

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 downstage right. 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 downstage right. FRANZ and FRAU SCHMIDT exit to third floor. She turns to CHILDREN with a hand clap, 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

(Right 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

(Right of FRIEDRICH.)
Boy? Why, you're almost a man.