

Act I, Scene 1

1891. A provincial German school.  
Boys sit upright at their desks,  
reciting from Virgil's Aeneid.  
Headmaster SONNENSTICH walks the  
aisles beside them, listening.

BOYS

...Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris  
Italiam fato profugus --

SONNENSTICH

Spine straight, Herr Robel.

BOYS

(Continuing)

...Laviniaque venit  
litora --

SONNENSTICH

(Hearing something suspiciously off)  
Herr Stiefel.

MORITZ

Sir...?

SONNENSTICH

Continue. On your own, please.  
(As MORITZ hesitates)  
Herr Stiefel...

MORITZ

(Haltingly)

...Laviniaque venit...

SONNENSTICH

Yes...?

MORITZ

...litora... multum enim --

SONNENSTICH

"Multum enim"...?

MORITZ

(Taking another stab at it)  
...multum olim --

SONNENSTICH

(Losing patience)  
"Olim"?! "Multum olim"...?! So then, somehow the Pious  
Anaeas has "already" suffered much "in the days to  
come"...?

(No response)  
Herr Stiefel?

(No response)  
Do you have any idea what you're saying, Herr Stiefel?

(MORITZ is too mortified to respond)

SONNENSTICH (Cont'd)

(Turns to MELCHIOR)  
Herr Gabor...?

MELCHIOR

(Letter-perfect)  
...Laviniaque venit  
litora... multum *ille* --

SONNENSTICH

Yes...

MELCHIOR

...et terris iactatus et alto --

SONNENSTICH

Good, Herr Gabor. As ever...

MELCHIOR

...vi superum, saevae memorem...

SONNENSTICH

(A call to resume the group recitation)  
Everyone. Please. In the manner of Melchior Gabor...

BOYS

...Iunonis ob iram  
multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem...

(The boys' recitation grows louder, more insistent, more numbing -- as if somehow we were entering into MELCHIOR's psychic experience of it. A bit of contemporary, electronic music drifts through)

MELCHIOR

*I'm listening now  
To the drifting wind.  
It haunts me --  
A murmur, a doubt,  
A shadow calling...*

(MELCHIOR turns out, and wails a "rock soliloquy". None of the other children can hear what he's singing)

MELCHIOR (Cont'd)

*Is it living --  
Simply waiting?  
Simply longing  
Sadly...?*

*Is it living --  
Feeling other?  
Is it living...?*

*Sitting by some window  
And sending out some prayer --  
As if someone there... were there...*

*Is it living --  
Nothing in me,  
Empty talking  
At me...?*

*Telling heaven  
How you hunger --  
Is it living...?*

*Is it living?*

*Someone there within you,  
Who murmurs in despair...  
Shadow, will you lead me still somewhere...?  
Somewhere...?*

(MORITZ taps MELCHIOR's shoulder, interrupting his "soliloquy")

MORITZ

Melchior...

MELCHIOR

Mmm...?

MORITZ

There's, uh, something I have to ask you.

MELCHIOR

Yes...?

MORITZ

("Well, all right then")

Last night I suffered a visit from the most horrific, dark phantasm...

MELCHIOR

You had a dream...?

MORITZ

A nightmare, really.

MELCHIOR

("Ah yes, I see...")

Perhaps you sensed the presence of something *feminine*...?

MORITZ

("Like a holocaust!")

Legs in sky-blue stockings, climbing over the lecture podium.

(A beat)

Have you ever suffered such... mortifying visions?

MELCHIOR

Moritz, of course. We all have.

Georg Zirschnitz dreamt about his mother.

MORITZ

Really?!!

(A beat)

It's like some kind of joke God is playing on us. Why can't we just sleep through it? I can hardly talk to a girl anymore, without feeling... I don't know what.

And, in the meantime, I still don't know... Melchi, I don't even know how... we're conceived.

MELCHIOR

I'll tell you everything. I got it out of books. You'll be shocked -- it made an atheist out of me.

MORITZ

I've been trying so hard to bear down and study. But the more I try and concentrate on Greek conjugations -- on Louis Quatorze -- on quadratic equations -- the more my mind keeps insistently wandering...

MELCHIOR

To...?

(MORITZ looks out into the distance. MELCHIOR cannot hear what MORITZ is singing)

MORITZ

*Judi Nathan.  
Kelly Casson.  
Sally Timmerman...*

*Anna Kim.  
Lucinda Primm.  
Jill and Jenny Sands...*

*Good ole Lisa.  
Christ, she seems so  
Distant, and so sad.*

*Then there's Cindy,  
Somehow with me --  
Doesn't matter where I am...*

*O, my hands  
Adjust my pants,  
In the auditorium.*

*Down the hall,  
Into the stalls,*

*Where my fingers are all thumbs...*

*Christ, such a whole, like, deal.  
Nightly. Too unreal.  
Holding you -- you nowhere near me.  
And I mean, holding, holding...*

*Through the darkness comes the laughter.  
All the stars bend over sideways.  
Oh my darlin', there's a heaven.  
Such a comet on its way...*

(All the BOYS turn out -- one after the other -  
-and sing in soliloquy)

GEORG

*Suzi Maler.*

OTTO

*Heather Taylor.*

ERNST

*Stanley Anderson...*

HANSCHEN

*Paula White.*

OTTO

*Barbara Leight.*

GEORG

*Patti Emelson...*

OTTO

*Alexandra --  
Can you stand that  
Ass that just won't quit...?*

ERNST

*Then there's Tommy,  
With that haunting  
Way those khakis bunch a bit...*

(As the boys complete the song below, MELCHIOR  
turns out, and sings a reprise against their

choruses. NOTE: These parts are sung  
simultaneously)

GEORG

*Christ, such a whole, like, deal.*

HANSCHEN

*Nightly. Too unreal.*

OTTO

*Holding you -- you nowhere near me.*

ERNST

*And I mean, holding, holding...*

MELCHIOR

*Oh, is it living --  
Simply watching?  
Simply wanting,  
Badly...?*

*Is it living?  
Disappearing  
In your body...*

MORITZ

*Through the darkness, comes the laughter.  
All the stars bend over sideways.  
Oh my darlin', there's a heaven.  
Such a comet on its way...*

MELCHIOR

*Is it living?  
Endless wishing,  
Useless calling...*

*Feeling not here,  
Even longer --*

*Is it living?*

*Is it living?*

(As the music recedes, the boys resume their  
stiff, upright postures, and their  
recitation:)

BOYS

...Urbs antiqua fuit (Tyrii tenuere coloni)  
Karthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe  
ostia, dives opum studiisque asperrima belli...

(End of Act I, Scene 1)

Act I, Scene 2

Immediately following -- late  
afternoon. The boys step out the  
school doors. Dressed in wool  
jackets, ties, and breeches.

MELCHIOR

Well, enough of that.

HANSCHEN

I swear, if I have to sit through one more of  
Sonnenstich's lectures about...

ERNST

The Pious Aeneas...?

GEORG

The Moral Order of the Roman Universe...?

HANSCHEN

That's it. I swear, I'll just...

OTTO

(Ironic)  
Despair and Die...?

GEORG

("Yes")  
Amen.

(A beat)

HANSCHEN

Speaking of Moral Order, has anybody done the Cartography  
yet?

MELCHIOR

(Ironic)

That's what Recess is for.

ERNST

It's so completely pointless.

OTTO

Meanwhile, the Mexican History's due tomorrow too.

MORITZ

Not to mention sixty lines of Homer, all those quadratic equations... I'll be up all night, and still won't get through it. And then, what? Exams. Failure -- that's what they want. The next class will only hold sixty -- so, seven of us have got to fail. And you know who that means -- Lammemeier, me... I can't stop thinking about it. I swear I'll just... shoot myself.

ERNST

(Sarcastic)

Shoot yourself?

HANSCHEN

Moritz, the point is to shoot everyone else.

GEORG

(Sarcastic)

Shoot yourself -- what a joke!

MORITZ

Just wait. I'll show you.

OTTO

I'd like to see you try --

GEORG

He'd probably miss.

ERNST

If he even has a gun.

MORITZ

You don't believe me?

GEORG

Bragger.

OTTO

Coward.

MELCHIOR

Who are you calling a coward?

(MELCHIOR rears his fist -- as if to slug OTTO. MORITZ takes hold of his arm to stop him)

MORITZ

Melchi, no!

(A beat)

MELCHIOR

(Relenting; starts away)

Come on, Moritz.

GEORG

Well, I'm off.

OTTO

Me too. Back to Equation-Land.

ERNST

Me too.

HANSCHEN

I'll walk with you, Ernst.

ERNST

You will?

HANSCHEN

("Yes"; suggestively)

We'll huddle over the Homer. Maybe do a little Achilles and Patroclos...

ERNST

Aren't we supposed to review the Catalogue of Ships...?

HANSCHEN

Of course. We can look at that too.

(A beat)

Night, Melchior.

MELCHIOR

Happy Homer.

(HANSCHEN, ERNST, OTTO, and GEORG go off)

MORITZ

Melchi... to return to the, uh, previous topic...

MELCHIOR

Yes...?

MORITZ

Do me a favor -- write it down. Everything. Whatever you know about...

MELCHIOR

(Teasing)

About...?

MORITZ

("You know...")

Conceal it in my books in class tomorrow.

If you want, you could add some illustrations in the margins.

MELCHIOR

As you like.

One question, though.

MORITZ

Mmm?

MELCHIOR

Ever seen a girl naked?

MORITZ

Of course.

MELCHIOR

(Skeptical)

Nothing on?

MORITZ

Absolutely. Nothing.

MELCHIOR

No illustrations necessary, then.

MORITZ

Well, one or two might be useful actually.

(A pause)

I better be off. Night, Melchi.

MELCHIOR

Good night.

(MELCHIOR and MORITZ head off. As they do,  
Headmaster SONNENSTICH and his associate,  
FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK, stroll past and pause)

SONNENSTICH

Unfathomable. Fraulein Knuppeldick, look at that.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Yes, Herr Sonnenstich?

SONNENSTICH

Our finest pupil, Melchior Gabor. And there he is,  
polluting himself -- with that, that...

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Neurasthenic imbecile...?

SONNENSTICH

Thank Heaven the upper grade only holds sixty.

(SONNENSTICH and FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK go off.)

The boys are revealed in various parts of the  
stage)

BOYS

*Christ, such a whole, like, deal.  
Nightly. Too unreal.  
Holding you -- you nowhere near me.  
And I mean, holding, holding...*

*Through the darkness, comes the laughter.  
All the stars bend over sideways.*

*Oh my darlin', there's a heaven.*

GEORG

*Such a comet on its way...*

(End of Act 1, Scene 2)

Act I, Scene 3

The lights shift. The Bergman living room. WENDLA stands at the mirror, examining herself in a near-transparent night-gown.

WENDLA

*Mama who bore me.  
Mama who gave me  
No way to handle things. Who made me so sad.*

*Mama, the weeping.  
Mama, the angels.  
No sleep in Heaven, or Bethlehem.*

*Some pray that, one day, Christ will come a'-callin'.  
They light a candle, and hope that it glows.  
And some just lie there, crying for him to come and  
find them.  
But when he comes, they don't know how to go...*

WENDLA

*Mama who bore me.  
Mama who gave me  
No way to handle things.  
Who made me so bad.*

GIRLS

*Mama -- ooh...*

*Mama, the weeping.  
Mama, the angels.*

*Oooh...*

WENDLA & GIRLS

*No sleep in Heaven, or Bethlehem.*

(FRAU BERGMAN suddenly enters, beaming. In hat and shawl)

FRAU BERGMAN

Wendla!

WENDLA

(Grabbing for a petticoat, guiltily)

Mama?

FRAU BERGMAN

Goodness, look at you -- in that nightgown! Wendla, grown-up girls cannot be seen strutting around the house in such... such...

(A beat)

Well, we'll just have to find something more suitable.

WENDLA

Let me wear this one, Mama! I love this one. It makes me feel like a little... faerie-queen.

(A beat)

FRAU BERGMAN

If I could only keep you as you are today, Wendla, but you... you're already in bloom.

(Sighs)

In another year, how much will you have... developed?

WENDLA

Maybe I won't even be here.

FRAU BERGMAN

At home?

WENDLA

No, Mama. Here.

(A beat)

FRAU BERGMAN

Wendla! Child! Where do you get such ideas?

WENDLA

Mama, no -- don't be frightened.

FRAU BERGMAN

(Embraces and kisses WENDLA)

My darling!

WENDLA

They're not sinful, are they, Mama -- such ideas? Doesn't everyone ask themselves sometimes? I mean, people do die young -- from diseases, accidents --

FRAU BERGMAN

Now, sssh. Listen to you. You made me forget all our good news.

(A beat)

You must get dressed, child. And go to your sister's at once.

WENDLA

How is she?

FRAU BERGMAN

Just imagine, Wendla, last night the stork visited. Brought her a little baby boy.

WENDLA

I can't wait to see him, Mama.

FRAU BERGMAN

Well, put on your dress, and take a hat.

(WENDLA starts out, hesitates)

WENDLA

Mama, don't be cross -- don't be -- but, I'm an aunt for the second time now, and I still have no idea how it... happens.

(FRAU BERGMAN looks stricken)

WENDLA (Cont'd)

Mama, please. I'm ashamed to even ask. But then, who can I ask but you? You can't imagine I still believe in the stork. Not at 14...

FRAU BERGMAN

Wendla, child, you can't imagine that I could --

WENDLA

Why not? It can't all be so terrible, when everyone's so happy about it.

FRAU BERGMAN

I honestly don't know what I've done to deserve this kind of talk. And on a day like today!

Go, child, put your clothes on.

WENDLA

And if I were to run out, now, and ask the chimney sweep...?

(A beat)

FRAU BERGMAN

Very well, I'll tell you everything.

But not today. Tomorrow. Or the day after...

WENDLA

Today, Mama. Please.

FRAU BERGMAN

Wendla, I'm sorry. I cannot...

WENDLA

Mama!

FRAU BERGMAN

You will drive me mad.

WENDLA

Why? I'll kneel at your feet, lay my head in your lap... You can talk as if I weren't even here.

(A beat)

FRAU BERGMAN

Come here, child, and I'll tell you.

WENDLA

(Waits)

Yes...?

FRAU BERGMAN

Child, I...

WENDLA

Please.

Mama...?

FRAU BERGMAN

All right, then. In order for a woman to conceive a child...

You follow me?

WENDLA

Yes, Mama.

FRAU BERGMAN

For a woman to bear a child, she must... love her husband. Love him, as she can love only him. With her whole heart.

Now, you know everything.

WENDLA

Everything...?

FRAU BERGMAN

Everything. So help me.

Now go, get yourself ready.

(FRAU BERGMAN goes out. The GIRLS appear)

WENDLA & GIRLS

*Mama who bore me.*

*Mama who gave me*

*No way to handle things. Who made me so sad.*

*Mama, the weeping.*

*Mama, the angels.*

*No sleep in Heaven, or Bethlehem.*

WENDLA

*Some pray that, one day, Christ will come a'-callin'.*

THEA

*They light a candle, and hope that it glows.*

MARTHA

*And some just lie there, crying for him to come and find them.*

WENDLA & GIRLS

*But when he comes, they don't know how to go...*

*Mama who bore me.*

*Mama who gave me*

*No way to handle things. Who made me so bad.*

*Mama, the weeping.*

*Mama, the angels.*

*No sleep in Heaven, or Bethlehem.*

(End of Act 1, Scene 3)

Act I, Scene 4

Evening. MELCHIOR's study. The window open, lamps burning on the table. MELCHIOR sits alone, writing in his journal.

MELCHIOR

(Reading aloud as he writes)

16 February. Spent the afternoon with Georg Zirschnitz, discussing Shame.

Of course, all the admired "modern" thinkers will tell you, it's nothing but a product of Education. Meanwhile, old Father Zungenschlag will insist it's deeply rooted in Human Nature --

FRAU GABOR (FROM OFF)

Melchior?

MELCHIOR

Yes, Mama?

FRAU GABOR (FROM OFF)

Moritz Stiefel, to see you.

(MELCHIOR sits up. The study door opens.  
MORITZ enters, looking pale and agitated)

MELCHIOR

Moritz...?

MORITZ

Sorry I'm so late. I clamped on a collar, ran a brush through my hair, and ran like some phantom to get here.

MELCHIOR

You slept through the day...?

MORITZ

("Yes")

I'm exhausted, Melchi. I was up till three in the morning -- conjugating Greek till I couldn't see straight.

MELCHIOR

Sit. Let me roll you a smoke.

MORITZ

Look at me -- I'm trembling. Last night I prayed like Christ in Gethsemane: "Please, God, give me T.B. and take these exams from me".

MELCHIOR

Well, I'm sure, if you worked through the night, by now you must be truly prepared --

MORITZ

No no no, Melchi. I still couldn't focus -- on *anything*. Even now, it seems like... Well, I see and hear and feel quite clearly. And yet, everything seems so strange...

MELCHIOR

You had another dream...?

MORITZ

("Oh yeah")

The lamp was smoking -- blackbirds singing. There I lay, beneath our chestnut tree, with some horrifying Headless Queen --

(FRAU GABOR enters, with tea)

FRAU GABOR

Well, here we are, with tea. Herr Stiefel, how are you?

MORITZ

Very well, thank you, Frau Gabor.

FRAU GABOR

(Skeptical)

Yes?

MELCHIOR

Moritz was up, reading all through the night.

MORITZ

The, uh, Sorrows of Young Werther. Actually.

FRAU GABOR

Oh my my. Well, these are progressive times.

But still, Herr Stiefel, you must take care of yourself. Surely, *your* health is more important than Werther's.

(Sees his books)

Now, what's that, Melchior? More Goethe?

MELCHIOR

His FAUST, actually.

FRAU GABOR

Really? At your age...?

MELCHIOR

It's so beautiful, Mama. So haunting.

FRAU GABOR

Still, I should have thought...

Well, if you need anything else, children, call me.

(FRAU GABOR goes out)

MORITZ

She means the story of Gretchen and the baby.

MELCHIOR

Yes.

You see how obsessively everyone fixes on that story.  
It's as if they all were mesmerized by penis and vagina.

MORITZ

Well, I must say, since reading your essay...

(A beat)

You know, Melchi...?

MELCHIOR

Yes?

MORITZ

That part about... Well, what you wrote about the...  
female... I can't stop thinking about it.

(Pulls out the essay)

This part here -- is it true?

MELCHIOR

Absolutely.

MORITZ

But it can't be. It just...

MELCHIOR

What? Why?

(No response. He reaches for a book, which he  
hands to MORITZ)

Well, it's all here -- documented, with diagrams -- in  
Leopold Habebald's essay on "Gender and Memory"...

MORITZ

(Checking out the diagrams)

Oh my God -- *Melchi*...!!!!!!!

MELCHIOR

(Smiles; calmly)

Actually, when I first read Habebald's argument, it was as  
if it was all coming back to me -- a series of long buried  
memories...

MORITZ

But how could you feel that, Melchi?

MELCHIOR

(Prompting)

Moritz?

MORITZ

Even reading it in your essay... that truly disturbed me.  
To give yourself over to someone else -- ??

MELCHIOR

("Indeed")

To defend yourself until, finally, you surrender and feel  
Heaven break over you -- it must be such a relief...

MORITZ

("You've got to be kidding")

Really?!

(He reaches for the book back; flips through  
it)

But when it's all -- the *two* anatomies -- I mean, when  
it's so... far-fetched...

(Flipping through one diagram after another,  
increasingly mesmerized)

So... grotesque and... Truly, so... demoralizing...

(MELCHIOR gazes into the distance, and the  
CHORUS OF BOYS appears, holding copies of  
MELCHIOR's essay)

MELCHIOR

*Where I go, when I go there,  
No more memory anymore --  
Only men on distant ships;  
The women with them, swimming with them, to shore...*

OTTO

*Where I go, when I go there,  
No more whispering anymore --  
Only hymns upon your lips;  
A mystic wisdom, rising with them, to shore...*

GEORG

*Touch me -- just like that.  
And that -- o, yeah -- now, that's heaven.  
Now, that I like.  
God, that's so nice.  
Now lower down, where the figs lie...*

BOYS

*Oooh...*

(The CHORUS OF BOYS recedes. MELCHIOR turns  
back to MORITZ)

MORITZ

(Still in his private moment with the diagrams)  
... So utterly... preposterous... So.... nauseating,  
really...

MELCHIOR

Really?

You really feel that, Moritz?

(MORITZ looks stricken)

MORITZ

Well, not that I'd want to *not* -- would ever not want  
to...

MELCHIOR

Moritz?

MORITZ

I have to go!

(MORITZ suddenly goes out the door)

MELCHIOR

Moritz, wait --

(But he's gone)

Moritz -- ?

FRAU GABOR (FROM OFF)

Melchior, what is it?

MELCHIOR

Nothing, Mama.

FRAU GABOR (FROM OFF)

Has Moritz gone?

MELCHIOR

Yes.

FRAU GABOR (FROM OFF)

Well, he does look awfully pale, don't you think? I  
wonder, is that FAUST really the best thing for him?

(MELCHIOR shakes his head, incredulous.  
Returns to his journal:)

MELCHIOR

(Reading aloud as he writes)

16 February, Continued. Spent the evening with Moritz Stiefel, discussing the Transgression of Gender, and the Sexual Sublimation of the Female.

Although our discourse was clearly unsettling to Moritz, the longer we reviewed the arguments and diagrams of Leopold Habebald, the more strongly *I* began to... feel...

(MELCHIOR gazes out into the distance. The CHORUS OF BOYS re-appears)

OTTO

*Where I go, when I go there  
No more shadows anymore --  
Only men with golden fins;  
The rhythm in them, rocking with them, to shore...*

GEORG

*Where I go, when I go there  
No more weeping anymore --  
Only in and out your lips;  
The broken wishes, washing with them, to shore...*

MELCHIOR

*Touch me -- all silent.  
Tell me -- please -- all is forgiven.  
Consume my wine.  
Consume my mind.  
I'll tell you how, how the winds sigh...*

BOYS

*Oooh...*

BOYS

*Touch me --*

ERNST

*-- just try it.  
Now, there -- that's it -- God, that's heaven.*

BOYS

*I'll love your light.*

HANSCHEN

*I'll love you right...  
We'll wander down where the sins cry...*

MELCHIOR AND BOYS

*Touch me -- just like that.  
Now lower down, where the sins lie...  
Love me -- just for a bit...  
We'll wander down, where the winds sigh...  
Where the winds sigh...  
Where the winds sigh...*

(End of Act I, Scene 4)

Act 1, Scene 5

Afternoon. MELCHIOR and WENDLA  
discover each other in the woods.

MELCHIOR

(In disbelief)

Wendla? What are you doing -- alone up here?

WENDLA

Gathering woodruff. Mama's making May wine. She was going to come with me, but then old Auntie Bauer stopped by -- and of course she couldn't do the climb. So, I came alone.

MELCHIOR

And how did you do? With the woodruff...?

WENDLA

A whole basket-ful.

MELCHIOR

Mm. And does that make you happy?

WENDLA

(Shrugs)

It will make Mama happy.

MELCHIOR

And, *that* must make you happy.

(A beat)

And if our little Acts Of Charity only serve to make us happy --

WENDLA

How can I help it if it makes me happy?

MELCHIOR

So, is that the point of life -- to make ourselves happy?

WENDLA

No, of course not. But still --

MELCHIOR

"But still"? Thank you. Wendla Bergman, you are a perfect example.

WENDLA

Of what?

MELCHIOR

I've been thinking about it constantly. No matter where you look -- church or state -- it's always the same thing. There is no true sacrifice. No such thing as selflessness.

WENDLA

Well, maybe. But that doesn't stop people doing kind things.

MELCHIOR

My point exactly.

WENDLA

Stop! Just... stop! Please!

MELCHIOR

("Sorry")

Sometimes ideas get the better of me.

(A beat)

WENDLA

Do you know what time it is?

MELCHIOR

Close to four.

WENDLA

I thought it was later. I lay so long in the moss, by the stream, and just let myself dream... I thought it must be... later.

MELCHIOR

Can't you sit for a moment? When you lean back against this oak, and stare up at the clouds, you start to think hypnotic things...

WENDLA

I have to get back before five.

MELCHIOR

But, when you lie here, such a strange, wonderful peace settles over you...

(WENDLA and MELCHIOR settle beneath the oak,  
and sing -- in soliloquy)

WENDLA

*Just too unreal, all this.  
Watching the words fall from my lips...*

MELCHIOR

*Baiting some girl -- with hypotheses!*

WENDLA & MELCHIOR

*Haven't you heard the word of your body?*

(MELCHIOR reaches, tentatively, takes WENDLA's  
hand)

MELCHIOR

*Don't feel a thing -- You wish.*

WENDLA

*Grasping at pearls with my fingertips...*

MELCHIOR

*Holding her hand like some little tease.*

WENDLA & MELCHIOR

*Haven't you heard the word of my wanting?*

*O, I'm gonna be wounded.  
O, I'm gonna be your wound.  
O, I'm gonna bruise you.  
O, you're gonna be my bruise.*

WENDLA

The sun's setting, Melchior. Truly, I'd better go.

MELCHIOR

*(Touches her)*

We'll go together. I'll carry your basket and have you on the bridge in ten minutes.

*(WENDLA hesitates, unsure. MELCHIOR lets her hand go)*

WENDLA & MELCHIOR

*Just too unreal, all this.*

WENDLA

*Watching his world slip through my fist...*

MELCHIOR

*Playing with her in your fantasies.*

WENDLA & MELCHIOR

*Haven't you heard a word -- how I want you?*

*O, I'm gonna be wounded.  
O, I'm gonna be your wound.  
O, I'm gonna bruise you.  
O, you're gonna be my bruise.*

(End of Act 1, Scene 6)

Act 1, Scene 6

HANSCHEN enters the bathroom, lamp in hand. He closes the door

furtively. Sets down the lamp.  
Lifts the toilet seat.

HANSCHEN

Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona?

(He pulls a reproduction of Corregio's Io from  
his pocket)

You don't look like you're praying, darling -- lying  
there, contemplating the coming bliss...

(A KNOCKING on the door)

FRAU RILOW (FROM OFF)

Hanschen, you all right? Not your stomach again?

HANSCHEN

I'll be fine, Mother.

FRAU RILOW (FROM OFF)

Yes?

HANSCHEN

Fine.

FRAU RILOW (FROM OFF)

Well, all right...

(He waits, listening. FRAU RILOW goes)

HANSCHEN

(To Io/Desdemona)

Darling, don't think I take your murder lightly. The  
truth is, I can hardly bear to think of the long nights  
ahead...

But it's sucking the marrow from my bones, seeing you lie  
there. Motionless. Staring at me, so innocently. One of  
us must go -- it's you or me.

(The lights shift. Another day...

WENDLA, MARTHA, and THEA walk along a bridge,  
arm in arm. Wearing starched high-button  
blouses, full-length skirts, etc.)

MARTHA

Oh, Wendla -- has your sister borne her baby yet?

WENDLA

Not yet. But, any day now.

THEA

And, how many children do you want, Wendla?

WENDLA

Who knows if I'll even have any.

MARTHA

No children?

THEA

Like Aunt Sophie, you mean?

WENDLA

Silly goose, that's because she isn't married.

MARTHA

(Teasing)

And then, who in the world would *Wendla* ever dream of marrying?

WENDLA

I'm sorry...?

MARTHA & THEA

(Rolling their eyes)

Melchior!

WENDLA

Well. Truly. He is so...

MARTHA

(Teasing)

Tall?

WENDLA

So wonderful.

MARTHA

More wonderful than Georg Zirschnitz?

WENDLA

(Appalled)

Georg Zirschnitz?!

THEA

(Teasing)

Otto Höchstädter certainly is... sensitive.

WENDLA

Otto Höchstädter -- sensitive?! Like Attila the Hun.  
Melchi Gabor -- he's like some... young Alexander.

MARTHA

They say he's the best, in everything. Latin, Greek,  
Trigonometry...

THEA

Not to mention, Swimming, Fencing, Gymnastics...

(WENDLA, MARTHA, and THEA look into the  
distance, and sing -- in soliloquy)

WENDLA

*In the midst of this nothing, this miss of a life,  
Still, there's this one thing -- just to see you go  
by.*

MARTHA

*It's almost like lovin' -- sad as that is.*

THEA

*May not be cool, but it's so where I live.*

(The lights shift... HANSCHEN still in action  
in the bathroom)

HANSCHEN

Darling, why -- why -- do you press your knees together?  
Even now, on the brink of eternity? Don't you see it's  
your terrible chastity that's prompted me to... You are  
not dying for your sins, but for mine.

(The lights shift... the bridge)

MARTHA

*It's like I'm your lover -- or, more like your ghost  
--  
I spend the day wonderin' what you do, where you  
go...*

THEA

*I try to just kick it, but then, what can I do?  
We've all got our junk, and my junk is you.*

GIRLS

*See us winter walkin' -- after a storm.  
It's chill in the wind -- but it's warm in your arms.  
We stop, all snow blind -- May not be true.  
(But) We've all got our junk, and my junk is you.*

(The lights shift... The park grounds in  
front of the school)

MELCHIOR

Has anyone seen Moritz?

GEORG

He's going to get it.

MELCHIOR

Why -- what's he done?

ERNST

Snuck into the Staff Room.

MELCHIOR

The Staff Room?

OTTO

Right after Latin Class.

ERNST

There he is!

MELCHIOR

White as a ghost.

(MORITZ enters, in a pitch of excitement)

GEORG

So, did you get caught?

MORITZ

No -- no -- Thank God --

ERNST

But, you're trembling.

MORITZ

For joy. I got promoted, Melchior! Promoted! Who would've believed it? I still can't believe it -- promoted! I read it over and over. And every time I read it, it still said, Promoted.

God, I feel dizzy.

OTTO

Just be grateful you got away with it.

MORITZ

You have no idea, Hanschen. No idea. The last three weeks I've been slinking by that door as if it were the gates of Hell.

Today, as I went past, I saw it cracked open. Nothing -- nothing -- could've stopped me.

Two seconds later, there I am, the middle of the room, leafing through the transcripts -- petrified, the entire time, knowing the door behind me is still wide open --

(SONNENSTICH enters the schoolyard)

ERNST

Shhh! There's Sonnenstich.

SONNENSTICH

(Approaching; sternly:)

Moritz Stiefel, could I see you in my office?

(The boys exchange a look of terror. The lights shift... HANSCHEN still busy in the stall)

HANSCHEN

(To Io)

*Well, you'll have to excuse me, I know it's so off, I love when you do stuff that's rude -- that's so wrong. I go up to my room, turn the stereo on, Shoot up some you in the You of some song.*

(The lights shift... the bridge is illumined too)

THEA

*I lie back, just driftin', and play out these scenes.  
I ride on the rush -- all the hopes, all the  
dreams...*

THEA & MARTHA

*I may be neglectin' the things I should do.  
(But) We've all got our junk, and my junk is you.*

HANSCHEN & GIRLS

*See us winter walkin' -- after a storm.  
It's chill in the wind -- but it's warm in your armsÉ  
We stop, all snow blind -- May not be true.  
(But) We've all got our junk, and my junk is you.*

*It's like, we stop time. What can I do --  
We've all got our junk, and my junk is you.*

(A KNOCKING at the bathroom door)

HERR RILOW (FROM OFF)

Hanschen, that's enough in there. Back to bed.

HANSCHEN

Yes, sir.

(HANSCHEN does not move)

HERR RILOW (FROM OFF)

Son?

HANSCHEN

One minute.

(HANSCHEN waits, listening. HERR RILOW goes)

HANSCHEN (Cont'd)

(To Io)

One last kiss. Those soft, white thighs... those girlish  
breasts... o, those cruel cruel knees...

(HANSCHEN drops the picture to the depths.  
The lights shift... the bridge)

THEA

Martha, careful -- your braid's coming loose.

MARTHA

Oh, let it. It's such a nuisance, really, day and night.

Martha may not cut it short, Martha may not wear it down.  
No, not even at home.

WENDLA

Tomorrow, I'm bringing scissors.

MARTHA

For God's sake, Wendla, no! Papa beats me enough as it  
is.

WENDLA

Really? Still beating you?

MARTHA

No, no, I --

(Breaks off)

It's nothing.

WENDLA

Martha...?

(No response)

Martha, we're your friends...

(A beat)

MARTHA

The other day, I wore a blue ribbon instead of pink.  
That night, Mama yanked me out of bed -- by my braid. I  
fell down to the floor, on my hands and knees. "How many  
times do I have to tell you, Child?" she says. "We have  
rules in this house. I will not be disobeyed."  
And suddenly, there's Papa. He yanks out his belt. Rip -  
- off goes my night-gown. He raises the belt -- I run for  
the door. He shouts, "Out the door? All right, I like  
that. That's where you'll spend the night -- out on the  
street."

WENDLA & THEA

Martha!

MARTHA

It was so cold. I had to spend all night in a toolshed in  
the garden. Wrapped in a... sack.

THEA

My God.

(A beat)

WENDLA

They beat you with a belt?

MARTHA

Anything.

WENDLA

Switches? Sticks?

MARTHA

Whatever's handy.

THEA

My Uncle Klaus says, "If you don't discipline a child, you don't love it."

MARTHA

("No")

I swear they enjoy it. Whether they admit it or not.

WENDLA

I just wish, somehow I could go through it for you.

(A beat)

MARTHA

When I have children, I'll let them be free. And, they'll grow strong and tall.

THEA

Free? But how will children know what to do if their parents don't tell them?

(THEA gazes out into space)

THEA (Cont'd)

*There is a part I can't tell  
About the dark I know well...*

*There is a part I can't tell*

*About the dark...*

(End of Act 1, Scene 6)

Act I, Scene 7

The Woods. WENDLA sits beside the stream, gazing dreamily into space. MELCHIOR approaches.

MELCHIOR

Dreaming again?

WENDLA

Melchior! How did you...?

MELCHIOR

(Shrugs)

I saw you lying here, by the stream, and I thought...

WENDLA

Oh. Well, then...

(An awkward pause)

MELCHIOR

So... what were you dreaming of?

WENDLA

It's silly.

MELCHIOR

Tell me.

WENDLA

I dreamed I was a little beggar-girl. Sent out on the street at five in the morning. And when I came home late at night, and hadn't collected enough money, my father beat me.

MELCHIOR

Beat you? Wendla, that kind of thing doesn't happen anymore. Only in stories.

WENDLA

You're wrong there, Melchior. Martha Bessel is beaten almost every evening -- the next day, you can see the welts. It's terrible.

Really, it makes you boiling hot to hear her tell it. Lately, I can't think about anything else.

MELCHIOR

Someone should file a complaint.

WENDLA

You know, Melchior... I've never been beaten. Not once. I can't even imagine it. I've tried hitting myself -- to find out how it feels, really, *inside*. It must be just awful.

MELCHIOR

I don't believe anyone is ever better for it.

WENDLA

What?

MELCHIOR

Being beaten.

WENDLA

(Reaches for a switch)

With this switch, for example? It's tough. And thin.

MELCHIOR

It'd draw blood.

WENDLA

You mean, if you beat me with it...?

MELCHIOR

Beat you?

WENDLA

Me.

MELCHIOR

Wendla, what are you thinking?!

WENDLA

Nothing.

MELCHIOR

I could never beat you.

WENDLA

But if I let you?

MELCHIOR

Never.

WENDLA

But if I asked you to? Melchior...?

MELCHIOR

Have you lost your mind?

WENDLA

I've never been beaten -- my entire life. I've never...  
felt...

MELCHIOR

What?

WENDLA

Anything. Martha Bessel --

MELCHIOR

Wendla! You can't envy someone being beaten.

WENDLA

No?

MELCHIOR

How can you even want a thing like that?

WENDLA

Please. Melchior...

(He takes the switch, strikes her lightly)

WENDLA (CONT'D) (Cont'd)

I don't feel it!

MELCHIOR

Maybe not, with your dress on.

WENDLA

(Rolling up her dress)  
On my legs, then.

MELCHIOR  
Wendla!

WENDLA  
Come on. *Please.*

MELCHIOR  
I'll teach you to say "Please"...

(He whips her again)

WENDLA  
(Winces from the pain; but...)  
You're barely stroking me.

(MELCHIOR strikes her again)

WENDLA (CONT'D) (Cont'd)  
Martha's father, he uses his belt. He draws blood,  
Melchi.

(MELCHIOR strikes her again)

MELCHIOR  
Well, how's that then?

WENDLA  
(A lie)  
Noth -- nothing, really.

(MELCHIOR strikes her)

MELCHIOR  
And that?

WENDLA  
(A lie)  
Nothing.

(He strikes her again)

WENDLA (CONT'D) (Cont'd)  
Nothing.

(He strikes her again)

WENDLA (Cont'd)

Nothing!

MELCHIOR

(With a SMACK)

You bitch. I'll beat the Hell out of you.

(MELCHIOR throws the switch aside and beats WENDLA with his fists, so violently that she begins screaming.

He pays no attention, but thrashes away at her. Raging.

Suddenly, he jumps up. Stumbles -- sobbing -- into the woods.

The lights shift... THEA is revealed, as if in her bedroom. She gazes into the distance)

THEA

*There is a part I can't tell  
About the dark I know well.*

THEA'S MOTHER (FROM OFF)

Thea, time for bed now.

THEA

*There is a part I can't tell  
About the dark I know well...*

THEA'S MOTHER

Thea, darling...?

(No response)

Put on that new nightgown. The pretty ruffled one your father bought you.

THEA

*You say, "Time for bed now, child,"  
Mom just smiles that smile --  
Just like she never saw me.*

*Just like she never saw me...*

*So, I leave, wantin' just to hide.  
Knowin' deep inside  
You are comin' to me.  
You are comin' to me...*

*You say all you want is just a kiss good-night,  
Then you hold me and you whisper, "Child, the Lord won't  
mind.  
It's just you and me.  
Child, you're a beauty."*

*"God, it's good -- the lovin' -- ain't it good tonight?  
You ain't seen nothin' yet -- gonna teach you right.  
It's just you and me.  
Child, you're a beauty."*

(A KNOCKING on THEA's door)

THEA'S FATHER (FROM OFF)

Thea...? Story-time.

THEA

*I don't scream. Though I know it's wrong.  
I just play along.  
I lie there and breathe.  
Lie there and breathe...*

*I wanna be strong --  
I want the world to find out  
That you're dreamin' on me,  
Me and my "beauty".  
Me and my "beauty"...*

THEA

*You say all you want is  
just a kiss goodnight,  
Then you hold me and you whisper,  
"Child, the Lord won't mind.  
It's just you and me.  
Child, you're a beauty."*

GEORG, ERNST, OTTO

*Aaaah....*

*"God, it's good -- the lovin' --  
ain't it good tonight?  
You ain't seen nothin' yet --*

*Aaaah...*

*gonna teach you right.  
It's just you and me.  
Child, you're a beauty."*

*There is a part I can't tell  
About the dark I know well.*

*There is a part I can't tell  
About the dark I know well.*

(End of Act I, Scene 7)

Act I, Scene 8

The Stiefel Sitting Room. Moritz's father, HERR RENTER STIEFEL, sits in his rocker, enjoying an after-dinner pipe.

MORITZ enters. Pale.

MORITZ

Father...?

RENTER STIEFEL

Moritz.

(MORITZ stands. Remains silent)

RENTER STIEFEL (Cont'd)

Yes...?

MORITZ

Well, I, uh, was wondering -- hypothetically speaking -- what would happen if...

RENTER STIEFEL

"If"...?

MORITZ

If, one day, I, uh, failed. Not that --

RENTER STIEFEL

You're telling me you've failed?

MORITZ

No -- no! I only meant --

RENTER STIEFEL

You've failed, haven't you? I can see it on your face.

MORITZ

Father, no!

RENTER STIEFEL

Well, it's finally come to this. I can't say I'm surprised.

(A beat)

Failed.

(A pause)

RENTER STIEFEL (Cont'd)

So, now, what are your mother and I supposed to do?

(No response)

You tell me, Son. What?

(No response)

RENTER STIEFEL (Cont'd)

How can she show her face at the Missionary Society?

(No response)

What do I tell them at the bank?

(No response)

How do we go to church?

(No response)

What do we say?

(No response)

My son. Failed.

(A beat)

Failed.

(A pause)

RENTER STIEFEL (Cont'd)

Thank God my father never lived to see this day.

(End of Act I, Scene 8. The lights fade, and simultaneously rise on...)

Act I, Scene 9

FRAU GABOR, writing a letter.

MORITZ steps forward, on the other side of the stage, holding FRAU GABOR's letter (which he reads, as she writes).

FRAU GABOR

Dear Herr Stiefel --  
(Thinks again)  
Moritz:

I've spent the entire day thinking about your note. Truly, it touched me, it did, that you'd think of me as a friend. Of course, I was saddened to hear that your exams came off rather less well than you'd hoped, and that you will not be promoted, come fall.

And yet, I must say straightaway, that fleeing to America is hardly the solution. And even if it were, I cannot provide the money you request.

MORITZ

*Uh huh... uh huh... uh huh... well, fine.  
Not like it's even worth the time.  
But still, you know, you wanted more.  
Sorry, it won't change -- Been there before.*

FRAU GABOR

You would do me wrong, Herr Stiefel, to read into my refusal any lack of affection. On the contrary, as Melchior's mother, I truly believe it to be my duty --

MORITZ

*The thing that sucks -- okay? -- for me,  
A thousand bucks, I'm, like, scott free.  
And I mean, please... That's all I need.  
Get real, José. By now, you know the score.*

FRAU GABOR

Should you like, I am ready to write to your parents. I will try to convince them that no one could have worked

harder last semester, and also that too rigorous a  
condemnation of your current misfortune --

MORITZ

*You wanna laugh. It's too absurd.  
You start to ask. Can't hear a word.  
You're gonna crash and burn -- Right, tell me  
more.*

FRAU GABOR

Still, Herr Stiefel, one thing in your letter disturbed  
me. Your -- what shall we call it? -- veiled threat that,  
should escape not be possible, you would take your own  
life.

MORITZ

*(Sarcastic)  
Okay so, now we do the play.  
Act like we so care. No way.  
You'll write my folks --? Well, okay. Babe,  
that's how it goes.*

FRAU GABOR

My dear boy, the world is filled with men -- businessmen,  
scientists, scholars even -- who have done rather poorly  
in school, and yet gone on to brilliant careers.

MORITZ

*They're not my home. Not anymore.  
Not like they so were before.  
Still, I'll split, and they'll, like... Well, who  
knows?*

FRAU GABOR

In any case, I assure you that your present misfortune  
will have no effect on my feelings for you, or on your  
relationship with Melchior.

MORITZ

*Uh huh... uh huh... uh huh... well, fine.  
Not like it's even worth the time.  
But still, you know, you wanted more.  
Okay, so nothing's changed. Heard that before.*

*You wanna laugh. It's too absurd.  
You start to ask. Can't hear a word.*

*You want to crash and burn.  
Right, tell me more.*

*You start to cave. You start to cry.  
You try to run. Nowhere to hide.  
You want to crumble up, and close that door.*

FRAU GABOR

So, head high, Herr Stiefel. And do let me hear from you soon. In the meantime, I am unchangingly and most fondly yours,

Fanny Gabor

MORITZ

*Just fuck it -- right? Enough. That's it.  
You'll still go on. Well, for a bit.  
Another day of utter shit --  
And then there were none.*

*And then there were noneÉ  
And then there were noneÉ  
And then there were noneÉ*

(End of Act I, Scene 9)

Act I, Scene 10

A hay-loft. Dusk. MELCHIOR paces about, unable to shake off the thought of what he's done to WENDLA.

MELCHIOR

(Sings)

*Flip on a switch, and everything's fine --  
No more lips, no more tongue, no more ears, no more  
eyes.*

*The naked blue angel, who peers through the blinds,  
Disappears in the gloom of the mirror-blue night.*

*But my soul is a bride, looking out from inside  
Of the bones of a ghost -- I'm a man and a child,  
With the bones of the ghost, who gets left in the  
cold.*

*I'm locked out of peace, with no keys to my soul.*

*And the whispers of fear, the chill up the spine,*

*Will steal away too, with a flick of the light.  
The minute you do it, with fingers so blind,  
You remove every bit of the blue from your mind.*

*But my soul is a bride, looking out from inside  
Of the bones of a ghost -- I'm a man and a child,  
With the bones of a ghost, who has nowhere to go...  
There's no one to see who can see to my soul.*

(WENDLA comes up the ladder)

WENDLA

So, here you are. Everyone's looking for you, you know. .  
The hay wagon's gone out again. You have to help, Melchior  
-- there's a storm coming.

MELCHIOR

Go away. Please.

WENDLA

Melchior, what's wrong with you?

MELCHIOR

Out.

WENDLA

When I see you so upset like that -- I just... I can't  
go. I won't.

(No response. WENDLA waits)

WENDLA (Cont'd)

I'm sorry about the other day. Truly, I am. I understand  
why you'd be angry at me...

(No response. WENDLA kneels beside MELCHIOR)

WENDLA (Cont'd)

Come out to the meadow, Melchior. It's dark in here, and  
stuffy. We can run -- get soaked to the skin -- and not  
even care.

MELCHIOR

("No")

The hay seems fine to me.

(A pause. WENDLA cradles MELCHIOR's head in her arms)

MELCHIOR (Cont'd)  
I can hear your heart beat, Wendla.

(MELCHIOR reaches to kiss WENDLA)

WENDLA  
Oh Melchi --  
(Then, hesitating)  
I don't know.

MELCHIOR  
No matter where I am, I hear it, beating...

WENDLA  
Do you love me?

MELCHIOR  
Love? I don't know -- is there such a thing? I hear your heart, I feel you breathing -- everywhere -- the rain, the hay...

WENDLA  
And I feel yours.

(MELCHIOR leans close, kisses WENDLA)

WENDLA (Cont'd)  
Melchior...

(He kisses her again. Presses his body onto hers)

WENDLA (Cont'd)  
No -- wait -- no --

MELCHIOR  
Wendla...

WENDLA  
Wait -- Melchi -- stop. I can't. We're not supposed to.

MELCHIOR  
What?

(No response)  
Not supposed to what?

WENDLA  
Love, Melchi.

MELCHIOR  
Please. Please, Wendla.

(He presses himself forward. Kisses her.)

As he does, THE CHORUS OF CHILDREN is  
revealed)

THE CHORUS OF CHILDREN  
(Quietly)  
*I believe,  
I believe,  
I believe,  
Oh I believe.  
All will be forgiven -- I believe.*

(The song continues under dialogue, growing in  
intensity, for the rest of the scene)

WENDLA  
Melchi, no -- it just -- it's...

MELCHIOR  
What?

WENDLA  
Sinful.

MELCHIOR  
Why? Because it's good?  
(No response)  
Because it makes us "feel" something?

(No response. WENDLA suddenly reaches and  
pulls MELCHIOR to her. Holds him)

THE CHORUS OF CHILDREN  
*I believe,  
I believe,  
I believe,*

*Oh I believe.  
All will be forgiven -- I believe.*

MELCHIOR  
Don't be scared.

WENDLA  
Oh, Melchi.

(He kisses her)

THE CHORUS OF CHILDREN  
*I believe,  
I believe,  
Oh I believe.  
There is love in Heaven -- I believe.*

WENDLA  
No -- oh, Melchi...

MELCHIOR  
Please --

WENDLA  
Don't. It...

MELCHIOR  
What?

WENDLA  
Oh! Melchior, wait...

MELCHIOR  
Just me.

WENDLA  
Oh, Melchi...

MELCHIOR  
Just me.

WENDLA  
Melchior... Oh...

THE CHORUS OF CHILDREN  
*I believe,*

*I believe,  
Oh I believe.  
There is love in Heaven -- I believe.*

*I believe,  
I believe,  
I believe,  
Oh I believe.  
There is love in Heaven -- I believe.*

*I believe,  
I believe,  
O, I believe...*

WENDLA

Melchi -- no!!

(The lights fade. End of Act I)

Act II, Scene 1

MELCHIOR and WENDLA stand on separate sides of the stage, as if in separate parts of town. They each gaze into the distance.

WENDLA

*There once was a pirate, who put out to sea --  
His mates all around him, no maiden on his  
knee.  
O, sail for a little...  
A little, little, little...  
He'll sail for a little, until she finds him...*

MELCHIOR

*There once was a maiden, who wandered the mead,  
To gather blue violets her Mama would need.  
  
O, wail through the willows,  
All hollow through the willows.  
She'll wail through the willows until she finds them.*

WENDLA

*The sea was so violent, the crew went below --  
They begged him to join them, but he would not go.*

WENDLA & GIRLS

*O, sail a little, little...  
For just a little, little...  
He'll sail for a little, until she finds him.*

MELCHIOR

*Her heart was so laden she fell by a tree,  
And sang of some pirate who haunted the sea...*

MELCHIOR & BOYS

*O, wail through the willows,  
All hollow through the willows.  
She'll wail through the willows until she finds  
him...*

WENDLA & GIRLS

(In unison with the boys)

*He'll sail for a little,  
A little, little...  
He'll sail for a little until she finds him.*

MELCHIOR & BOYS

*O, wail through the willows,  
All hollow through the willows.  
She'll wail through the willows until she finds him.*

ALL

*He'll sail for a little, until she finds him.*

(The lights dim. End of Act II, Scene 1)

Act II, Scene 2

Twilight. The sound of the nearby  
river. MORITZ follows a path,  
through low hedges and reeds.

MORITZ

Enough. Enough. Enough. It's not like anyone will  
notice, really. They'll set a wreath, shed a tear, then

off for whipped cream and lady fingers, the next twenty lines of Homer...

Well, at least the weather's good.

*Awful sweet to be a little butterfly.  
Just wingin' over things, and nothin' deep  
inside.  
Nothin' goin', goin' wild in you -- you know --  
You're slowin' by the river side or floatin'  
high  
and blue...*

*Or, maybe, cool to be a little summer wind.  
Like, once through everything, and then away  
again.  
With a taste of dust in your mouth all day,  
But no need to know, like, sadness -- you just  
sail  
away.*

*'Cause, you know, I don't do sadness -- not even a  
little bit.*

*Just don't need it in my life -- don't want  
any part of it.*

*I don't do sadness. Hey, I've done my  
time.*

*Lookin' back on it all -- man, it blows my mind.*

*I don't do sadness. So been there.  
Don't do sadness. Just don't care.*

(ILSE enters, in a torn saint's costume. She  
watches MORITZ a moment)

ILSE

Moritz Steifel!

MORITZ

Ilse?! You frightened me!

ILSE

Did you lose something?

MORITZ

Why did you frighten me?

(A beat)

Damn it!

ILSE

What're you looking for?

MORITZ

If only I knew.

ILSE

Then what's the use of looking?

(No response)

I'm on the way home. Want to come?

MORITZ

I don't know.

(A beat)

Where have you been keeping yourself?

ILSE

Priapia -- the Artists' Colony?

MORITZ

Yes.

ILSE

(Playing the blasé sophisticate -- as if  
lighting a long cigarette)

With Nohl. Fehrendorf. And Padinsky, Lenz, Rank, Speuhler -  
- all of them, Moritz, all so wild. So... Bohemian. All  
they want to do is dress me up and paint me!

That Fehrendorf's a wicked one, actually. Always knocking  
easels down and chasing me. Dabbing me with his paint  
brush. But then, that's men -- if they can't stick you  
with one thing, they'll try another.

Just last week Padinsky trapped me behind the oven --  
kissed me so hard I was shaking.

Oh God, Moritz, the other day we all got so drunk, I  
passed out in the snow -- just lay there, unconscious, all  
night.

You know, I spent an entire week with Nohl -- up all night  
-- that ether of his! Him and that Adolar! Finally, I  
thought: Enough of this! So, I moved in with Lenz. Let  
him dress me up as goddesses and little Greek fawns...  
Then, this morning, he woke me with a gun -- set against  
my breast. "One twitch..." he said, "and it's the end."

Really gave me the shivers, I'll tell you.

But, how about you, Moritz -- still in school?

MORITZ

No -- well, this semester I'm through.

(A beat)

ILSE

God, you remember how we used to run back to my house and play pirates?

(Music in)

ILSE (CONT'D) (Cont'd)

Wendla Bergman, Melchior Gabor, you, and I...

*Spring and summer,  
Every other day,  
Blue wind gets so sad.  
Blowin' through the thick corn,  
Through the bales of hay,  
Through the open books on the grassÉ*

*Spring and summer...*

*Sure, when it's autumn,  
Wind always wants to  
Creep up and haunt you \_  
Whistling, it's got you,  
With its heartache, with its sorrow.  
Winter wind sings, and it criesÉ*

*Spring and summer,  
Every other day,  
Blue wind gets so pained.*

*Blowin' through the thick corn,  
Through the bales of hay,  
Through the sudden drift of the rainÉ*

*Spring and summerÉ*

MORITZ

Actually, I better go, Ilse.

ILSE

Walk as far as my house with me.

MORITZ

And...?

ILSE

We'll dig up those old tomahawks and play together, Moritz -- just like we used to. I'll brush your hair, and curl it, set you on my little hobby-horse...

MORITZ

I wish I could.

ILSE

Then, why don't you?

MORITZ

(A lie)

Eighty lines of Virgil, sixteen equations, a paper on The Hapsburgs...

MORITZ (Cont'd)

*So, maybe I should be some kinda' laundry line -*

-

*Hang their things on me, and I will swing 'em  
dry.*

*You just wave in the sun through the afternoon,  
And then, see, they come to set you free beneath  
the rising moon.*

*'Cause you know --*

ILSE

(In counterpoint to the chorus of MORITZ's song  
which follows)

*Spring and summer,  
Every other day,  
Blue wind gets so lost.  
Blowin' through the thick corn,  
Through the bales of hay --*

*Spring and summer,  
Every other day,  
Blue wind gets so lost.  
Blowin' through the thick corn,*

*Through the bales of hay,  
Through the wandering clouds of the dustÉ  
Spring and summerÉ*

MORITZ

*I don't do sadness -- not even a little bit.  
Just don't need it in my life -- don't want any  
part*

*of it.  
I don't do sadness. Hey, I've done my time.  
Lookin' back on it all -- man, it blows my mind.*

*I don't do sadness. So been there.  
Don't do sadness. Just don't care.*

Good-night, Ilse.

ILSE

Good-night?

MORITZ

Virgil, the equations -- remember?

ILSE

Just for an hour.

MORITZ

I can't.

ILSE

Well, walk me at least.

MORITZ

Honestly, I wish I could.

ILSE

You know, by the time you finally wake up, I'll be lying  
on some trash heap.

(ILSE goes)

MORITZ

For the love of God, all I had to do was say yes.

(Calls after)

Ilse? Ilse...?

(Waits)

So, what will I say? I'll tell them all, the angels, I got drunk in the snow, and sang, and played pirates... Yes, I'll tell them, I'm ready now. I'll be an angel.

(MORITZ withdraws FRAU GABOR's letter from his pocket, and burns it)

Ten minutes ago, you could see the entire horizon. Now, only sparks -- see, shooting stars...

So dark. So dark. So dark. So dark. So dark...

(End of Act II, Scene 2)

Act II, Scene 3

A cemetery in the pouring rain. MORITZ'S FATHER stands beside an open grave, surrounded by MORITZ's friends. Pin-spots pick out the various speakers as they step forward, drop a flower onto MORITZ's grave, then go on their way.

HANSCHEN

Constable Müller said his brains were splattered through the willows.

STIEFEL

He wasn't mine. No son of mine. I knew it the day he was born.

THEA

I just wish I could jump in there with him.

ERNST

So, he really did have a gun...

MARTHA

Just so strange to think: in that little box -- *all* of him.

ILSE

I'll hear the shot -- I know, I'll hear it, I will --  
every night, as I cross the bridge.

MELCHIOR

Farewell, Moritz. Farewell, my friend.

(MELCHIOR starts from the graveyard, looks  
back and sees MORITZ'S FATHER standing still  
by the grave)

STIEFEL

Better he had not been born than I had lived to see this  
day.

(MELCHIOR sings, giving voice to STIEFEL's  
inner thoughts)

MELCHIOR

*You scratch your head, and wonder why.  
He was your little gem.  
Were you really so blind, and unkind to him?*

*Can't help the itch to touch, to kiss,  
To hold him once again.  
Now, to close his eyes, never open them...?*

*A shadow passed. A shadow passed,  
Yearning, yearning for the fool it called a  
home.*

*All the things he never did are left behind;  
All the things his Mama wished he'd bear in  
mind;*

*And all his Dad ever hoped he'd know.  
O - o - o - o - o - o -*

*The talks you never had,  
The Saturdays you never spent,  
All the "grown-up" places you never went;*

*And all of the crying you wouldn't understand,  
You just let him cry -- "Make a man out of him".*

*A shadow passed. A shadow passed,  
Yearning, yearning for the fool it called a  
home.*

*All things he ever wished are left behind;  
All the things his Mama did to make him mind;  
And how his Dad had hoped he'd grow.*

*All things he ever lived are left behind;  
All the fears that ever flickered through his  
mind;  
All the sadness that he'd come to own.*

*O - o - o - o - o - o  
O - o - o - o - o - o  
O - o - o - o - o - o*

*A shadow passed. A shadow passed,  
Yearning, yearning for the fool it called a home.*

*And, it whistles through the ghosts still left  
behind...  
It whistles through the ghosts still left behind...  
It whistles through the ghosts still left behind...  
O - o -*

(End of Act II, Scene 3)

Act II, Scene 4

SONNENSTICH, the Headmaster, stands  
at the head of the Staff Room.  
FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK beside him.

SONNENSTICH  
Fraulein Knuppeldick, we must address the remarkable  
calamity that's befallen our school -- uh, I, uh, mean --  
the tragedy -- yes, the tragedy -- the terrible suicide of  
the Stiefel boy.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK  
My thought precisely, Herr Sonnenstich.

SONNENSTICH  
We must take immediate and decisive steps to end the  
veritable epidemic of suicides sweeping institutions such  
as our own.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Indeed, sir. But, it won't be an easy war to win. There's not only the moral corruption of our youth, but the creeping sensuality of these liberal-minded times.

SONNENSTICH

I couldn't agree more. It's war. And, sadly, there must be casualties.

(A beat)

Bring the boy in.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Certainly, Herr Sonnenstich.

(FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK leads MELCHIOR in)

SONNENSTICH

It would seem, young man, that all roads end in you. You do know what I mean?

MELCHIOR

("But, you don't understand...")

I'm afraid --

SONNENSTICH

As well one would be. Two days after his father learned of -- the young, uh...

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

(Supplying the name)

Moritz Stiefel...

SONNENSTICH

Moritz Stiefel's death, he searched through the boy's effects and uncovered a certain depraved and atheistic document which made terribly clear --

KNUPPELDICK

Terribly clear...

SONNENSTICH

-- the utter moral corruption of the young man. A corruption which, no doubt, hastened the boy's end.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Without question, Herr Sonnenstich.

SONNENSTICH

I am referring, as you may know, to a twenty page essay, entitled, coyly enough, "The Art of Sleeping With"... accompanied by -- shall we say -- life-like illustrations.

MELCHIOR

Herr Sonnenstich, if I could --

SONNENSTICH

(Completing MELCHIOR's sentence)

Behave properly? Yes, that would be another affair entirely.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Entirely.

SONNENSTICH

For our part, we have made a thorough examination of the handwriting of this obscene document, and compared it with that of every single pupil --

MELCHIOR

Sir, if I could only --

SONNENSTICH

You must now answer only the precisely stated questions. With a swift and decisive "Yes" or "No".

(A beat)

Melchior Gabor, did you write this?

(False-start music. FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK turns to MELCHIOR.)

False-start music. FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK turns toward SONNENSTICH)

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Did you write this?

(False-start music. FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK turns toward MELCHIOR. The CHORUS OF CHILDREN is revealed)

THE CHORUS OF CHILDREN

*There's a moment you know... you're fucked \_ -  
Not an inch more room to self-destruct.  
No more moves -- oh yeah, the dead-end zone.  
Man, you just can't call your soul your own.*

*But the thing that makes you really jump,  
Is that the weirdest shit is still to come.  
You can ask yourself, Hey, what have I done?  
You're just a fly -- the little guys, they kill for fun.*

*Man, you're fucked if you just freeze up,  
Can't do that thing -- that keeping still.  
But, you're fucked if you speak your mind,  
And you know -- uh huh -- you will.*

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

*Yeah, you're fucked, all right \_ and all for spite.  
You can kiss your sorry ass good-bye.  
Totally fucked. Will they mess you up?  
Well, you know they're gonna try.*

(Mocking the Professors)

*Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa...*  
*Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa...*

(False-start music.)

Silence. False-start music)

SONNENSTICH

Herr Gabor?

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

*Disappear -- yeah, well, you wanna try.  
Wanna bundle up into some big-ass lie,  
Long enough for them to all just quit.  
Long enough for you to get out of it.*

SONNENSTICH

Herr Gabor, answer me.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

*Yeah, you're fucked, all right -- and all for spite.  
You can kiss your sorry ass good-bye.  
Totally fucked. Will they mess you up?  
Well, you know they're gonna try.*

SONNENSTICH

Melchior Gabor, for the last time, did you write this?

MELCHIOR

Yes.

(A beat)

SONNENSTICH

Take him away.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN

*Yeah, you're fucked all right -- and all for spite.  
You can kiss your sorry ass good-bye.  
Totally fucked. Will they mess you up?  
Well, you know they're gonna try.*

*Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa  
Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa,  
Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa  
Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa...*

FULL CAST

*Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa  
Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa,  
Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa  
Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa...*

*Totally fucked!*

(End of Act II, Scene 4)

Act II, Scene 5

A vineyard at sunset. Church bells  
sounding in the distance. HANSCHEN  
and ERNST loll in the grass.

HANSCHEN

(Looking out)

Those bells... So peaceful.

ERNST

I know. Sometimes, when it's quiet, in the evening like this, I imagine myself as a country priest. With my red-cheeked wife, my library, my degrees... Boys and girls, who live nearby, give me their hands when I go walking...

HANSCHEN

You can't be serious.

(A beat)

Really, Ernst, you're such a Sentimentalist! The pious, serene faces you see on those priests, it's all an act -- to hide their envy.

Trust me, there are only three ways a man can go. He can let the status quo defeat him -- like your country priest, or Moritz. He can rock the boat -- like Melchior -- and be expelled. Or he can bide his time, and let the System work for him -- like me.

Think of the future as a pail of whole milk. One man sweats and stirs -- churning it into butter -- like Otto, for example. Another man frets, and spills his milk, and cries all night -- like Moritz. But, me, well, I'm like a pussycat, I just skim off the cream...

ERNST

Just skim off the cream...?

HANSCHEN

Right.

ERNST

But, what about...?

(Off HANSCHEN's look)

You're laughing.

What -- ?

Hanschen?

(HANSCHEN and ERNST look into the distance, and sing -- in soliloquy)

HANSCHEN (CONT'D)

*Come, cream away the bliss,  
Travel the world within my lips,  
Fondle the world and her distant seasÉ  
Haven't you heard the word of your body?*

HANSCHEN & ERNST

*O, I'm gonna be wounded.  
O, I'm gonna be your wound.  
O, I'm gonna bruise you.  
O, you're gonna be my bruise.*

(HANSCHEN leans over, kisses ERNST)

ERNST

Oh God...

HANSCHEN

Mmm, I know. When we look back, thirty years from now,  
tonight will seem unbelievably beautiful.

ERNST

And, in the meantime...?

HANSCHEN

Why not?

(HANSCHEN kisses ERNST deeply)

ERNST

On my way here this afternoon, I thought perhaps we'd  
only... talk.

HANSCHEN

So, are you sorry we --?

ERNST

("No way")

I love you, Hanschen. As I've never loved anyone.

HANSCHEN

And so you should.

ERNST

*O, I'm gonna be wounded.  
O, I'm gonna be your wound.*

ERNST & HANSCHEN

*O, I'm gonna bruise you.  
O, you're gonna be my bruise...*

(WENDLA and MELCHIOR appear in the background)

ERNST, HANSCHEN, WENDLA & MELCHIOR  
*O, you're gonna be wounded.  
O, you're gonna be my wound.  
O, you're gonna bruise too.  
O, I'm gonna be your bruise...*

(End of Act II, Scene 5)

Act II, Scene 6

WENDLA's bedroom. DOCTOR VON  
BRAUSEPULVER attends WENDLA at  
bedside. FRAU BERGMAN hovers.

DOCTOR VON BRAUSEPULVER

Now, now, don't fret. I've  
been prescribing these since  
before you were born, young  
lady. In fact, I recently  
recommended them to the utterly  
exhausted, young Baroness von  
Witzelben. Eight days later --  
I'm pleased to report -- she's  
off to a spa in Pyrmont,  
breakfasting on roast chicken  
and new potatoes.

(A beat)

So, my child, three a day -- an hour after meals.

In a few weeks, you should be fine -- breakfasting on  
suckling pig, no doubt.

FRAU BERGMAN

So, that's all it is, Doctor -- anemia?

DOCTOR VON BRAUSEPULVER

C'est tout.

FRAU BERGMAN

And the nausea?

DOCTOR VON BRAUSEPULVER

Not uncommon.

(Turns to WENDLA)

Trust me, child. You'll be fine.

(A beat)

Frau Bergman, if I could have a word with you...?

FRAU BERGMAN

Certainly, Doctor.

(FRAU BERGMAN leads DOCTOR VON BRAUESPULVER  
out.)

WENDLA sits, quiet. Uncomfortable. Whistles.

FRAU BERGMAN enters, stares at WENDLA silently)

wENDLA

Mama...?

FRAU BERGMAN

Wendla, what have you done? To yourself? To me?

(No response)

Wendla?

WENDLA

I, uh, don't know.

FRAU BERGMAN

(Not a question)

You don't know.

WENDLA

Dr. Van Brausepulver said I'm anemic.

FRAU BERGMAN

Well, probably. You're going  
to have a child.

WENDLA

A CHILD?! BUT, I'M NOT  
MARRIED!

FRAU BERGMAN

Precisely.

WENDLA, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

WENDLA

I DON'T KNOW. TRULY, I DON'T.  
WE LAY IN THE HAY --

FRAU BERGMAN

"We"?

WENDLA

Mama, please. I haven't loved a soul as I do you. Only you.

My God, why didn't you tell me everything?

Why?

(A beat)

I DIDN'T FEEL THE LOVE. NOT  
LIKE YOU SAID. IT HURT. IT  
JUST... ALL THIS BLOOD...

FRAU BERGMAN

WENDLA!

WENDLA

What? What have I done that's so --

I couldn't help it, Mama. I couldn't. I swear. I --

FRAU BERGMAN

Wendla, darling, please. No  
more. We'll only break our  
hearts.

WENDLA

I'm so sorry, Mama.

FRAU BERGMAN

(Comforting WENDLA)

My darling...

(A pause)

Well, you are going to have to tell me who.

(No response)

Wendla, I'm waiting.

(WENDLA looks into the distance, sings -- in soliloquy)

WENDLA

*Whispering...*

*There's a ghost in the moonlight.  
Sorrow doing a new dance  
Through her bones, through her skin.*

*Listening...  
To the souls in the blue night,  
Fumbling mutely with their rude hands,  
And the whispering starts again...*

*See the sweetheart on his knees --  
So faithful and adoring.  
Says he loves her,  
So she lets him have her...  
Another summer's story.*

FRAU BERGMAN

Georg Zirschnitz?

WENDLA

Mama, no.

FRAU BERGMAN

Then, who?

WENDLA

*Mystery...  
Little Miss didn't do right.  
Went and ruined all the true plans --  
Such a shame, such a sin.*

*History...  
Home alone on a school night.  
Harvest moon over the blue sands,  
And there's heartache on the wind...*

*See the father bent in grief,  
The mother dressed in mourning.  
Sister crumples,  
And the neighbors grumble.  
The preacher issues warnings...*

FRAU BERGMAN

Ernst Robel?

WENDLA

Mama, please. Don't.

FRAU BERGMAN

Then who, Wendla?

WENDLA

*Listening...*

*To the souls in the fool's night.*

*Some girl taking a new chance,*

*And the whispering starts again...*

FRAU BERGMAN

Hanschen Rilow?

WENDLA

Mama!

FRAU BERGMAN

Moritz Stiefel?

WENDLA

Of course not.

FRAU BERGMAN

Melchior Gabor?

(No response)

Wendla, Melchior Gabor?

(No response)

Wendla...?

(End of Act II, Scene 6)

Act II, Scene 7

FATHER ZUNGENSCHLAG's office at  
the rectory. FRAU BERGMAN  
approaches, knocks on his open  
door.

FRAU BERGMAN

Father Zungenschlag...?

ZUNGENSCHLAG

(Looks up)

Yes...?

FRAU BERGMAN

Anna Bergman.

ZUNGENSCHLAG

Frau Bergman, yes. The mother of little, uh...

FRAU BERGMAN

Wendla.

ZUNGENSCHLAG

Little Wendla. Yes. Such an innocent lamb of our Lord. Now, what can we do for you today, Frau Bergman? Nothing serious, we trust...?

FRAU BERGMAN

(Sudden tears)

Oh Father... Well, it does concern Wendla. Darling Wendla...!

ZUNGENSCHLAG

Tell us.

FRAU BERGMAN

How -- how -- after so many years of your instruction, Father, and your care -- how can our little lamb have wandered so far astray...?!

(The lights shift. FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK's office at the school. FATHER ZUNGENSCHLAG approaches, knocks on her door)

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Yes?

ZUNGENSCHLAG

Fraulein Knuppeldick, I believe...?

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Father Zungenschlag! To what do I owe the inexpressible pleasure of such an unexampled visit?

ZUNGENSCHLAG

(Gravely)

We must talk. I'm afraid we must talk, Fraulein Knuppeldick.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Please. Father. Come. Sit.

ZUNGENSCHLAG

There is no time to sit. No, no, we must *act*, Fraulein Knuppeldick.

(A beat)

Two -- it would seem, two -- of the students in your express charge. That sinful young vixen, Wendla Bergman. And the equally culpable Melchior Gabor. Living in carnal denial of God's proper honor.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Father, I am horrified -- *mortified* -- if less than surprised -- to hear it.

(The lights shift. MELCHIOR's father -- HERR GABOR's office. FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK approaches, knocks on his door)

HERR GABOR

Do come in.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Herr Gabor?

HERR GABOR

Yes?

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Ina Knuppeldick. Associate Headmistress of the Ruprecht Wittelsbach und Sigismund Academy und Grammar School.

HERR GABOR

Fraulein Knuppeldick.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

Well, I'm afraid I bear rather frightful news. Sad, sad news.

HERR GABOR

Yes, well. The boy has already been expelled.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK

(Sighs)

Would that the terrible stamp, of the deviant soul your son bears, had only ended there.

(The lights shift. MELCHIOR's home. HERR GABOR knocks on his wife's study door)

HERR GABOR

Fanny...?

FRAU GABOR

Yes...?

HERR GABOR

We need to speak. Again. About Melchior.

(A beat)

For, I received a visit, this afternoon, from Ina Knuppeldick.

FRAU GABOR

Oh Hermann, no. No. What has the poor boy done now?

HERR GABOR

An act so unbecoming in a son, that I scarcely know where to begin. Except, perhaps, Fanny, with you. And the utterly unorthodox educational principles which you have espoused, and thus instilled in the boy, these past fifteen years...

(The lights shift. End of Act II, Scene 7)

Act II, Scene 8

A darkened corner in a reformatory.

A group of boys huddle together. MELCHIOR stands apart, reading a letter.

DIETER

All right, which of you animals has a coin?

HELMUT

A coin?

RUPERT

Try Reinhold. He's been getting cozy with that guard.

REINHOLD

Guard?!

HELMUT

Oh -- Mr. Innocent!

REINHOLD

"Mr. Innocent"? I'll split your damn head open --

DIETER

All right, calm down, both of you.

(Means business)

Reinhold, cough it up.

REINHOLD

(Giving him the coin)

Christ!

DIETER

(Displaying the coin; quieting the mob)

Okay, whoever hits it, gets it.

HELMUT

(Indicating MELCHIOR)

What about our fine philosopher over there?

REINHOLD

(To MELCHIOR)

Gabor?

MELCHIOR

No, thank you.

RUPERT

Oh. "No, thank you"?

DIETER

(Ironic)

He's saving it for better things.

HELMUT

(Ironic)

So I hear. Fourteen, wasn't she?

REINHOLD

Nobody taught the poor boy what parlour maids are for.

(The lights shift, revealing WENDLA in her bedroom, seated at her desk, writing a letter)

WENDLA

(Reading aloud as she writes)

...So, my days are spent shut in. Nothing but Mama's voice and the sound of -- "

(As FRAU BERGMAN peeks in, WENDLA hurriedly puts her letter away)

FRAU BERGMAN

Wendla?

WENDLA

Yes, Mama?

FRAU BERGMAN

Put your shawl on, darling. We're going out for a bit.

WENDLA

Really? How wonderful!

FRAU BERGMAN

Well, a young girl must experience *some* of the autumn. No matter how anemic she's been.

WENDLA

Mama, yes! Of course.

(WENDLA crosses for her shawl. The lights shift, revealing the reformatory. MELCHIOR has turned from the boys, and is again reading his letter)

DIETER

Hey, what's Don Juan reading now?

(MELCHIOR attempts to hide the letter. But the boys manage to grab it from him)

HELMUT

Listen to this -- from his little bitch...

MELCHIOR

Give that back!

(The boys restrain MELCHIOR)

HELMUT

(Reading from the letter; with exaggerated prissiness)

"...So, my days are spent shut in. Nothing but Mama's voice. And the sound of the wind, pulling, here, at my heart...

BOYS

(Mocking)

"Pulling here, at my heart..."

HELMUT

"...I wonder: Is this any world in which to bear our child?"

BOYS

"Our child"?!"

MELCHIOR

(Breaking free; this is news to him)

Give me that!

(The boys again restrain MELCHIOR)

DIETER

(Snatching the letter; tossing it into the circle)

Forget the coin -- we'll use his little love letter.

MELCHIOR

Stop!

(The lights shift, rising on a fresh scene. A dark street on the outskirts of town. FRAU BERGMAN leads WENDLA up the block)

WENDLA

Oh Mama, it's so wonderful, just to walk about!

(As they continue on)

What part of town is this?

(No response)

Mama?

(No response)

The streets so narrow -- and dark...

(FRAU BERGMAN abruptly stops before a small dark house. She leads WENDLA to the door, and then knocks)

WENDLA (Cont'd)  
Mama, whose house...?

(FRAU BERGMAN says nothing. Waits. Reaches for the knocker -- knocks again)

WENDLA (Cont'd)  
Who lives in *this* house?

(FRAU BERGMAN says nothing. Knocks again)

WENDLA (Cont'd)  
Mama...?

(The lights shift, rising again on the Reformatory. The boys have shoved MELCHIOR aside and now begin their Circle Jerk)

MELCHIOR  
*Where I go, when I go there,  
No more listening anymore --*  
(Dialogue starts. Song continues under dialogue for remainder of the scene)  
*Only drifting on some ship,  
A wind that whispers: "Someone lived here, before"...*

RUPERT  
There -- look at Reinhold.

DIETER  
Can't even get a stiffy.

HELMUT  
Reinhold? That is his stiffy.

REINHOLD  
Oh yeah? I'll show you stiffy.

DIETER  
Like you showed that guard...?

REINHOLD

Like you did, maybe.

DIETER

In your dreams.

MELCHIOR

*Touch me -- all silent.  
Tell me -- please -- all is forgiven.  
Consume my wine.  
Consume my mind.  
I'll tell you how, how the winds sigh...*

RUPERT

(Nearing climax)

Oh -- oh God --

HELMUT

God!

(The lights shift, rising on WENDLA and FRAU BERGMAN outside Mother Schmidt's door. The door opens. A grim-jawed WORKMAN, in leather apron, peers out)

WORKMAN

Frau Bergman?

WENDLA

(Shudders)

Mama...?!

WORKMAN

You must be Wendla, then...?

WENDLA

Mama -- how does he know us?!

WORKMAN

(To WENDLA)

Are you coming or not? Mother Schmidt doesn't like to be kept waiting.

WENDLA

(Recognizing what this means)

Mother Schmidt?! Who's Mother Schmidt??!!

WORKMAN

(Extends his hand)

Fraulein.

FRAU BERGMAN

Wendla -- don't keep the man waiting.

(FRAU BERGMAN pulls WENDLA by the hand and gives her to the WORKMAN)

DIETER

I'm almost there!

WENDLA

Noooo! Mama -- Nooooooooo!!!!!! Nooooo!!! Don't leave me!!!

(As the WORKMAN takes hold of WENDLA, FRAU BERGMAN lets her go)

HELMUT

Coming!

RUPERT

Me too!

REINHOLD

You? The day after tomorrow, maybe.

WENDLA

MAMA...????!!!!!! MAMA -- NOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(FRAU BERGMAN watches as the WORKMAN drags WENDLA into the house)

RUPERT

No -- no -- now -- !

WENDLA

Mama -- NO! -- NOOO -- NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

BOYS

OH -- GOD -- GOD -- NOW!!!!

(The boys climax as the door slams shut. From within the house, WENDLA's cries can still be heard.)

FRAU BERGMAN looks nervously up the street, afraid the passers-by and neighbors will hear. She covers herself in her shawl, walks briskly up the block)

HELMUT

(To MELCHIOR)

Hey, what are you looking at?

DIETER

Maybe he just wants his little letter back.

RUPERT

So he can kiss the wax...

REINHOLD

Get him!

BOYS

Grab him! Get him!!!

(The boys grab hold of MELCHIOR)

MELCHIOR

Let go!

(The boys drag MELCHIOR into the "Circle" and force him down where their semen lies)

DIETER

Okay, you -- on your knees.

MELCHIOR

Let go of me!

RUPERT

(Grabbing MELCHIOR's head)

Now, lick it up.

(As they force MELCHIOR's head down, the lights shift. End of Act II, Scene 8)

Act II, Scene 9

MARTHA and THEA gather on the bridge. ILSE stands apart, tossing flower petals into the water below.

THE CHORUS OF BOYS in the background.

BOYS

*There once was a pirate, who put out to sea --  
His mates all around, no maiden on his knee.*

*O, sail for a little...  
A little, little, little...  
He'll sail for a little, until she finds him...*

THEA

I can't believe it.

MARTHA

Truly.

THEA

How do you die of anemia?

ILSE

When your anemia is caused by losing four pints of blood, it has a way of doing you in.

THEA

How did *that* happen?

ILSE

(Shrugs)

Sometimes ole Mother Schmidt runs into complications...

THEA

Ole Mother Schmidt -- ?!

MARTHA

You mean -- ?

THEA

Wendla?! I don't believe you.

ILSE

Why do you think they really sent Melchior to that reformatory?

(MARTHA and THEA exchange a horrified look)

BOYS

*The sea was so violent, the crew went below --  
They begged him to join them, but he would not go...*

*O, sail for a little...*

(Dialogue begins. The song continues under,  
for the remainder of the scene)

*For just a little, little...*

*He'll sail for a little, until she finds him...*

ILSE

In any case, he's escaped from the reformatory now.

THEA

Escaped?!

MARTHA

How do you know...?

ILSE

(Shrugs)

I know.

(A beat)

They were searching for him, through the night. You could hear the hounds...

(MARTHA and THEA exchange another look)

THEA

Can you imagine... *Melchior Gabor*?! Being hunted by dogs?! Sleeping, cold and alone, in some field...?

MARTHA

And *Wendla*...?

(MARTHA and THEA exchange a look)

BOYS

(Quietly, under the scene)

*O, sail for a little...*

*For just a little, little...*

*He'll sail for a little, until she finds him...*

*O, sail for a little...*

*For just a little, little...*

*He'll sail for a little, until she finds him...*

THEA

It's so terrible. But then... I guess they brought it on themselves.

ILSE

(Ironic)

Hardly.

THEA

But they did. Of course they did.

(She turns)

Martha, you see -- see what happens when children disobey their parents?

MARTHA

(Sighs)

I guess it is for my own good that Father beats me.

THEA

We better get home now -- before dark.

MARTHA

(Starts off with her)

Bye, Ilse.

THEA

Bye...

(MARTHA and THEA go. As they do, ILSE reaches into her dress, pulls out a letter. Opens it --for the first time)

ILSE

(Reading from the letter)

"Ilse: I'm back. I can't get a message to Wendla; but I must see her. Could you bring her to meet me tomorrow

evening? I'll be waiting in the graveyard... Melchior Gabor"...

(ILSE folds the note, sighs. End of Act II, Scene 9)

Act II, Scene 10

A graveyard. Moonlit. Branches rustling in the wind. MELCHIOR -- still in reform school uniform -- climbs over a church wall. Jumps to the ground.

MELCHIOR

(Looks about)

My God -- the abyss...

CHORUS OF CHILDREN (FROM OFF)

*Flip on a switch, and everything's fine --  
No more lips, no more tongue, no more ears, no more eyes.  
The naked blue angel, who peers through the blinds,  
Disappears in the gloom of the mirror-blue night.*

MELCHIOR

(Looks around; calls)

Wendla...?

(No response)

Wendla...?

CHORUS OF CHILDREN (FROM OFF)

*And your soul is a bride, looking out from inside  
Of the bones of a ghost -- You're a man and a child,  
With the bones of the ghost, who gets left in the cold.  
You're locked out of peace, with no keys to your soul...*

(MELCHIOR crosses to a row of gravestones)

MELCHIOR

(Sighs)

Just look at you -- all of you, beneath your crosses and your dismal little wreaths... And here, a fresh one...

(He pauses, reads an epitaph)  
"Here Rests in God, Wendla Bergman --"

Wendla?!! O my God!!

"Born the... Died -- of Anemia...?!"

Then, I am... It's because of me that...

No. No. No...

MORITZ (FROM OFF)  
Melchior?

(MELCHIOR freezes)

MORITZ (Cont'd)  
Melchior, it's me.

(MELCHIOR spins around. MORITZ approaches,  
carrying his head beneath his arm)

MELCHIOR  
Moritz?

(MORITZ extends his hand, MELCHIOR hesitates)

MORITZ  
I came up specially.

MELCHIOR  
But, aren't you...?

MORITZ  
Yes -- sure.

MELCHIOR  
And... Wendla...?

MORITZ  
Wendla too.

MELCHIOR  
My God! Everyone I love is here -- beneath these stones.

MORITZ

("Ah, yes")  
Beneath your boots...  
                  (A beat)  
And yet, we stand above it all, Melchi -- the sorrow and  
the joy. The best part is, you see through everything.  
Take my hand, we'll soar from the top of that old church  
tower, and

                                  MORITZ (Cont'd)  
I'll show you.

                                  (MORITZ extends his hand)

                                  MELCHIOR  
Do you forget?  
MORITZ  
Anything. Everything. At last, there's peace.  
Contentment.

                                  (A beat. Sings:)  
                  *Come -- all forgiven --  
                  The life you never lived in.  
                  You will lie there with her,  
                  And tell her how you miss her.  
                  And all the thought, and the clouds will drift  
                  away...*

Let's go!

                                  (MELCHIOR extends his hand, and... WENDLA  
                                  enters -- in a blood-stained skirt)

                                  WENDLA  
Melchior -- no!!! Don't!!!

                                  MELCHIOR  
                  (Turning, seeing her)  
My God -- Wendla -- is it you?

                                  WENDLA  
Yes. Don't listen to him -- *please*.

                                  MORITZ  
I beg your pardon.

                                  WENDLA

He's lying, Melchior. The regret is still there.  
Everywhere.

MELCHIOR

But even so, I'll be with you.

MORITZ

Precisely.

WENDLA

No, you won't be. You won't be...

MELCHIOR

But how can I...?

WENDLA

*Cold, hell, and hunger;  
And knowing that you're done for.  
And everything is missing,  
But still it hurts like living.  
A world of phantoms lost in yesterday...*

MORITZ

*No more, the endless taunt  
Of all you think you want --  
The dreams that seem to haunt you through the day...*

*You have known enough here --  
It only goes on longer.*

WENDLA

*Still so much to learn from,  
This world that now you turn from --*

MORITZ

*Where nothing happens, with such amazing grace...*

WENDLA

*No more, the songs that steal --*

MORITZ

*Through the darkness that you feel --*

WENDLA

*The words that heal --*

MORITZ & WENDLA

*And the hurt you can't erase...*

(MELCHIOR extends his hand to MORITZ.  
MELCHIOR gazes into the distance)

MELCHIOR

*I'm listening now  
To the wind again --  
It haunts me.*

*A murmur. A doubt.  
A ghostly longing...*

*Nothing's only light or dark --  
In this world that breaks your heart.  
The shadows part, and the clouds will drift away...*

(As MELCHIOR grows stronger in his song,  
WENDLA and MORITZ drift out of the graveyard)

MELCHIOR (Cont'd)

*Do I suck it up again?  
Aren't you man enough to live?  
The heart will mend, and the clouds will drift away...*

*Just get on with it again.  
Just be man enough to live.  
The heart will mend,  
And the clouds will drift away...*

(MELCHIOR turns and walks out of the  
graveyard.)

The lights shift. ILSE wanders on)

ILSE

(Calling, as she searches)

Melchior...?

(No response)

Melchior Gabor...?

(No response. She looks about)

I guess they found him. And now they'll lock him up  
again.

Or maybe he got away.

(Sighs)  
Who knows...

(ILSE gazes into the distance)

ILSE (Cont'd)  
*And all shall fade --  
The flowers of spring,  
The world and all the sorrow  
At the heart of everything...*

(The CHORUS of CHILDREN enters, singing)

THE CHORUS OF CHILDREN  
*But still, it stays --  
The butterfly sings,  
And opens purple summer  
With a flutter of its wings*

*The earth will wave with corn,  
The grey-fly choir will mourn,  
And mares will neigh with  
Stallions that they mate, foals they've borne...*

*And all shall know the wonder  
Of purple summer...*

*And yet, I wait.  
The swallow brings  
A song too hard to follow,  
That no one else can sing...*

*The fences sway.  
The porches swing.  
The clouds begin to thunder,  
Crickets wander, murmuring --*

*The earth will wave with corn,  
The grey-fly choir will mourn,  
And mares will neigh with  
Stallions that they mate, foals they've borne...*

ALL  
*And all shall know the wonder --  
I will sing the song  
Of purple summer...*

*All shall know the wonder --  
I will sing the song  
Of purple summer...*

*All shall know the wonder  
Of purple summer...*

THE END