

FRANZ and FRAU SCHMIDT – p. 1 of 2

(We see CAPTAIN GEORG VON TRAPP. He takes a silver boatswain's whistle from his pocket and blows a distinctive signal on it. FRANZ, the butler, enters.)

FRANZ

Yes, sir?

CAPTAIN

I was calling the housekeeper and she didn't answer. Do you know why?

FRANZ

Sometimes she doesn't hear, sir.

(FRAU SCHMIDT enters)

FRAU SCHMIDT

I'm sorry, sir, I was answering the telephone. Good day, sir. We're happy to have you home again.

CAPTAIN

Why did the last governess leave?

FRAU SCHMIDT

Who knows? She just said, "I've had enough of this," and walked out.

CAPTAIN

Why? Was Louisa playing tricks again? – Putting toads in her bed?

FRAU SCHMIDT

She didn't complain of that, sir.

CAPTAIN

Well, there's another one coming today. And this one can't walk out.

FRAU SCHMIDT

Oh?

CAPTAIN

She's coming from Nonnberg Abbey with orders to stay until November.

FRAU SCHMIDT

I hope you'll be home for a time, sir.

CAPTAIN

Just until tomorrow. The telephone call – was it for me?

FRAU SCHMIDT

No, sir, it was for Franz. Before you arrived there was a call from Vienna – a Frau Schraeder. I have the number in the pantry.

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CAPTAIN

I know the number. Oh, I shall be back in about a month with some guests.

FRAU SCHMIDT

Yes, sir. Do you know how many, sir?

CAPTAIN

Just two. Herr Detweiler –

FRANZ

Ah, Herr Detweiler.

CAPTAIN

And Frau Schraeder.

(The CAPTAIN exits)

FRANZ

Who wanted me on the telephone?

FRAU SCHMIDT

It was the post office. They've got a telegram for you. It will be delivered at seven o'clock.

FRANZ

Seven o'clock? That gives me five hours to be nervous.

FRAU SCHMIDT

With that scatterbrained boy delivering telegrams –

FRANZ

Well, that's one thing people are saying – if the Germans did take over Austria, we'd have efficiency.

FRAU SCHMIDT

Don't let the Captain hear you say that. He didn't whistle for us when his wife was alive.

FRANZ

He's being the captain of a ship again.

FRAU SCHMIDT

I can't bear being whistle for – it's humiliating.

FRANZ

In the Imperial Navy, the bo's'un always whistled for us.

FRAU SCHMIDT

But I wasn't in the Imperial Navy.

FRANZ

Too bad. You could have made a fortune.

(end of side)

ACT I

Scene 7

Maria's Bedroom. The gabled ceiling suggests it is on the top floor of the villa. The door from the hallway is in the upstage wall. At the left of this door is a wardrobe with double doors. The left wall slants away from this and in it is a window. To the right of the door to the hall is an alcove, curtained off with drapes of yellow and brown cretonne, matching the drapes of the window. Below the alcove, in a jog, is MARIA's double brass bed with a thick eider-down comforter. Guitar case on floor D.S. of window. There is a knocking on the door.

START

FRAU SCHMIDT: *(Off)* Fraulein Maria! *(She enters U.C. carrying a bolt of cloth.)* Fraulein Maria, it's Frau Schmidt.

MARIA: *(Off)* I'm getting ready for bed.

FRAU SCHMIDT: The Captain is going to Vienna tomorrow. I have this material he ordered for a new dress for you.

MARIA: *(Off)* Oh, how nice of him. *(She enters from the alcove, wearing a nightgown under a dressing robe. FRAU SCHMIDT hands her the bolt of material.)* Even before it's made, this is the prettiest dress I've ever had. I hope the Captain will like it because I want to ask him for more material.

FRAU SCHMIDT: More?

MARIA: Oh, not for me—for the children. For play clothes. *(She takes the material into the alcove.)*

FRAU SCHMIDT: The Von Trapp children never play. *(Crosses to the window and closes the curtains.)* The Captain doesn't like them to get dirty.

MARIA: *(Re-entering)* But they're children. They have to climb trees, roll on the grass. Think of all the rocks and caves—

FRAU SCHMIDT: The Captain says the best exercise is marching. The children will continue to march. I hope you find your room comfortable.

MARIA: Yes, thank you.

FRAU SCHMIDT: (*Going to the bed and adjusting the eider-down comforter*) There will be new curtains for the window and the alcove. They will be hung tomorrow.

MARIA: (*At the window*) But these curtains are very good.

FRAU SCHMIDT: There will be new curtains.

MARIA: (*Measuring the drapes at arm's length from her nose*) Will the Captain be away long?

FRAU SCHMIDT: I don't know. Of course he has to come home every time he hires a new governess. I sometimes think the children get rid of their governesses just because they want to see their father.

MARIA: (*Picking up her guitar case*) He must want to see them, too.

FRAU SCHMIDT: Since his wife died, they remind him too much of her. (*Seeing the guitar.*) You can put that away. You won't be using it.

MARIA: Why not?

FRAU SCHMIDT: The Captain won't have music here.

MARIA: He won't have music???

FRAU SCHMIDT: And he used to love music. There were wonderful evenings here. His wife would sing and he would play the violin or guitar. But now he's shut all that out of his life.

MARIA: So that's why he's the way he is. But not to have music—that's wrong for him and wrong for the children too. (*She puts the guitar in the alcove.*)

FRAU SCHMIDT: It will work out. The Captain may marry again before the summer is over.

MARIA: (*Re-entering*) That would change everything. They'd have a mother again.

FRAU SCHMIDT: (*Dismissingly*) It's going to rain. You'd better close your window. (*She exits U.S. MARIA goes to the bed and kneels in prayer.*)

END

MARIA: Dear God, I know now that You have sent me here on a mission. I must help these children to love their new mother and prepare them to win her love so she will never want them to leave her. And I pray that this will become a happy family in Thy sight. God bless the Captain, God bless Liesl, and Friedrich, Louisa, Brigitta, Marta, and little Gretl—and oh, yes, I forgot the other boy—what's his name? Well, God bless what's-his-name! (*There is lightning and thunder. LIESL enters through the window. Her dress is smudged with dirt. She tiptoes to the hall door. MARIA sees her out of the corner of her eye, but continues.*) God bless the Reverend Mother, and Sister Margareta and everybody at Nonnberg Abbey. And now, dear God, about Liesl—(*LIESL stops and gives MARIA a startled look.*) Help her to know that I am her friend and help her to tell me what she's up to.

LIESL: Are you going to tell on me?

MARIA: (*Silencing her with a gesture*) Help me to be understanding so that I may guide her footsteps. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. (*MARIA rises.*)

LIESL: (*Crosses C.*) I was out taking a walk and somebody locked the doors earlier than usual—and I didn't want to wake everybody up—so when I saw your window open—You're not going to tell Father, are you?

MARIA: (*Looking out the window*) Did you climb that trellis to get up here?