

LIESL. (*Crossing center stage.*) 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?

LIESL. That's how we always got into this room to play tricks on the governess.

(*Proudly.*) Louisa can climb it with a toad in her hand.

MARIA. Liesl, were you out walking all by yourself?

(**LIESL** shakes her head negatively.)

You know, if we wash that dress out tonight, nobody would notice it tomorrow. Then all this would be just between you and me. You could put this on –

(*She takes off her robe and puts it around LIESL's shoulders.*)

Take your dress in there and put it to soak in the bathtub.

(*Thunder and lightning. They embrace each other in fright.*)

Then come back here and sit on the edge of my bed and we'll have a talk.

LIESL. I told you today I didn't need a governess. Well, maybe I do.

(*She exits into the alcove. Lightning and thunder. MARIA jumps, then crosses to the bed and peers under the comforter, looking for possible toads. GRETL enters through the door upstage in her nightdress.*)

MARIA. Oh, it's you Gretl. Are you afraid?

(**GRETL** shakes her head. *Thunder and lightning. GRETL jumps up on the bed with MARIA.*)

You're not afraid of a thunderstorm, are you? You just stay right here with me. Where are the others?

GRETL. They're asleep. They're not scared.

(Thunder and lightning. BRIGITTA, LOUISA, and MARTA run on through the door upstage in their nightdresses.)

MARTA. Wait for me.

MARIA. *(To GRETL.)* Oh, no? Look

(To the others.) Come, all of you. Up on the bed.

(All three GIRLS jump up on the bed.)

Now all we have to do is wait for the boys.

LOUISA. We won't see them! Boys are brave.

(Thunder and lightning. KURT and FRIEDRICH enter through the door upstage in their pajamas.)

MARIA. You boys aren't frightened, too, are you?

KURT. Oh, no. We just wanted to be sure you weren't.

MARIA. Was this your idea, Friedrich?

FRIEDRICH. Oh, no. It was Kurt's.

MARIA. That's it, Kurt. That's the one I left out.

(Looking up.) God bless Kurt.

(Lightning and thunder. The BOYS run and cower at the foot of the bed.)

MARTA. Why does it do that?

MARIA. Well, the lightning says something to the thunder and the thunder answers it back.

MARTA. I wish it wouldn't answer so loud.

MARIA. Maybe if we all sing loud enough we won't hear the thunder.

[MUSIC NO. 14 "THE LONELY GOATHERD"]

(The CHILDREN climb off the bed and sit in a semicircle at its foot. MARIA sits on the downstage edge of the bed. The CHILDREN are in the following order from stage right: KURT, MARTA, GRETL, BRIGITTA, LOUISA, FRIEDRICH.)