

FRAU SCHMIDT AND FRANZ AUDITION SCENE

was previously the Captain's orderly in the Imperial Navy. He is dressed in a butler's working apron, is wearing gloves, and is carrying a metal tray and a polishing cloth.)

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. (Entering downstage right.) 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. (Crossing left, reading letter.) 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 September.

FRAU SCHMIDT. I hope you'll be at 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.

CAPTAIN. (Crosses downstage right.) 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. (He exits downstage right.)

FRANZ. Who wanted me on the telephone?

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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. (Going up the stairs. 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. (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 bosun 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 downstage right. FRANZ re-enters, followed by MARIA.)

You will wait here.

(He exits downstage right.)

[MUSIC NO. 08 "THE SCENE CONTINUES"]

(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