

*(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.

BRIGITTA

*(Steps left of MARIA.)*

I'm Brigitta. She's Louisa and she's thirteen years old and you're smart. I'm nine and I think your dress is the ugliest one I ever saw.

KURT

*(Steps right of MARIA.)*

Brigitta, you mustn't say a thing like that.

BRIGITTA

Why not? Don't you think it's ugly?

KURT

If I did think so, I wouldn't say so.

*(Snapping to attention.)*

I'm Kurt, I'm eleven – almost.

MARIA

That's a nice age to be, eleven – almost.

MARTA

*(Steps forward left of MARIA, pulling her skirt.)*

I'm Marta and I'm going to be seven on Tuesday and I'd like a pink parasol.

MARIA

Pink is my favorite color, too.

*(GRETEL steps forward and stamps her foot.)*

And you're Gretl.

*(GRETEL smiles and jumps into her arms. MARIA crosses left center.)*

I'm going to tell you something.

*(MARIA sits on chair right of sofa, puts GRETEL on floor right of her.)*

I've never been a governess before. How do I start?

LOUISA

*(Runs to MARIA.)*

You mean you don't know anything about being a governess?

MARIA

No.