, LOUISA, FRIEDRICH and LIESL, in that order, on the balcony behind them. They are dressed in white sailor uniforms; the girls, of course, in white skirts. The CAPTAIN changes his signal to one that marks time for marching, and, led by GRETLE, they march down the stairs and, with a military left turn at the foot of the stairs, line up across the stage. MARIA has watched this with considerable astonishment. There is an empty space between MARTA and KURT. Slowly through the diningroom door, BRIG-*

ITTA enters, reading a book. The CAPTAIN sees her, takes the book away from her, puts it on the sofa, and gives her an admonishing pat on the behind, which sends her running to take her place in formation. The CAPTAIN crosses in front of them to the other side of LIESL and addresses them.)

CAPTAIN: This is your new fraulein—Fraulein Maria. As I sound your signal you will step forward and repeat your name. You, Fraulein, will listen and learn their signals so that you can call them when you want them.

(He whistles their various signals. Each child responds to his or her signal, stepping forward in a military manner, announcing his or her name, then stepping back into line. The CAPTAIN crosses below the children to MARIA, taking from his pocket a velvet case which holds another boatwain's whistle. He hands it to MARIA.) Now, Fraulein, let's see how well you listened. (MARIA, slightly bewildered, takes the whistle from its case. The CAPTAIN crosses D.R.) MARIA: I won't have to whistle for them, Reverend Captain—What I mean is, I'll be with them all the time.

CAPTAIN: Not on all occasions. This is a large house and a large estate. They have been taught to come only when they hear their signal. Now when I want you, this is what you'll hear. (The CAPTAIN whistles the governess' signal.)

MARIA: You won't have to trouble, sir, because I couldn't answer to a whistle.

CAPTAIN: That's nonsense. Everyone in this house answers to a whistle. I'll show you. (He whistles the butler's signal.)

FRANZ: (Entering D.R. and coming to attention) Yes, sir?

CAPTAIN: This is my orderly—my butler. The new governess—Fraulein Maria. (He whistles the housekeeper's signal.)

FRAU SCHMIDT: (Entering on the balcony) Yes, sir? CAPTAIN: That is the executive officer, Frau Schmidt, the housekeeper. Fraulein Maria. Please be sure that her room is ready.

FRAU SCHMIDT: Yes, sir.

(FRANZ takes MARIA's bag and goes upstairs to landing, joining FRAU SCHMIDT.)

CAPTAIN: Well, I shall now leave you with the children.

You are in command. (He starts out D.R. MARIA blows a blast on the whistle. He stops and turns.)

MARIA: Pardon me, sir—I don't know how to address you.

CAPTAIN: You will call me Captain.

MARIA: (Crosses to CAPTAIN) Thank you, Captain. I forgot to return this whistle, Captain. I won't need it, Captain. (He takes the whistle and exits D.R. FRANZ and FRAU SCHMIDT exit to third floor. She turns to children with a handclap, catching them off guard.) Well, now that there's just us, would you tell me your names again, and tell me how old you are. Now you're—?

(Each child, in turn, steps forward in military manner, speaks, and then steps back.)

LIESL: I'm Liesl. I'm sixteen years old and I don't need a governess.

MARIA: (R. of LIESL) I'm glad you told me. We'll just be friends. (LIESL steps back. FRIEDRICH steps forward.)

FRIEDRICH: I'm Friedrich. I'm fourteen. I'm a boy.

MARIA: (R. of FRIEDRICH) Boy? Why, you're almost a man. (FRIEDRICH looks pleased. LOUISA signals the other

girls, who giggle.)

LOUISA: I'm Brigitta.

MARIA: (Crosses behind LOUISA, pulling up her braid) You didn't tell me how old you are, Louisa.