

EXT. SPECHT VILLA - GARDEN - DAY (1882)

-- Young Steiner plays catch with Richard, Arthur and Otto.
Otto catches the ball.

-- Now Young Steiner runs after the boys as a catcher.

STEINER (V.O.)
I never played as much as I did at the
Spechts'. I got back everything I
missed in my childhood.

-- Otto and the young teacher are playing hide-and-seek; Otto
is the seeker.

Leaning on the stacked logs Otto hides his eyes with his
arms.

He counts out aloud.

OTTO
One, two, three...

Young Steiner is looking for a place to hide. He quickly
jumps behind the logs near Otto.

OTTO
3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10... Ready or
not, here I come!

Otto looks for him and finds him very quickly.

YOUNG STEINER
That was very fast!

INT. SPECHT VILLA - STUDY ROOM - DAY

Young Steiner sits with Otto at a table. There are two empty
cups next to a steaming tea can before them.

Otto picks his nose.

The young teacher puts a page in front of Otto that contains
a handwritten text in capitals.

YOUNG STEINER
All right, let's have a go.

The boy tries to read it running his fingers across the page.

OTTO
 O...Ott...Otto...Otto li...Otto lo...I
 don't know this here...

YOUNG STEINER
 ...likes...

OTTO
 Otto likes the...po...the
 pot...neither this...

YOUNG STEINER
 ...pota...

OTTO
 ...Otto likes potato...

The boy watches the text. Then he starts laughing at his young teacher.

INSERT PAGE: "OTTO LIKES POTATO PEELS."

YOUNG STEINER(O.S.)
 I am sure you can even write it down.

Otto's smile disappears swiftly.

He reluctantly takes the pencil and starts writing very slowly in misshapen capitals.

INSERT: "OTT..."

Otto's face becomes pale. He puts his head on the desk.

Young Steiner pours tea into the cups and watches the boy with compassion.

STEINER(V.O.)
 Otto got tired from the easiest
 intellectual effort. We often could
 work only for a quarter of an hour...

EXT.SPECHT VILLA- GARDEN- DAY

Young Steiner sits on a bench writing on a page that is almost full of capital letters.

STEINER(V.O.)
 ...and for this quarter of an hour I
 had to prepare two hours... I had
 great doubts whether I'd be able to

teach him reading and writing.

Ladislaus Specht steps along the pathway holding a thin cane in his hand.

The young teacher stands up.

LADISLAUS SPECHT

I see you're preparing for the lesson,
aren't you?... Tell me how you get on
with him?

YOUNG STEINER

Well, at the moment we are facing some
difficulties, sir, but--

Ladislaus offers the cane to the teacher who looks puzzled.

LADISLAUS SPECHT

Thank to this, Otto learned to write
the few crabbed letters you saw. It
was used by his previous teacher...
Take it!

Young Steiner is reluctant to take it.

LADISLAUS SPECHT

...I wouldn't mind if you'd motivate
him with this.

YOUNG STEINER

I don't think...that would be of use,
sir.

Ladislaus looks a bit annoyed then puts the cane on the
bench, nods, turns around and goes away.

Young Steiner looks after him then at the cane.

Arthur and Ernst are running towards the young man.

ARTHUR

Please, please come and play! Come and
play with us!

After being disturbed by this scene he reluctantly goes with
the boys and eventually starts playing tag with them.

His papers and the cane are left on the bench.

INT. SPECHT VILLA - STUDY ROOM - DAY

Young Steiner sits with the 3 boys (Ernst, Arthur and Richard) at a round table.

Ernst draws a verydetailed picture on a piece of paper.
Arthur is doing arithmetic inhis academic-exercises book.

Richard looks at Young Steiner who is correcting his composition.

STEINER (V.O.)

The other boys were obviously highly
gifted. One in drawing...one in music
and one...in writing.

YOUNG STEINER

Richard, this is a very good story.
There is drama init... You only have
to take care of repetition. Look, this
isunnecessary...

He shows the text to Richard and points to the sentence in question.

YOUNG STEINER

...But that's all.

Young Steiner hands the paper to Richard.

Then Arthur gives his academic-exercise book to him.

The young teacher starts looking through the exercises in it.

Pauline enters the room.

PAULINE

Music lesson starts in a few minutes.

YOUNG STEINER

I'll pass the boys on to you soon,
madam.

YOUNG STEINER

(to Arthur
)

Nothing to be corrected.
Congratulations!

He gives back the exercise book to Arthur.

Then he stands up, collects his papers from the table.

Richard leaves the room.

Ernst and Arthur remain on their chairs and start thumb-wrestling.

PAULINE

Mr. Steiner...you know spiritual
seances are very popular now in
Vienna...

Ernst and Arthur stop playing. They listen to their mother.

PAULINE

...tonight we'll be having one... If
you'd like to join us...don't
hesitate--

YOUNG STEINER

I work on my doctoral thesis in the
evenings... I am sorry, madam.

PAULINE

The most famous medium will be here in
our house tonight... Think it over.

ERNST

Mama, mama, may we also come? I am so
curious...

PAULINE

Out of the question! This is not for
children...

ERNST

(growling)

We aren't allowed anything!

Young Steiner looks at Pauline, nods and leaves the room.

Pauline looks at him in puzzlement.

INT. VIENNA - CAFE GRIENSTEIDL - NIGHT

The cafe is filled with cigarette smoke and the buzz of
conversation.

Young Steiner after entering hangs his hat and coat on a
stand.

He passes by a table at which two men are playing cards:
HELMUT (a young fat and bald man about the same age as
YoungSteiner) and his COMPANION.

HELMUT

What do we have here! Our Rudi has
come!

Young Steiner passes without replying.

He sits down at a table with some chairs around it.

Three men talk to each other around the neighboring table (a
MIDDLE-AGED MAN and TWO YOUNGER MEN).

They smile and nod towards Young Steiner.

He nods back to them.

The WAITER puts a pitcher of wine before the newcomer. Young
Steiner takes it and pours wine into a glass.

HELMUT

(scornful and loud to Steiner
)

It is rumored that our Rudi has got an
engagement with some Jews. Is that
true, Rudi?

Young Steiner, without dignifying him with a response, sips
at his wine. He takes a cigar from the box on the table and
lights it with a match.

MAGAZINE EDITOR (a blond man in his early 20s) stands up from
a distant table, takes a newspaper from the newspaperstand
and comes to Young Steiner's table.

He slaps the paper down in front of the young man and points
to it.

EDITOR

(angry
)

I can't figure out your political
views!

Young Steiner looks into his eyes then takes the newspaper,
called "DEUTSCHE WOCHENSCHRIFT."

Headline: "DER UNTERRICHTWESEN UND DER HERR GAUTSCH"

English subtitles: "THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND SIR GAUTSCH"

EDITOR

In this article, you praise the former cleric and Minister of Education and you blame the recent Minister who as a social democrat made so many reforms... Tell me, are you now on the side of social democracy or on the kaiser and vicar's side?

Young Steiner pours wine into a glass and points to the chair next to him.

The Editor sits down.

YOUNG STEINER

My friend, neither this or that...

EDITOR

I don't understand...

YOUNG STEINER

It is thanks to the former Minister Graf von Thun that we had teacherly types and not bureaucrats in the classrooms... and that pupils, amongst them, you and me, learned to think.

He pulls on his cigar then exhales the smoke at length.

YOUNG STEINER

Graf von Thun was a real reformer. He overcame his own Catholic views and attitude... He deserves all our respect.

EDITOR

I thought you hate all vicars and authorities... But now I see you would praise anyone if they give you some favors, wouldn't you?

Young Steiner draws on his cigar.

YOUNG STEINER

(smiling
)

I withdraw... Not everybody was taught
to think!

The Editor looks angrily at him and drinks from his glass.

Young Steiner puts his hand on the Editor's shoulder.

YOUNG STEINER

(loudly
)

My friend, I don't give a fig about
vicars or the kaiser or about your
social democrats!

Suddenly a huge silence descends on the tables next to
theirs.

Everyone looks at the young man who is surprised at the
interest he has just drawn upon himself.

Helmut, looking over to their table, pulls eagerly at his
cigar and nods to his table Companion, who nods back, stands
up and goes out of the cafe.

The waiter, while drying some glasses at the counter, watches
Helmut's Companion discreetly leaving the café.

After a short break the buzz goes on.

YOUNG STEINER

(in a low voice)

I don't care on which political side
someone stands, if he serves the
individual instead of his own
ideology...

Young Steiner drinks his wine.

EDITOR

I can't digest this article by you!

Young Steiner puffs on his cigar looking at the Editor.

The Waiter comes to him and whispers into his ear.

The young man looks over to Helmut's table concerned. He
drains the wine from his glass then stands up.

YOUNG STEINER
(to the Editor)
I've got to go now.

EDITOR
I thought you'd produce an article for
my magazine too... Just as you
promised.

YOUNG STEINER
Oh, I'd almost forgotten.

He takes out from his pocket some papers and puts them down
on the table.

YOUNG STEINER
Please pay for the wine and the cigar
from my honorarium.

EDITOR
But I don't have--

Young Steiner starts off.

When passing Helmut's table he smiles at the fat man.

At the stand he quickly grabs his coat and hat without
putting them on then hurries out of the café.

Helmut sees him through the window go to the right, but
suddenly he turns around and runs to the left.

Helmut's Companion enters with two GENDARMES.

HELMUT
He went the other way!

The Gendarmes run out from the café to follow Young Steiner.

The Editor and the Two Younger Men watch Helmut with
contempt.

Helmut pulls nervously on his cigar.

EXT. SPECHT VILLA - GARDEN - DAY (1882)

Young Steiner and Otto walk on the pathway towards the villa.

The young teacher holds the cane given him by Otto's father.

Ernst and Richard arrive hurriedly with school satchels under their arms.

RICHARD AND ERNST
Good morning, Mr. Steiner!

YOUNG STEINER
Good morning...and have a nice day at school!

Otto watches them disappear through the gate. He sighs and lowers his head.

Then Otto runs to the kitchen window.

Young Steiner tries the cane by hitting his own palm softly several times.

YOUNG STEINER
Otto, come we should start our lesson!

Otto shushes him.

OTTO
(in a low voice
)
Come, I want to show you something!

He shades his eyes and peers into the kitchen.

Young Steiner looks at the cane and goes reluctantly to the window.

YOUNG STEINER
We should start studying!

Otto warns him with his fingers to be quiet.

The young man shades his eyes and looks THROUGH THE WINDOW...

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

The Butler takes out the ash with a shovel from the stove and puts it into a bucket then takes the bucket to the door.

EXT. GARDEN - SAME

Young Steiner and Otto go to the corner of the house.

They watch the Butler go with the bucket along the pathway.

He empties the bucket behind the woodshed then returns to the house.

Otto runs to the ash and, crouching down, starts drawing in it with his fingers.

Young Steiner follows him.

The boy draws a house with an open roof.

He concentrates on his drawing.

The young man crouches down and watches the boy and his work.

A stick figure appears in the picture next to the house, then a tree with a hole in its trunk and finally the sun.

After having finished his drawing, Otto looks concerned at the young teacher.

OTTO

Please don't tell anyone... My mother
would be sad again.

Young Steiner nods, then makes the ash even under the drawing with his hands.

He breaks a piece from the cane and writes with it in the ash:

"BEAUTIFUL!"

Otto struggles to read the letters silently and then suddenly smiles at Young Steiner.

STEINER (V.O.)

I was thoroughly convinced that the
boy had great mental capacities...
Though they were still buried.

INT. SPECHT VILLA - STUDY ROOM - DAY (1882)

The Butler enters with a bucket in his hand.

BUTLER

Exactly what you asked for, sir!

Young Steiner stands up from the round table where he is sitting with Otto.

YOUNG STEINER

Thank you!

He takes the bucket and pours the ash into two silver platters on the table.

The ash floats up in the air. Young Steiner starts coughing.

The Butler goes out.

Young Steiner evens the ash in the platters with his hands.

After dusting off his hands by clapping them, he sits down next to Otto.

The young teacher draws a vertical line with his finger in the ash and nods to Otto to do the same.

Otto draws with his finger a similar line in his platter. Then he wipes his finger on his white shirt.

Young Steiner draws an "S" over the line and looks at Otto. Otto draws the same in his platter.

The young man now draws an inverted "S" to the first "S" so that they form an "8."

Otto draws the same then wipes his hands again on his shirt which is now quite dirty. This time he wipes his hand on his face.

Without being instructed to do so, the boy writes "OTTO" in the ash with not perfect but legible letters.

Otto (with smeared face and shirt) smiles at his teacher.

Young Steiner's face lights up.

He evens the ash swiftly in his platter and draws a line.

Otto does the same. He only leaves his writing "OTTO" untouched in the ash.

After Young Steiner draws a spiral to the left side of the line, he wipes the back of his hand on his forehead without realizing that he is smearing himself.

Otto tries to draw a similar spiral and wipes the ash again on his shirt and face.

Young Steiner draws a symmetrical spiral on the right of the line in the ash.

Pauline comes in.

PAULINE

For heaven's sake, what do you look like!?

Young Steiner looks down.

Pauline starts laughing.

PAULINE

Next time...and this is only a suggestion, sand will do just as well, won't it?

Otto writes hurriedly next to his writing from before in the ash with legible capitals "WRITES" then he smiles proudly at her mother.

PAULINE

Unbelievable!