

*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 boatswain'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.

BRIGITTA: (Steps L. 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 R. 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 L. 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. (GRETLE steps forward and stamps her foot.) And you're Gretl. (GRETLE smiles and jumps into her arms. MARIA crosses L.C.) I'm going to tell you something. (MARIA sits on chair R. of sofa, puts GRETLE on floor R. 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.

LOUISA: Well, the first thing you have to do is to tell Father to mind his own business.

KURT: No, Louisa, don't. I like her.

BRIGITTA: (Above chair, picking up guitar case) What's in here?

MARIA: My guitar.

BRIGITTA: What did you bring this for?

MARIA: For when we all sing together.

MARTA: (BRIGITTA takes guitar out of case) We don't sing.

MARIA: Of course you sing. Everybody sings. What songs so you know?

KURT: We don't know any songs.

MARIA: (Taking guitar from BRIGITTA) You don't?

ALL: No.

MARIA: Well. . . Now I know where to start. I'm going to teach you how to sing. (Sings.) ~~END~~

Let's start at the very beginning,

A very good place to start.

When you read you begin with

GRETLE: (Leaning over to MARIA)

A, B, C,

MARIA: When you sing you begin with do-re-mi.

CHILDREN: Do-re-mi?

MARIA: Do-re-mi,

The first three notes just happen to be  
Do-re-mi,

CHILDREN: Do-re-mi!

MARIA: (Stands)

Do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti (Speaks)

Come, I'll make it easier. Listen. (Puts on guitar, crosses, sits on couch, sings.)

Doe—a deer, a female deer,

Ray—a drop of golden sun,

Me—a name I call myself,

Far—a long, long way to run,

Sew—a needle pulling thread,

La—a note to follow sew,

Tea—a drink with jam and bread

That will bring us back to Doe—oh—oh—oh!

GRETLE: Do—

MARIA: A deer, a female deer,

CHILDREN: Re—

MARIA: A drop of golden sun,

Mi—a name I call myself,

Fa—a long, long way to run,

So—