

CAPTAIN: Why not?

MAX: Elsa, tell him why not.

ELSA: Max, can you change in a hurry?

CAPTAIN: Yes, Max, we can use you tonight.

(MAX starts up stairs.)

BRIGITTA: (Entering from terrace, crosses to L.C.) Frau Schraeder, they're talking about you out there.

ELSA: Come on, Georg, I've been dodging these people for an hour. (ELSA and CAPTAIN exit to terrace.)

MARIA: (Entering D.R.) Brigitta, have you seen your father?

MAX: (On balcony) Good evening, Fraulein Maria.

MARIA: Herr Detweiler, it's nice to see you again.

MAX: Yes, you're going to. (Exits off R.)

BRIGITTA: (D.R.C.) I knew it all along. Frau Schraeder didn't have a headache. She just wanted to get out of the party. She was faking.

MARIA: (Crosses to BRIGITTA) Brigitta, you shouldn't say things you don't know are true.

BRIGITTA: But I do know. I heard her say to Father she'd been dodging these people.

MARIA: That doesn't mean that she didn't have a headache. It's very important that you children like Frau Schraeder.

BRIGITTA: I like her all right. Why is it important?

MARIA: Well—I think she's going to be your new mother.

BRIGITTA: Oh, Fraulein, Father's never going to marry her. Why, he couldn't.

MARIA: Why couldn't he?

BRIGITTA: Because he's in love with you.

MARIA: Now Brigitta, that's just the kind of thing—

BRIGITTA: You must know that—

MARIA: Brigitta—no!

BRIGITTA: Remember the other night when we were all sitting on the floor singing the Edelweiss song he taught us? After we finished, you laughed at him for forgetting

the words. He didn't forget the words. He just stopped singing to look at you. And when he speaks to you, the way his voice sounds—

*(MARIA can't accept an idea that conflicts with her commitment to the church.)*

MARIA: No, Brigitta, no.

BRIGITTA: And the way you looked at him just now when you were dancing. You're in love with him.

*(MARIA stands in stunned silence. The CAPTAIN enters from the terrace with GRETL, LOUISA and KURT.)*

CAPTAIN: One more dance, Gretl, and then to bed. *(He sees MARIA and goes to her.)* Oh, Fraulein Maria, you're not going to have dinner with the children tonight. You're having dinner down here with us. *(MARIA shakes her head—"No! I can't!")* Oh, yes! It's all arranged. You'll have to hurry. You'll have to change. *(She starts up the stairs but stops as the CAPTAIN speaks.)* Oh, and Maria, wear the dress you wore the other night—when we were all singing.—It was lovely—soft and white.

*(MARIA stares at him for a moment then quickly exits upstairs. FRANZ enters from the dining room D.L.)*

FRANZ: Shall I announce dinner, Captain?

ELSA: *(Entering from terrace, followed by the guests)* Oh, no, not yet. The children will want to say good night. Oh, Georg, I wanted the children to say good night the way they did last night.

CAPTAIN: No, Elsa—not here—

ELSA: Please, Georg, the way they did it for me—it was so sweet.

CAPTAIN: No, no, not in front of strangers!

ELSA: Please, Georg, for me.

MAX: *(Entering on the balcony in evening clothes)* Presto chango!

ELSA: Max, you're just in time. Children—now.