

SPRING AWAKENING

BOOK AND LIRICS BY
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SCENE 1

Wendla; is revealed in song light. as if at a mirror. She gently explores her newly maturing body, pulls on a near—transparent schoolgirl dress.

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 with come a—callin!

They light a candle, and hope that it glows.

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

(The lights shift to the world of 1891; a provincial German living room. Frau Bergman suddenly enters, beaming.

FRAU BERGMAN: Wendla!

WENDLA: Mama?

FRAU BERGMAN: Goodness, look at you — in that ... that kindergarten dress! Wendla, grown—
up girls cannot be seen strutting about in such —

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

FRAU BERGMAN: But you're already... in bloom.

(Off her look) Now, sssh. You made me forget all our good news.

Just imagine, Wendla, last night the stork finally visited your sister. Brought her another little baby girl.

WENDLA: I can't wait to see her Mama.

FRAU BERGMAN: Ell, put on a proper 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.)

Mama, please. I'm ashamed to even ask. But then, who can I ask but you?

FRAU BERGMAN: Wendla, child, you cannot imagine that I could —

WENDLA: But you cannot imagine I still believe in the stork.

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 run out, now, and ask Gregor? Our chimney sweep ...?

(A beat)

FRAU BERGMAN: Very well, I'll tell you everything.

But not today. Tomorrow. Or the day after.

WENDLA: Today, Mama.

FRAU BERGMAN: Wendla Bergman, I simply 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.

(No response.)

Please.

FRAU BERGMAN; Very well, I'll tell you.

(Wendla kneels. Flustered, Frau Bergman buries the girl's head in her apron.

WENDLA (Waits): Yes?

FRAU BERGMAN: Child, I ...

WENDLA: 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 in her own personal way, she must ... love her husband. Love him, as she can love only him. *Only* him ... she must love — with her whole... heart.

There. Now, you know everything.

WENDLA: Everything?...

FRAU BERGMAN: ("Yes") Everything. So help me.

WENDLA (Not budging): Mama!

(The lights shift — we are back in the song world. Contemporary music sounds. The Girls appear. Wendla rises and joins them. Shedding her nineteenth-century formality, she sings, as do all the Girls, in the manner of a contemporary young woman.)

WENDLA AND 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.

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 ...

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.

SCENE 2

School. The Boys sit upright at their desks, reciting from Virgil's Aeneid. They stand, one after the other, for their recitation. Herr Sonnenstich walks the aisles beside them, listening

HERR SONNENSTICH: Again.

OTTO (Mid—recitation):

... superum saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram

HERR SONNENSTICH: ("Well done"): Better, Herr Lammermeier. Continue, Herr Zirschnitz.

GEORG: multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem.

HERR SONNENSTICH: Herr Rilow. From the beginning.

HANSCHEN: Arma virumque cano, Troilae qui primus ab oris —

HERR SONNENSTICH: Herr Robel, And...

ERNST: ... Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venit litora —

HERR SONNENSTICH: Herr Stiefel.

(But, alas, Moritz is asleep)

Herr Stiefel.

MORITZ (Waking) Sir?...

HERR SONNENSTICH: Continue. Please, (Moritz hesitates) Herr Stiefel...

MORITZ (Haltingly): ... Laviniaque venit ...

HERR SONNENSTICH: Yes...?

MORITZ: ... litora ... multum enim —

HERR SONNENSTICH: "Multum enim"?

MORITZ (Taking another stab at it): ... multum olim —

HERR SONNENSTICH (Losing patience): "Olim"?! "Multum olim"...?! So then, somehow the Pious Aeneas has “already” suffered much "in the days still 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, Melchior rises.)

MELCHIOR: If you please!

HERR SONNENSTICH: Pardon me?

MELCHIOR (Covering gracefully) If you please, Herr Sonnenstich... can't we at least consider "multum olim" as a plausible conjecture for how the text might read?

HERR SONNENSTICH: Herr Gabor. We are hardly here today to conjecture about textual conjectures. The boy has made an error.

MELCHIOR: Yes. But an understandable error, sir, Indeed, if we could only entertain the fitness of the conjecture —

HERR SONNENSTICH: "Multum olim"?!

MELCHIOR: Look to the fresh rhetorical balance— “multum olim” introducing “multa quoque” — parallel, sir, between what Aeneas has already suffered in war and those sufferings on land and sea just ahead.

HERR SONNENSTICH: Herr Gabor, since the days of Servius, Aulus Gellius, and Claudius Donatus — nay, since the moment of Virgil's death — our world has been littered with more than sufficient critical commentary on textual conjecture.

MELCHIOR: With all respect, sir, are you then suggesting there is no further room for critical thought or interpretation? Why indeed, then, do we even —

HERR SONNENSTICH (Striking Melchior with his teacher's cane): I am suggesting no such thing. I am confirming that Herr Stiefel has made an error. And I am asking — nay, demanding — that you emend his faulty text and proceed from there. Do I make myself clear?

(Melchior's jaw locks.)

Herr Gabor?

(No response. He strikes Melchior more forcefully)

Herr Gabor, do I make myself clear?

MELCHIOR: Yes, Herr Sonnenstich: "litora multum ille."

HERR SONNENSTICH: All of you — together with Melchior Gabor:

"Laviniaque venit"

BOYS: ... litora, multum ille et terris iactatus alto vi superum saevae memorem iunonis ob...

(The Boy's 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. Shimmering song light finds Melchior. He turns out and sings — like a roker in concert:)

MELCHIOR:

All that's known

In History, in Science

Overthrow

At school, at home,

blind men.

You doubt them,

And soon they bark

and hound you —

Till everithing you say —

is just another bad

about you

All they say

Is, "Trust in What Is

Written"

BOYS:

... iram

multa quoque et bello

passus, dum conderet

urbem...

Arma virumque cano, Troiae

qui primus ab oris

Italiam, fato profugus,

Laviniaque venit

litora, multum ille et terris

iactatus et alto

vi superem saevae memorem

Iunonis ob iram;

multa quoque et bello

passu, dum conderet

Wars are made,
And somehow that is
wisdom.

urbem...

Thought is suspect,
And money is their idol,
And nothing is okay unless it's scripted in their Bible.
But I know
There's so much more to find —
Just in looking through myself, and not at them.

Stili, I know
To trust, my own true mind,
And to say: "There's a way through this..."

On I go,
To wonder and to learning —
Name the stars and know their dark returning.

I'm calling,
To know the world's true yearning —
The hunger that a child feels for everything they're shown.

You watch me —
Just watch me —
I'm calling,
I'm calling,
And one day all will know...

You watch me —
Just watch me —
I'm calling,
I'm calling,
And one day all will know...

(Melchior's song concludes. As he rejoins the Boys in their recitation, the lights shift back to the classroom.)

BOYS AND MELCHIOR . . . multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem...

HERR SONNENSTICH (On to fresh matters): Thank you, gentlemen. Now, if you please: "inferretque deos Latio" The following seven lines of Pious Aeneas' journey. From memory.

(The Boys begin scribbling. Herr Sonnenstich steps away. Moritz taps Melchior's shoulder.)

MORITZ (Sotto voce): Melchi, thank you.

MELCHIOR: It's nothing.

MORITZ: Still, I'm sorry. You didn't need to —

MELCHIOR ("Don't worry"; ironic): Think what Aeneas suffered.

MORITZ: But I should have known it, "Multum ille" It's just... I didn't sleep all night. In fact, I, uh, suffered a visit from the most horrific, dark phantasm...

MELCHIOR; You mean, a dream?...

MORITZ: A nightmare, really. Legs in sky blue stockings, climbing over the lecture podium.

MELCHIOR: Oh. That kind of dream.

MORITZ ("Indeed"): Have you ever suffered such mortifying visions?

MELCHIOR: Moritz, of course. We all have. Otto Lammermeier dreamt about his mother.

MORITZ: Really?!!

MELCHIOR: Georg Zirschnitz? Dreamt he was seduced by his piano teacher.

MORITZ: Fraulein Grossebustenthaler?!

HERR SONNENSTICH: (Suddenly, grabbing Moritz by the ear): Moritz Stefel. I need hardly remind you that, of all our pupils, you are in no position to be taking liberties. I will not warn you again.

(Moritz nods — absolutely petrified. An intense alt—rock guitar riff. Herr Sonnenstich freezes. The world around Moritz comes to a halt as concert—like lights find him. He turns out in song:)

MORITZ: God, I dreamed there was an angel, who could hear me through the wall,

As I cried out — like, in Latin: "This is so not life at all. Help me out—out—of this nightmare." Then I heard her silver call —

She said: "Just: give it time, kid. I come to one and all.

She said "Give me that hand, please, and the itch you can't control,
Let me teach you how to handle all the sadness, in your soul.

Oh, we'll work that silver magic, then we'll aim it at the wall".

She said: "Love may make you blind, kid — but I wouldn't mind at all."

(All the Boys except Melchior begin to move joining Moritz one by one, their energy building into a dance.)

MORITZ AND BOYS: It's the bitch of living

With nothing but your hand.

Just the bitch of living

As someone you can't stand ...

GEORG: See, each night, it's, like, fantastic — tossing, turning,
without rest,

'Cause my day's at the piano — with my teacher and her breast;

And the music's, like, the one thing I can even get at all,

And those breasts! I mean, God, please just let those apples fall...

BOYS: It's bitch of living

With nothing going on.

Just the bitch of living.

Asking: "What went wrong?"

Do they think we want this? Oh—who knows?

ERNST: See, there's showering in gym class...

HANSCHEN: Bobby Maler, he's the best —

Looks so nasty in those khakis ...

ERNST: God, my whole life's, lire, some test.

OTTO: Then there's: Madonna Wheelan—as if she'd return my call.

HANSCHEN: It's like, just kiss some ass, man—then you can screw 'em all.

(Melchior join the song.)

MELCHIOR: It's the bitch of living—

And living in your head.

It's the bitch of living,

And sensing God is dead.

MOIUTZ AND BOYS

It's the bitch of living

And trying to get ahead.

It's the bitch of living —

MELCHIOR

You watch me —

You watch me —

I'm calling,

And one day all will

know

MORITZ: Just, getting out or bed.

MORITZ AND BOYS: It's the bitch of living

And getting what you get,

Just the bitch or living—

MELCHIOR:

And knowing this is it.

MELCHIOR, MORITZ AND BOYS: God", is this it?

This can't be it. Oh God, wath a bitch!

(The song ends. The lights shift back. The school day resumes.)

HERR SONNENSTICH: Gentlemen, turn in your verses, and clear away your personal effects. I will see you tomorrow, seven A. M.

(Herr Sonnenstich goes out. The Boys gather their books.)

OTTO (Heading out): Well, I'm off.

ERNST! Me, too.

HANSCHEN: I'll walk wit you, Ernst.

ERNST (Pauses, turns back): You will?

HANSCHEN ("Yes"; suggestively): We'll huddle over the Homer.

Maybe do a little Achilles and Patroclus. (Hanschen leads Ernst orf.)

GEORG ("Good nigh"): Melchior, Moritz.

MELCHJOR (Archly): Home to Bach?...

GEORG: Fraulein Grossebustenthaler will not be kept waiting. (Georg shivers involuntarily, and goes. Melchior turns to Moritz with a wink, but Moritz waves, it away.)

MORITZ: Ach, Melchi! Sixty lines of Homer, all those quadratic equations... I'll be up all night again, haunted by another of those... dreams. And still I won't get through it.

MELCHIOR: Oh, yes. Your dream.

MORITZ ("the horror!"). Melchi, why—why—am I haunted by the legs or a woman? By the deepening conviction: some dark part of my destiny may lie there between them?

MELCHIOR: All right then, I'll tell you. I got it out of books. But prepare yourself: it made an atheist out of me.

(A beat.)

So—

MORITZ: No no — not here! I can't talk it! No — do me do favor: write it down. *All* of it. Conceal it in my satchel — after Gymnastics — tomorrow.

(A beat.)

If you like, you could add some illustrations in the margins. (A beat.)

MELCHIOR: Top to bottom?

MORITZ: Everything. (Headmaster Knochenbruch and his associate, Fraulein Knuppeldick, stroll past and pause.)

HEER KNOCHENBRUCH: Unfathomable, Fraulein Knuppeldick.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Herr Knochenbruch...?

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: Look at that. Melchior Gabor, a young man of distinct intellectual capability—

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK Thoroughly distinct.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: A young man who could be our finest pupil —

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Our finest, Herr Knochenbruch.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: But there he is, polluting himself, cavorting about with that, that

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Neurasthenic imbecile, Moritz Stiefel?

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: Thank Heaven the upper grade only holds sixty

(Herr Knochenbruch and Fraulein Knuppeldick go off)

SCENE 3

Late afternoon. A bridge in the countryside. Wendla, Martha, Thea and Anna walk home, talking excitedly.

THEA (Mid-conversation) :... And the bodice in lace, with a satin bow in back...

ANNA: Ooh! And Wendla —what will you wear to Greta Brandenburg's wedding?

WENDLA: Mama said we cannot go.

THEA: To Greta's wedding?!

MARTHA: Because she's marrying that forest inspector?

WENDLA: Mama felt it was a little improper.

ANNA: But, they're decking the entire sanctuary in orchids and chrysanthemums!...

WENDLA: Mama said no.

(Anna and Thea exchange a look.)

ANNA: I certainly hope your mama approves the man I marry.

THEA: And the man I marry.

WENDLA (Teasing): Well, we all know who Thea longs to marry!

MARTHA: Melchior Gabor!

THEA ("Gimme a break"): And who doesn't?

ANNA (Still playful): He is rather handsome

WENDLA: SOo wonderful.

MARTHA (Her secret crush): But not so wonderful as that sad soulful sleepyhead, Moritz Stiefel.

ANNA AND THEA: Moritz Stiefel!?

THEA: How can you even compare them? Melchi Gabor he's such a radical. You know what the whisper is?

(An the Girls lean in, eager to bear)

He doesn't believe in anything, Not in Cod.

(The Girls gasp in wonder)

Not in Heaven.

(Another gasp.)

Not in a single thing in this world.

(The Girls utter a final collective sigh.)

ANNA: They say he's the best, in everything. Latin, Creek, Trigonometry...

THEA: The best part is: he doesn't care a whit about any of it...

(Music begins—an innocent uptempo feel. The Girls turn out—glistening in girl—group light:)

WENDLA: In the midst, or 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.

ANNA: It's like I'm your l'over—or, more like your ghost—

I spend the day wonderin' what you do, where you go...

THEA: I try and just kick it, but then, what can I do?

We've all got our junk, and my junk is you.

GIRLS: See us walkin' — after a storm.

It's chill in the wind —but it's warm in your arms.

We stop, all got our blind—may not be true.

But we've all go to our junk, and my junk is you.

(The lights shift, revealing Georg at his piano. Fraulein Grossebustenthaler hovers.) ‘

FRAULEIN GROSSEBUSTENTHALER: Well done, Georg. And now, the Prelude in C Minor...

(Georg begins playing Bach's Prelude. As he does, Fraulein Grossebustenthaler touches his hand. He lets out an illicit sigh—a moment, or private bliss. The lights shift revealing Hanschen seated in his bathroom, wearing his nightshirt. He pulls a reproduction of Correggio's *Io* from his pocket. His free hand sneaks under his nightshirt.)

HANSCHEN: (To Io/Desdemona): Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona? You don't look like you're praying, darling—lying there, contemplating the coming bliss...

(A knocking on the door. Hanschen freezes.)

HERR RILOW: Hanschen, you all right?

HANSCHEN: My stomach again... Father, But I'll be fine.

HERR RILOW: Yes?

HANSCHEN: Fine.

HERR RILOW Well, then.

(Herr Rilow goes. Slowly and steadily, Hanschen begins to masturbate—building steam as the scene continues.

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 Fraulein Grossebustenhalter sternly interrupts Georg's playing.)

FRAULEIN GROSSEBUSTENHALTER: No, no! Georg, please. Again. And t his time, bring out the left hand.

(Fraulein Grossebustenhalter touches his hand again double the bliss. Hanschen dutifully switches hands—to the left.)

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 driving me to ...

(A knocking at the bathroom door. Hanschen freezes)

HERR RILOW: Hanschen, that's enough in there.

HANSCHEN: Yes .. sir.

HERR RILOW: Back to bed.

(Hanschen does not move.)

Son?

HANSCHEN; One minute.

(Hanschen waits, listening. Herr Rilow goes. Hanschen redoubles his extersions)

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

(Fraulein Grossebustenthaler claps, interrupting Georg's playing.)

FRAULEIN GROSSEBUSTENTHALER: Répétez, s'il vous plaît.

(Georg turns out and sings. We enter the world of his fantasy.)

GEORG: Well, you'll have to excuse me, I know it's so off.

I love when you do stuff that's rude and so wrong.

(Fraulein Grossebustenthaler rips open her bodice, exposing her bustier. Georg beckons her onto his lap and fondles her. As he does, Hanschen turns out, in a world of his own:)

HANSCHEN: I go up to my room, turn the stereo on,

Shoot up some you in the "you" of some song.

(The Girls surround Hanschen, dancing. Oblivious to their charms, he only has eyes—and thumbs—for his Io. The Boys join in, as a vocal chorus:)

GIRLS, MORITZ, GEORG AND OTTO: I lie back, just driftin' and play out these scenes.

I ride on the rush—all the hopes, all the dreams ...

ANNA: I may be neglectin' things I should do. We've all got our junk, and my junk is you.

BOYS AND GIRLS! See, we still keep talkin'—after you're gone.

You're still with me then—feels so good in my arms. They say you go blind—maybe it's true.

But we've all got our junk, I and my junk is you....

(As the song reaches a climax so does Hanschen)

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

And my junk is you— You—you—you.

SCENE 4

Evening, Melchior's study. A lamp burning on the table. Melchior sits alone writing in his journal.

MELCHIOR (Reading aloud as he writes): 16 October, The question is: Shame. What is its origine
And why are we hounded by its miserable shadow?
Does the mare feel Shame as she couples with a stallion?
Are they deaf to everything their loins are telling them, until we grant them a marriage
certificate? I think not.
To my mind, Shame is nothing but a product of Education, Meanwhile, old Father Kaulbach
still blindly insists, in every single sermoni that it's deeply rooted in our sinful Human Nature,
Which is why I now refuse to go to Church—

FRAU GABOR (From off): Melchior?

MELCHIOR: Yes, Mama?

FRAU GABOR (From off): Moritz Stiefel to see you. (Melchior sits up. Moritz enters, looking pale
und agitated.)

MELCHIOR: Moritz

MORITZ: Sorry I'm so late. I yanked on a jacket, ran a brush through my hair, and dashed 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—reading that essay
you gave me, till I couldn't see straight.

MELCHIOR; Sit. Let me roll you a smoke.

(Melchior rolls Moritz a cigarette.)

MORITZ: Look at me — I'm trembling. Last night I prayed like Christ in Gethsemane: "Please, God, give me Consumption and take these sticky dreams away from me."

MELCHIOR: With any luck, he'll ignore that prayer.

MORITZ: Melchi, I can't focus —on anything. Even now, it seems like... Well, I see, and hear, and feel, quite clearly, And ye t, everything seem so strange...

MELCHIOR: But all those illustrations I gave you — didn't they help illuminate your dreams?

MORITZ: They only multiplied everything ten times! Instead of merely seeing Stockings, now I'm plagued by Labia Majora and—

(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 (Busting him): Just think, Mama. Moritz was up, reading all through the night.

MORITZ; Uh, conjugating Greek,

FRAU GABOR: You must take care or yourself, Moritz. Surely, your health is more important than Ancient Greek. (Indicating his books) Now, what have you been reading, Melchior?

MELCHIOR: Goethe's Faust, actually.

FRAU GABOR: Really? At your age?...

MELCHIOR: It's so beautiful, Mama.

MORITZ ("Indeed")): So haunting, t

RAU GABOR: Still, I should have thought... But surely, you boys are now of an age to decide for yourselves what is good for you and what is not. (Sighs) If you need anything else, children, call me.

(Frau Gabor goes out.)

MORITZ: Well, your Mother certainly is remarkable.

MELCHIOR ("Yes, but"): Until she catches her son reading Goethe.

MORITZ: I think she meant the story of Gretchen and her illegitimate child.

MELCHIOR: Yes. You see how obsessively everyone fixes on that story. It's as if the entire world were mesmerized by penis and vagina.

MORITZ: Well, I am. All the more so I'm afraid, since reading your essay. What you wrote about the... *female* I can't stop thinking about it. (Pulls aut the essay) This part here—is it true?

MELCHIOR: Absolutely.

MORITZ: But, how can you understand that, Melchi? What the *woman* must feel.

MELCHIOR (“Why not?”): Giving yourself over to someone else?... Defending yourself until, finally, you surrender and feel Heaven break over you? ...

(Moritz nods.)

I just put myself in her place—and imagine...

MORITZ (“You’ve, got to be kidding”): Really?! (Flipping through the essay—one diagram after another—increasingly mesmerized) What it feels like? ... for the woman?...

(A twelve—string guitar sounds — subtle chords, a world of longing. The Boys and Girls gather around Melchior and Moritz in radiant light, singing and moving as a chorus. The Boys hold copies or Melchior's essay.)

MELCHIOR: Where I go, when I go there

No more memory anymore —

Only drifting on some ship;

The wind that wishpers, of distance, to shore

MORITZ: Where I go, when I go there,

No more listening anymore—

Only hymns upon your lips;

A mystic wisdom rising with them, to shore ...

ERNST: Touch me—just like that.

And that—O, yeah — now, that’s heaven.

Now, that I like.

God, that’s so nice.

Now lover down, where the figs lie ...

(Melchior turns back to Moritz. The lights shift back to the lamplit study, but the Boys and Girls hover, singing quietly, underscoring the scene.)

MORITZ (Still in his private moment with the diagrams):... Still, you must admit... with all the differing... (Mispronouncing, with a “hard g”) geni... geni...

MELCHIOR (Correcting his pronunciation)! Genitalia?

MORITZ: Genitalia. It truly is daunting — I mean, how... everything might...

MELCHIOR: Measure up?

(Moritz looks stricken)

Fit?

(More stricken)

Moritz, not that I'm saying I myself have ever —

MORITZ: Not that I'm saying I wouldn't want... Would ever want to not— Would ever not want...

MELCHIOR: : Moritz?

MORITZ: I have to go!

(Moritz abruptly rushes out.)

MELCHIOR: Moritz, wait

(But he's gone)

More to himself Moritz...

(Frau Gabor enters, and clears the tea)

FRAU GABOR: Melchior, what is it?

MELCHIOR: Nothing, Mama.

FRAU GABOR: Has Moritz gone?

MELCHIOR: Yes.

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

(Frau Gabor exits. Melchior shakes his head, incredulous. The world recedes. All reenter the song.)

OTTO: Where I go, when I go there,

No more shadows anymore —

Only you there in the kiss;
And nothing missing, as you're drifting, to shore...

GEORG: Where I go, when I go there,
No more weeping anymore —
Only in and our your lips;
The broken, washing, with them shore...

MELCHIOR AND MORITZ: 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 AND GIRLS: Touch me—
GEORG — just try it
Now there—that's it—God, that's heaven.
I'll love your light.
I'll love you right...
We'll wander down where the sins cry...

BOYS AND GIRLS. Touch me — just like that.
Now lower down, where the sins lie...

Lave me — just for a bit...
We'll wander down, where the winds sigh...

Where the winds sigh...
Where the winds sigh...

SCENE 5

Afternoon. Melchior and Wendla discover each other in the woods.

WENDLA: Melchior Gabor?

MELCHIOR (In disbelief): Wendla Bergman? Like a tree—nymph fallen from the branches. What are you doing—alone up here?

WENDLA: Mama's making May wine. I thought I'd surprise her with some woodruff. And you?

MELCHIOR: This is my favorite spot, My private place—for thinking,

WENDLA (starts away): Oh. I'm sorry

MELCHIOR: No—no, Please,

(She pauses.)

So... how have you been doing?

WENDLA: Well, this morning was wonderful. Our youth group brought baskets of food and clothing to the day-laborers' children,

MELCHIOR: I remember when we used to do that, Together.

WENDLA: You should have seen their faces, Melchior. How much we brightened their day.

MELCHIOR: Actually, it's something I've been thinking a lot about.

WENDLA: The day-laborers?

MELCHIOR ("No"): Our little acts of charity. What do you think, Wendla, can our Sunday School deeds really make a difference?

WENDLA: They have to. Of course. What other hope do those people have?

MELCHIOR: I don't know, exactly. But I fear that industry is fast determining itself firmly against them.

WENDLA: Against us all, then.

MELCHIOR: Thank you, yes!

WENDLA: It seems to me: what serves each of us best is what serves all of us best.

MELCHIOR: Indeed.

(A beat)

Wendla Bergman, I have known you all these years, and we've never truly talked.

WENDLA: We have so few opportunities. Now that we're older.

MELCHIOR: True. In a more progressive world, of course, we could all attend the same school. Boys and girls together. Wouldn't that be remarkable?

(In the moment of intellectual engagement, Melchior has drawn so close to Wendla that she grows self-conscious and pulls back.)

WENDLA: What time is it?

MELCHIOR: Must be close to four.

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

MELCHIOR: Then, 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 be back before five.

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

WENDLA: Well, for a moment maybe.

(Wendla, and Melchior settle beneath the oak. The lights shift, isolating them in a world of vibrant shadow. A classic arpeggio begins.)

Just too unreal, all this.

Watching the words fall from my lips.

MELCHIOR: Baiting some girl—with hypotheses!

WENDLA AND MELCHIOR: Haven't you heard the word of your body?

(Melchior reaches, tentatively, takes Wendla's hand. They begin a private pas de deux.)

MELCHIOR: Don't feel a thing—you wish

WENDLA: Grasping at pearls with my fingertips ...

MELCHIOR: Holding her hand like some little tease.

WENDLA AND 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.

Just too unreal, all this.

WENDLA: Watching his world slip through my fist

MELCHIOR: Playing with her in your fantasies.

WENDLA AND MELCHIOR: 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.

(The lights shift. Back to the woods.)

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

MELCHIOR (Touches her): We'll go together. I'll have you on the bridge in ten minutes.

(She hesitates, then allows him to take her hand. They walk off together.)

SCENE 6

The schoolyard. Georg, Hanschen, Ernst and Otto wait expectantly.

OTTO (Pointing): Look—there he is!

(Moritz, bounds on.)

HANSCHEN: So, did you get caught?

MORITZ: No — no — thank God —

ERNST: But, you're trembling ..

MORITZ: For joy. For pure and certain joy!

GEORG (Sarcastic): Cross your heart?

MORITZ: Twice over!

(Melchior enters.)

ERNST: Melchior!

MELCHIOR: Moritz, I've been looking for you.

GEORG: He snuck into the headmaster's office.

MELCHIOR: Moritz, what were you thinking?

MORITZ: I had to, Melchi. I just had to. The good news is: I passed!

HANSCHEN: The middle—terms, that is.

MORITZ: Yes, Everything will now be determined by me final exams. Still, I know I passed. Truly,
Heaven must feel like this.

(Melchior embraces Moritz. The lights shift. Headmaster Knochenbruch is revealed, as if in his office. He turns to Fraulein Knuppeldick.)

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: Well, well, Fraulein Knuppeldick.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Herr Knochenbruch?

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: Now that... that skittish, near-aphasic moron...

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Moritz Stiefel.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH (“Indeed”): Has somehow passed our middle-term exams, it would appeal we face a certain dilemma.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Ah.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: The upper grade, as we know, will hold only sixty. I hardly think we can promote sixty-one,

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Hardly;, Herr Knochenbruch. But, let us look to the finals ahead.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: Yes?...

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Remember, it is I who shall be marking them.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH:, Then I am assured the good name of our school is secure,

(Herr Knochenbruch and Fraulein Knuppeldick exchange a look.)

SCENE 7

Afternoon. A windy day. Wendla, Martha, Thea and Anna walk arm in arm.

ANNA: Shall we take the short way home?

THEA: No no—by the bridge.

WENDLA: After two hours marching with that medicine ball?!

THEA: Come on!

ANNA (Teasing): Someone wants to see: has Melchi Gabor taken a raft out?

THEA (“Even so”): Last one there has to hold hands with Hanschen!...

(The Girls start off.)

ANNA: Martha, careful—your braid's coming loose.

MARTHA (Concerned)! No.

THEA: Just let it. Isn't it a nuisance for you—day and night. You may not cut it short, you may not wear it down...

WENDLA: Tomorrow, I'm bringing scissors.

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

WENDLA: Really?

MARTHA: No, no, I— It's nothing

THEA: Martha?...

ANNA; Martha, where your friends...

(A beat.)

MARTHA: Well, when I don't do as he likes...

ANNA: What?

MARTHA: Some nights ... Papa yanks out his belt.

THEA: But where is your mama?

MARTHA: "We have rules in this house. Your father will not be disobeyed."

(A beat.)

The other night, I ran for the door. "Out the door? All right, I like that. That's where you'll spend the night—out on the street."

THEA: No!

MARTHA: It was so cold.

ANNA: My God.

(A beat)

WENDLA: : He beats you with a belt?

MARTHA: Anything ..

WENDLA: With a buckle?

MARTHA (Rolls up her sleeve): Right there...

ANNA: Oh my God!

WENDLA: Martha, the welts—they're terrible.

ANNA: We must tell someone.

MARTHA: Anna, no!

ANNA: But we must.

MARTHA: No, no, please. They'd throw me out for good.

THEA: Like what happened to Ilse, you mean.

WENDLA! Remember!

ANNA:. But still...

MARTHA: Anna, no. (The utter degradation) Just look what's become of Ilse now! Living who knows where—with who knows who?!

WENDLA: Just wish I could somehow go through it for you...

(A beat.)

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

MARTHA: That must be. (A beat.)

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

THEA: Free? But how will we know what to do if our parents don't tell us?

(A menacing eighth-note guitar riff. The lights shift. We enter the song world of Martha. Her mother, Frau Bessell, casting a long shadow.

Over the course of the first verses, Wendla, Anna and Thea walk off, one after the other.)

FRAU BESSELL: Martha, time for bed now.

MARTHA; There is a part I can't tell

About the dark I know well...

FRAU BESSELL: Martha, darling? ...

(No response.)

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

MARTHA: 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 treat you right.

It's just you and me.

Child, you're a beauty."

(A knocking on a door. Ilse is revealed in song light. Her father, Herr Neumann, peers out of the dark.)

HERR NEUMANN: Ilse ...? Ilse. Story time.

ILSE: 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".

ILSE AND MARTHA: Me and my "beauty"...

ILSE MARTHA AND BOYS: 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"

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.

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.

SCENE 8

The woods. Melchior sits, writing his journal.

MELCHIOR (Reading aloud as he write): 27 November, The trouble is: the terrible prerogative of the... Parentocracy in Secondary Education ...

(The lights shift, rising on Moritz iD the schoolyard. Herr Knochenbruch, and fraulein Knuppeldick summon him.)

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Herr Stiefel, may we have a word with you?

(Moritz stiffens.)

MELCHIOR (Continuing in his journal) ... a world where teachers—like parents—view us as merely so much raw material for an obedient and productive society...

(Her Knochenbruch and fraulein Knuppeldick approach Moritz, and address him in private conference.)

... a unified, military-like body, where all that is weak must be hammered away...

(Herr Knochenbruch and Fraulein Knuppeldick continue on their way, leaving Moritz looking like a ghost.)

... where the progress of the students reflects back only on the rank and order of the faculty, and therefore a single low mark can be seen as a threat to—

(Moritz: wanders off—lost. Wendla approaches Melchior.)

WENDLA: Melchior?

MELCHIOR (Jumps up, startled): You?!...

WENDLA (Shrugs): I was lying by the stream, and then... I saw you here...

MELCHIOR: Yes.

(An awkward pause.)

WENDLA: So...

MELCHIOR: So... the stream. Dreaming again?...

WENDLA: I was, I guess.

MELCHIOR: And what were you dreaming of?

WEN OLA: It's silly.

MELCHIOR: Tell me.

WENDLA: I dreamed I was a clumsy little girl, who spilt my father's coffee. And when he saw what I had done, he yanked out his belt and whipped me.

MELCHIOR: Wendla, that kind of thing doesn't happen anymore. Only in stories,.

WENDLA: Martha Bessell 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... I've never been beaten. Not once. I can't even imagine it. It must be just awful.

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

WENDLA; I've tried hitting myself—to find out how it feels, really, inside.

(Wendla sees a switch on the ground und picks it up.)

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

(She offers Melchior the switch. He takes it. Tries it through the air.)

MELCHIOR: It'd draw blood.

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

MELCHtIQR: 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: Have you lost your mind?

WENDLA: Martha Bessell, she told me—

MELCHIOR! Wendla! You can't envy someone being beaten.

WENDLA: But I've never been beaten—my entire life. I've never... felt...

MELCHIOR: What?

WENDLA: Anything.

(No response.)

Please. Melchior...

(She offers him her backside. He considers, then strikes her lightly)

I don't feel it:

MELCHIOR: Maybe not, with your dress on. (Wendla hikes her skirt, offering Melchior the prospect of her somewhat more exposed backside.)

WENDLA: On my legs, then.

MELCHIOR: Wendla!

WENDLA: Come on. Please.

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

(He firmly takes her by the arm, and strikes her with the switch.)

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

(He strike her again.)

MELCHIOR: How's that then?

WENDLA: Martha's father, he uses his belt. He draws blood, Melchi.

(Melchior strikes her again.)

MELCHIOR: How's that?

WENDLA (A lie): Nothing,

MELCHIOR: And that?

WENDLA: Nothing.

MELCHIOR: You bitch. I'll beat the hell out of you.

(Melchior flings the switch aside and throws Wendla to the ground, so violently that she begins sobbing.

Suddenly, he realizes what he's done. He stumbles, sobbing, into the woods. Otto and Georg are revealed, soulful members of the band.)

OTTO (Gently): O, you're gonna be wounded.

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

OTTO AND GEORG: O, I'm gonna bruise you.

O, you're gonna be my bruise

SCENE 9

The Stiefel sitting room, Moritz approaches his father, Herr Stiefel.

MORITZ: Father ...?

HERR STIEFEL: Moritz.

(Moritz remains silent.)

Yes ...?

MORITZ: Well, I, uh, was wondering—hypothetically speaking—what would happen if.

HERR STIEFEL: “If...”?

MORITZ: If ... one day, I uh, failed. Not that —

HERR STIEFEL: You're telling me you've failed?

MORITZ: No—no! I only meant—

HERR STIEFEL: You have failed, haven't you? I can see it on your face.

MORITZ: Father, no!

(Herr Stiefel strikes Moritz.)

Father—!

(Herr Stiefel strikes Moritz again. And again. He turns away in disgust.)

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

(A beat.)

Failed.

(A beat.)

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

(No response.)

You tell me, Son,. What?

(No response.)

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 beat.)

Thank God my father never lived to see this day.

(The lights fade, and simultaneously rise one)

SCENE 10

Two discrete spaces are revealed. Over the course of the scene, the lights shift back and forth between them.

Frau Gabor sits, as if in her study, writing a letter.

Moritz steps forward, on the other side of the stage—in brilliant concert light—reading that letter.

A driving beat underscores the scene, building as Moritz sings.

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 (to curb this momentary loss of —

MORITZ: The thing that sucks—okay? —for me,

A thousand bucks, I'm, like, scot-free.

And I mean, please... That's all I need.

Get real—okay? 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 (could have the gravest possible effect on) —

MORITZ: You wanna laugh. It's too absurd.

You start to ask. Can't hear a word.

You wanna 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: 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. I Consider, for example, that rare and estimable essayist, Leopold Habebald—

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?

Who knows? 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.

(The Boys stride forward, one after the other, and join Moritz—a rousing punk—rock anthem)

MORITZ AND HANSCHEN: Uh—huh... uh—huh ... uh—huh... well, fine. Not like it's even worth the time. But still, you know, you wanted more.

HANSCHEN: Okay, so nothing's changed.

MORITZ: Heard that before.

MORITZ AND OTTO: You wanna laugh. It's too absurd.

You start to ask. Can't hear a word.

OTTO: You're gonna crash and burn.

MORITZ: Right, tell me more.

MORITZ AND ERNST: You start to cave. You start to cry.

You start to run. Nowhere to hide.

GEORG: 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.

(Lights aut on Frau Gabor. Moritz commands his post—punk space.)

MORITZ: Just fuck it—right? Enough. That's it. You'll stili go on. Well, for a bit.

Another day of utter shift—

And then the re were no ne.

MORITZ AND OTTO: And then there were none...

MORITZ, OTTO AND GEORG: And then there were none...

MORITZ AND BOYS: And then there were none...

(Moritz: withdraws a gun from his vest poket and strides off.)

SCENE 11

A minimalist electronica motif sounds, Melchior is revealed in a haunted world of song. Distraught. Unable to shake the thought of what he's done to Wendla. He hounds his body with his hands. The Boys look on, and join as a chorus.

BOYS: 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: But there's nowhere to hide from these bones, from my mind.

It's broken inside—I'm a man and a child.

I'm at home with a ghost, who got left in the cold.

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

BOYS: And the whispers of fear, the chill up the spine,

Will steal away too, with a flick of the light.

The minute you do, with fingers so blind,

You remove, every bit of the blue from your mind.

MELCHIOR AND BOYS: But there's nowhere to hide, from the ghost in my mind,

It's cold in these bones— of a man and a child.

And there's no one who knows, and there's nowhere to go.

There's no one to see who can see to my soul...

(Wendla enters, holding Melchior's journal. The lights shift abruptly— from a cool "mirror blue" to the warm light, of dusk—revealing Melchior in a hayloft.)

WENDLA: SO, here you are.

MELCHIOR: Go away. Please,

WENDLA; There's a storm coming, you know. You can't sit sulking in some hayloft.

MELCHIOR: Out.

(A beat.)

WENDLA: Everyone's at Church,. Rehearsing for our Michaelmas chorale. I slipped out.

MELCHIOR: Yes. Well.

(A beat.)

WENDLA: Your friend Moritz Stiefel is absent. Someone said he's been missing all day.

MELCHIOR: I expect he's had his fill of Michaelmas.

WENDLA: Perhaps.

(A beat.)

You know, I have your journal.

MELCHIOR: You do?!

WENDLA: You left it. The other day. I confess, I tried reading part of it —

MELCHIOR: Just leave it. Please.

(Wendla climbs into the hayloft, sets down the journal.)

WENDLA: Melchior, I'm sorry about what happened. Truly, I am. I understand why you'd be
angry at me. I don't know what I was thinking —

MELCHIOR: Don't.

WENDLA: But how can I not—

MELCHIOR: Please, Please. Don't.

(A beat.)

We were confused. We were both just...

WENDLA: But it was my fault that —

MELCHIOR: Don't—please—no! It was me—all me,. Something in me started, when I hit you,.

WENDLA: Something in me, too.

MELCHIOR: But I hurt you —

WENDLA: Yes, but still —

MELCHIOR; No more! My God. No more. Just—please.

(A beat.)

You should go.

(A beat. Wendla kneels beside Melchior.)

WENDLA: Won't you come out to the meadow now, Melchior? It's dark in here, and stuffy,. We can run through the rain —get soaked to the skin—and not even care.

MELCHIOR: Forgive me ...

WENDLA: It was me. All me.

(Wendla cradles his head on her breast.)

MELCHIOR: I can hear your heart beat, Wendla.

(Melchior reaches to kiss Wendla.)

WENDLA: Oh Melchi—

(Then, hesitating) I don't know.

MELCHIOR (Cradling her head on his breast): No matter where I am, I hear it, beating...

WENDLA: And I hear yours. (Melchior leans close, kisses Wendla.)

Melchior ...

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

No—wait—no—

MELCHIOR: Wendla...

WENDLA: Wait—stop. I can't. We're not supposed to.

MELCHIOR! What? (No response.) Not supposed to what? Love? I don't know—is there such a thing I hear your heart.

(Gospel—tinged music with a modern groove begins. The Boys and Girls are revealed, gathered in quiet chorus.)

... I feel you breathing—everywhere—the rain, the hay... Please ... Please ... Wendla.

(He presses himself forward. Kisses her.)

BOYS AND GIRLS (Quietly): I believe,

I believe,

I believe,

Oh I believe.

All will be forgiven—I believe.

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

WENDLA: Melchi, no—it just—it's...

MELCHIOR: What? Sinful?

WENDLA: No. I don't know...

MELCHIOR: Then, why? Because it's good? (No response.) Because it makes us "feel" something?

(Wendla considers then suddenly reaches and pulls Melchior to her. She kisses, him. He holds her, and gently helps her lie back)

BOYS AND GIRLS: I believe,

I believe,

I believe,

Oh I believe.

All will be forgiven—I believe.

I believe,

I believe,

I believe,

Oh I believe.

There is love in Heaven —I believe.

MELCHIOR: Don't be scared, (Wendla hesitates, then nods. Melchior kisses her. Touches her breast.)

WENDLA: No.

MELCHIOR: Please—

WENDLA: Don't, It...

MELCHIOR: What?

(Wendla takes his hand, places it back ON her breast.)

BOYS AND GIRLS: I believe,

I believe,

I believe,

Oh I believe.

There is love in Heaven —I believe.

I believe,

I believe,

I believe,

Oh I believe.

All will be forgiven—I believe.

(Melchior starts to unbutton Wendla's dress. He gently reaches up her legs.)

WENDLA: Wait... io

MELCHIOR: It's just me. (Off her look; reassuring her) It's just me.

BOYS AND GIRLS: I believe,

I believe,

I believe,

Oh I believe.

There is love in Heaven.

All will be forgiven.

There is love in Heaven.

All will be forgiven.

I believe...

There is love in Heaven.

I believe...

All will be forgiven.

I believe...

There is love in Heaven.

I believe...

All will be forgiven.

I believe...

There is love in Heaven.

I believe...

All will be forgiven.

(Melchior, reaches inside Wendla's undergarments, strokes her gently.)

WENDLA: Now, there—now, that's...

MEICHIOR: Yes...?

WENDLA: Yes.

(As the song continues, Melchior climbs on top of Wendla, lowers his pants.)

BOYS AND GIRLS: I believe...

There is love in Heaven.

I believe...

All will be forgiven.

BOYS AND GIRLS:

I believe...

There is love in Heaven.

I believe...

All will be forgiven.

I believe...

There is love in Heaven.

I believe...

All will be forgiven.

Peace and joy be with them,

Harmony and wisdom...

OTHER GIRLS

Peace and joy be with

them

(Melchior penetreres Wendla.)

WENDIA: Melchior—oh! ...

BOYS AND GIRLS: I believe...

(The song ends. The lights fade. End of Act One).

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

Dusk. Church. The same time, the same day as the close of Act One. Music underscores, as Father Kaulbach delivers his sermon.

FATHER KAULBACH (Mid-sermon): ... Let us then turn today, children, to an adage much loved of Martin Luther: "To God, to our parents, to our teachers, we can never render sufficient gratitude."

(The scene shifts, revealing Wendla and Melchior in the hayloft. They are once again in their moment of love-making as Father Kaulbach continues:)

How well we know: these words may strike our modern ear as merely quaint. As dubious. As old. And yet, let us pose this question—each of us—within our dark heart: in what ways have we honored, or dishonored, our father and mother? In what ways have we strayed—in soul, in body—from all the wise instruction of our clergymen, our teachers?

(The light fades on Father Kaulbach. Melchior gently, withdraws himself from Wendla)

MELCHIOR: Are you all right, Wendla?

(A song begins—subtly sweeping electronic keyboards. Concert light finds Wendla. The lights shift between the world of cloudless song and the lovers's uncertain moment in the hay-loft. The Boys and Girls look on, and sing as a chorus.)

WENDLA: Something's started crazy —

Sweet and unknown.

Something you keep

In a box on the street—

Now it's longing for a home

WENDLA, GIRLS AND BOYS: And who can say what dreams are...

WENDLA: Wake me in time to be lonely and sad.

WENDLA, GIRLS AND BOYS: And who can say what we are?...

WENDLA: This is the season for dreaming...

And now our bodies are the guilty ones,
Who touch,
And color the hours;
Night won breathe
Oh how we
Fall in silence from the sky,
And whisper some silver reply ...

MELCHIOR (Still intent on his question): Wendla ...?

WENDLA: I think so. Yes.

MELCHIOR: Pulse is gone and racing —

All fits and starts,
Window by window
you try and look into
This brave new you that you are.

MELCHIOR, GIRLS AND BOYS: And who can say what dreams are? ...

MELCHIOR: Wake me in Time to be out in the cold.

MELCHIOR, GIRLS AND BOYS: And who can say what we are?...

MELCHIOR: This is the reason for dreaming...

MELCHIOR, WENDLA, GIRLS AND BOYS: And now our bodies are the guilty ones—

Our touch
Will fill every hour
Huge and dark,
Oh our hearts
Will murmur the blues from on high,
Then whisper some silver reply...

GIRLS AND BOYS: Wo-o-Wo-o-o

(The Boys and Girls gather like an, alt-rock choir around Melchior and Wendla. Father Kaulbach is again revealed in church.)

FATHER KAULBACH: Ah, but children, children, in what ways have we cloaked, and hidden even from ourselves, the secret bargains we have made with our own devils...?

MELCHIOR, WENDLA, GIRLS AND BOYS: And now our bodies are the guilty ones...

(Moritz strides on, waving everyone away.)

MORITZ: Enough, Enough, Enough.

(The lights go electric holding on Moritz.)

SCENE 2

Moritz looks out, as if he were the frontman in a garage band.

MORITZ: Awful sweet to be a little butterfly.
Just winging over things, and nothin' deep inside.
Nothin' gojn', goin' wild in you—you know—
you're slowin' by the riverside 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 you mouth al 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.

(The song ends, and the lights shift. Twilight. A river, Moritz stands alone. He withdraws, a gun from his pocket. Ilse suddenly enters. Sees him.)

ILSE: Moritz Stiefel!

MORITZ (Frantically hiding the gun): 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 whatr's the use of looking?

(A beat)

MORITZ: So, where have you been keeping yourself?

ILSE: Priapia—the Artists' colony?

MORITZ: Yes.

ILSE: All those old buggers, Moritz. All so wild. So... Bohemian. All they want to do is dress me up and paint me! That Johan Fehrendorf, he's, il wicked one, actually. Always knocking easels down and chasing me. Dabbing me with his paintbrush. But then, that's men— if they can't stick you with one thing, they'll try another.

Oh God, Moritz, the other day we all got so drunk. I passed out in the snow—just lay there, unconscious, all night. Then, I spent all entire week with Gustav Baum, (Off his look) Truly. Inhaling that ether of his! Until this morning, when he woke me with a gun, set against my breast, He said: "One twitch and it's the end,." Really gave me the goosebumps.

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

MORITZ: Well, this semester I'm through.

(A beat.)

ILSE: God, you remember how we used to run back to my house and play pirates? Wendla Bergman, Melchior Gabor, you, and I ...

(A plaintive guitar sounds. A spotlight finds Ilse.)

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 grass...

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 cries...

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

Blowing through the thick corn
Through the bales of hay
Through the sudden drift of the rain...

Spring and summer...

(The lights shift—twilight resumes.)

MORITZ: Actually, I better go.

ILSE: Walk as far as my house with me.

MORITZ: And ...?

ILSE: Well dig up those old tomahawks and play together, Moritz—just like we used to.

MORITZ: We did have some remarkable times. Hiding in our wigwam

ILSE: Yes. I'll brush your hair ... and curl it, set you on my little hobby horse ...

MORITZ: I wish I could.

ILSEE: Then, why don't you?

MORITZ (A lie): Eighty lines of Virgil, sixteen equations, a paper on the Hapsburgs...

(The world goes neon again.)

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 risin' moon.

MORITZ:

ILSE

'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.

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 dust...

(The concert light fades.)

MORITZ: 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 winces.)

MORITZ: For the love of God, all I had to do was say yes. (Calls after her) Ilse? Ilse?

(He waits. If only he could run after her... But now... she's gone.)

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 sighs, looks out on the night. He withdraws the gun from his pocket.)

Ten minutes ago, you could see the entire horizon. Now, only the dusk —the first few stars...
So dark. So dark. So dark...

(Moritz cocks the hammer of the gun. Sets the gun in his mouth. Blackout.)

SCENE 3

A cemetery in the pouring rain. Moritz's father, Herr Steifel, stands, stoic, beside an open grave. Frau Gabor approaches the grave to offer a flower. As she does, Melchior is revealed in song light. He begins to sing, giving voice to Herr Stiefel's inner thoughts. One by one, the Boys and Girls step forward, dropping a flower on Moritz's grave, then continuing on their way, rejoining as a chorus.

MELCHIOR: You fold his hands, and smooth his tie.

You gently lift his chin—

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? ...

MELCHIOR, BOYS AND GIRLS: A shadow passed. A shadow passed,

Yearning, yearnings for the fool it called a home.

MELCHIOR: All 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".

MELCHIOR, BOYS AND GIRLS: A shadow passed. A shadow passed,
Yearning, yearnings for the fool it called a home.

MELCHIOR: All things he ever wished

Are left behind;
All the thing his mama
Did to make him mind;
And hoped his dad
Had hoped he'd grow.
All things he ever lived
Are left beh behind;

All the fears that ever
Flickered through his mind;
All the sadenss that
He'd come to own.

O-o-o-o-o-o—

(Herr Stiefel moves to drop his flower, but, hesitates. Melchior touches Herr Stiefel's chest, and che man abruptly collapse in grief, weeping over his son's grave.)

MELCHIOR, BOYS AND GIRLS:

O-o-o-o-o-o—

O-o-o-o-o-o—

A shadow passed. A shadow passed,

Yearning, yearnings for the fool it called a home.

MELCHIOR: And, it whistles through the ghosts

Still left behind...

It whistles through the ghosts

Still left behind...

It wishless through the ghosts still left behind...

O-o...

(Melchior drops the final flower.)

SCENE 4

The headmaster's office. Herr Knochenbruch summons Fraulein Knuppeldick.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: Fraulein Knuppeldick.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Herr Knochenbruch...?

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: We must take immediate and decisive steps, lest we be perceived as one of *those* institutions afflicted by the veritable epidemie of adolescent suicide.

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

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: I couldn't agree more. It's war. Naturally, there must be casualties

(A beat.) Bring the boy in.

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Certainly, Herr Knochenbruch.

(Fraulein Knuppeldick beckons Melchior in)

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: 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—

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH (Completing Melchior's sentence for him): As well one would be. Two days after his father learned of the young, uh...

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: (Suppling the name) Moritz Stiefel...

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: ... Moritz Stiefel's death, he searched through the boy's effects and uncovered a certain depraved and atheistic document which made terribly clear—

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Terribly clear ...

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

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Without question, Herr Knochenbruch.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: I am referring, as you may know, to a ten-page essay, entitled, coyly enough, "The Art of Sleeping Within" accompanied by—shall we say—life-like illustrations.

MELCHIOR: Herr Knochenbruch, if I could—

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

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Entirely.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: 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 you could show me only one obscenity—

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: 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?

(Herr Knochenbruch and Fraulein Knuppeldick turn and stare at Melchior. Music sounds—o dirty electric guitar chord, seemingly prompting a song. Herr Knochenbruch and Fraulein Knuppeldick exchange a look, then turn again and stare at Melchior. The guitar chord sounds again.)

FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Did you write this?

(Herr Knochenbruch and Fraulein Knuppeldick turn and stare—awaiting an answer. The lights shift. A rocking beat kicks in. The Boys and Girls appear. Melchior turns out.)

MELCHIOR: 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.

OTTO: 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.

GEORG: Man, you're fucked if you just freeze up,
Can't do that thing — that keepin' still.

HANSCHEN: But, you're fucked if you speak your mind,

GEORG, OTTO AND HANSCHEN: And you know—uh—huh—you will.

BOYS AND GIRLS — 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.

MELCHIOR (Mocking the professors): Blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa...

BOYS AND GIRLS: blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa blaa...

(The lights shift back: the headmaster's office. Hen Knochenbruch and Fraulein Knuppeldick again summon Melchior's attention. over the course of the next exchanges, the lights shift back and forth—between the worlds of song and scene.)

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: Herr Gabor?

MELCHIOR Disappear—yeah, well, you wanna try.

Wanna bundle up into some big-uss lie,

Long enough for them to get just quit.

Long enough for you to get aut it.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: Herr Gabor, answer me.

MELCHIOR, BOYS AND GIRLS: Yeah, you're fucked, all right—and all for spit.

You can kiss your sorry ass good-bye.

Totally fucked. Will they mess you up?

Well, you know they're gonna try.

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH: Melchior Gabor, for the last time...

HERR KNOCHENBRUCH AND FRAULEIN KNUPPELDICK: Did you write this?

MELCHIOR: Yes.

(Herr Knochenbruch gestures, and Melchior is led away. The lights go psychedelic.)

MELCHIOR, BOYS AND GIRLS: 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.

(And now even the grown —ups join the song.)

ALL: 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...

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!

SCENE 5

A vineyard at sunset. Church bells sounding in the distance. Hanschen and Ernst loll in the grass.

HANSCHEN: Those bells... So peaceful,.

ERNST: I know. Sometimes, when it's quiet, in the evening like this, I imagine myself as a country pastor, 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 the clergy, It's an act—to hide their envy.

(Hanschen deftly scoots closer to Ernst.)

Trust me, there are only three ways a man can go. He can let the status quo defeat him — like 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.

(Hanschen scoots even closer to Ernst.)

Think of the future as a pail of whole mille. 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 Georg. 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 the? (Off Hanschen's look) You're laughing.

What—?

Hanschen?

(The lights shift. Hanschen leans into the spotlight and smoothly croons.)

HANSCHEN: Come, cream away the bliss.

Travel the world within my lips,

Fondle the pearl of your distant dreams...

Haven't you heard the word of your body?

O, you're gonna be wounded.

O, you're gonna be my wound.

O, you're gonna bruise too.

O" J'm gonna be your bruise...

(The lights shift back. Hanschen leans over and 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: Oh no— I love you, Hanschen. As I've never loved anyone.

HANSCHEN: And so you should,

(Hanschen shares the spotlight with Ernst)

ERNST: O, I'm gonna be wounded.

O, I'm gonna be your wound.

ERNST AND HANSCHEN: O, I'm gonna bruise you.

O, you're gonna be my bruise...

(Wendla, Melchior, and the Boys and Girls appear in chorus. As the song continues, Ilse takes a letter from Melchior and delivers it to Wendla.)

ERNST, HANSCHEN, WENDLA, MELCHIOR, BOYS AND GIRLS: 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...

SCENE 6

Wendla's bedroom. Wendla reads from Melchior's letter. Melchior is revealed, in a spotlight.

MELCHIOR (From his letter). "... I have now seen, Wendla, how this contemptible bourgeois society works—how everything we touch is turned to dirt. In the end, we have only each other—we must build a different world. Despite what those whispering elders may say, I must set my head against your breast. We must let ourselves breathe and move again in that Paradise —

(Doctor von Brausepulver and Frau Bergman enter. Wendla swiftly hides the letter in her sleeve. Doctor von Brausepulver attends her, pill bottle in hand. Frau Bergman hovers.)

DOCTOR VON BRAUSEPULVER: Now, now, don't fret, J'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 Pymont, breakfasting on roast chicken and new potatoes.

(A beat.)

So, my child, three a day—an hour before 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 Brausepulver out. Wendla sits, quietly touches the letter in her sleeve. In a moment, Frau Bergman reenters, and stares at her.)

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: Doctor von Brausepulver said I'm anemic.

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

WENDLA: A child? f But, I'm not married!

FRAU BERGMAN: Precisely, Wendla, what have you done?

WENDLA: I don't know. Truly, I don't.

FRAU BERGMAN: Oh, I think you know. And now need his name.

WENDLA: His name? But what are you... (Abruptly realizing) That? How could that ...? I just wanted to be with him...

WENDLA!... To hold him
and be close to him—

FRAU BERGMAN: Wendla,
please. No more. You'll break my heart.

(A beat.)

WENDLA: My God, why didn't you tell me everything? (Frau Bergman slaps Wendla.)

FRAU BERGMAN: Well, you are going to have to tell me who.

(No response.)

Wendla, I'm waiting.

(Wendla looks off in to the distance.)

Georg Zirschnitz?

(No response.)

Then, who?

(No response.)

Hanschen Rilow?

(No response.)

Moritz Stiefel?

(No response.)

Melchior Gabor?

(Wendla quietly bursts into tears.)

Wendla, Melchior Gabor?

(No response.)

Wendla...?

(Wendla reluctantly hands Melchior's letter to her mother. As Frau Bergman opens it, Wendla stands, spotlight like a singer in concert. She remains in this pool of light, her song playing in counterpoint to the following scenes;)

WENDLA: Whispering...

Hear the ghosts in the moonlight.

Sorrow doing a new dance

Through their bones, through their skin.

Listening—

To the souls in the fool's night

Fumbling mutely with their rude hands...

And there's heartache without end...

(The lights shift. Melchior's home. Melchior's father, Herr Gabor, addresses Frau Gabor)

FRAU GABOR (Mid-conversation): Hermann, this is our son.

HERR GABOR (This is hard for him, too): For fifteen years, my darling, I have followed your lead, we have given the boy room. And now we must eat of the bitter fruit. He has shown himself utterly corrupt.

FRAU GABOR: He has not.

HERR GABOR: Hear me out.

FRAU GABOR: But I have, Melchior wrote an essay—every word of which was true. Are we so afraid of the truth we will join the ranks of cowards and fools? Twisting his naive act into evidence against him? I will not have Melchior sent to some reformatory, pent up with degenerates and genuine criminals.

(Herr Gabor looks away, pained)

WENDLA: See the father bent in grief,

The mother dressed in mourning.

Sister crumples,

And the neighbors grumble. The preacher issues warnings...

HERR GABOR:.. And now I must break your heart, (Withdrawing a letter from his pocket) This afternoon, Frau Bergman came to see me. Bearing a letter Melchior wrote to young Wendla, telling her he has no regret for what transpired in our hayloft.

FRAU GABOR Impossible!

HERR GABOR: That he only longs to find again that bit of Paradise—

FRAU GABOR (Reaching for the letter): Let me see that.

HERR GABOR; Yes, do have a look.

(Frau Gabor takes it and is horrified by what she reads.)

WENDLA: History...

Little Miss didn't do right.

Went and ruined all the true plans—

Such CI shame, such a sin.

Mystery...

Home alone on a school night.

Harvest moon over the blue land;

Summer longing on the wind...

HERR GABOR: The wretched fact is: Melchior knew precisely what he was doing., And as that essay shows, he knew the danger of doing it. And yet, he went ahead. Defiling himself and all but destroying that girl, so, you tell me, Fanny—what shall we do?

FRAU GABOR: What you will. A reformatory.

(Herr Gabor confronts Frau Gabor. She gazes into the distance, stricken. The light on them fades.)

WENDLA: Had a sweetheart on his knees,

So faithful and adoring.

And be touched me,
And let him love me.
So let that be my story...

Listening...
For the hope, for the new life—
Something beautiful, a new chance..
Hear, it's whispering, there, again...

SCENE 7

A Reformatory. In a darkened corner, Melchior opens a letter from Wendla.

MELCHIOR (Reading from the letter): "My dear Melchior... I only pray this letter reaches you. I have written so many, and have heard nothing back. When I think of your life in that terrible place, my heart aches. If only I could be close to you, and talk to you—I have such remarkable news. Something has happened, Melchior. Something I can barely understand myself—"

(A group of Boys breaks in. Melchior quickly pockets the letter.)

DIETER: All right, each of you animals put in a coin.

RUPERT: Reinhold can put in for both of us.

REINHOLD: I beg your pardon!—

DIETER: All right, you, calm down. (Means business) Reinhold, cough it up.

REINHOLD (Giving him a coin): Christ!

DIETER: Rupert, Ulbrecht—you, too.

(Dieter collects their coins, displays them, then sets them down in a pile.)

Now, whoever hits 'em, gets 'em.

(The Boys begin their circle jerk.)

ULBRECHT: Wait. (To Melchior) What are you lookin' at?

REINHOLD: Who? (Melchior freezes.)

RUPERT: Gabor.

DIETER: He just wants a part of the sport.

MELCHIOR: No thank you.

RUPERT (Ironie): Oh no, why would he dirty his hands?

DIETER ("Right"): Saving it for better things.

MELCHIOR: What do you mean?

ULBRECHT (IRONIC): Oh. A "good girl," wasn't she?

DIETER: Nobody taught the poor boy what parlor maids are for.

RUPERT: He was too busy fucking his slut—

MELCHIOR: You shit!

(Melchior lunges at Rupert. Rupert draws a straight razor, holds it to Melchior's throat.)

RUPERT: Careful—razor burn.

MELCHLOR: Bastard!

DIETER (Approaching)! Check his pockets for money.

REINHOLD! Yes!

ULBRECHT (Finds the letter in Melchior's pocket): Now what's this—a letter from his bitch?

MELCHIOR: Animals!

RUPERT (Reading from the letter; with exaggerated prissiness): "My dear Melchior... I only pray this letter reaches you. I have written so many, and have heard nothing back..." (Something in the text catches his eye) Oooh, hang on, the perfect thing to grease the works ... Listen up ...

MELCHIOR: Son of a bitch!

(The scene shifts—a private garden. Frau Bergman greets Schmidt.)

SCHMIDT: Frau Bergman?

FRAU BERGMAN: Thank you for meeting me. Your name was given me by a uh, doctor friend.
My daughter—

SCHMIDT: I understand. Now, listen to my instructions carefully. This Thursday, after nightfall, bring the girl to me. Gartenstrasse, Number Eleven. The door below the tavern. Knock three times—and three times only.

FRAU BERGMAN: But my daughter—! The procedure— is it safe?

SCHMIDT (Lifting a hand): We do what we can.

(The scene shifts back. The circle jerk is well underway.)

RUPERT (Further on in the letter as if he were reading from de Sede's journal)

“... in my bed each night, I have so many dreams: of the better world that we will build, together with our child—“

MELCHIOR (This is news to him): Child?

RUPERT: You didn't know, (To the Boys) Put a pup in the bitch and didn't even know.

DIETER: Forget the coins, we'll use "Mommy's" letter.

(Dieter tosses the letter in to the center of their circle. The circle jerk intensifies.)

RUPERT (Pushing Melchior's face down toward the floor) And you can lick it up!

(Melchior seizes the moment, wrests the razor from Rupert and breaks free. Melchior brandishes the blade, fighting the Boys back)

ULBRECHT: Get him!

REINHOLD: Grab him! (Melchior leaps over the reformatory wall, the Boys in hot pursuit, the scene shifts. Frau Bergman leads Wendla up a darkened street.)

WENDLA: But where are we going, Mama?

(Frau Bergman leads the girl to where Schmidt waits. Frau Bergman hands him some marks.)

SCHMIDT: Frau Bergman, good, I'll take her now.

(Frau Bergman pulls Wendla by the hand, and gives her to Schmidt.)

WENDLA: MaMa?!!

FRAU BERGMAN: I'll be there with you every moment.

(As Schmidt takes hold of Wendla, Frau Bergman lets her go. Schmidt leads Wendla off.)

WENDLA: Mama, don't leave me! Mama????!!!

(Frau Bergman looks around nervously, then bolts up the block)

SCENE 8

The bridge. The Girls huddle around Ilse. She reaches into her dress, pulls out a letter from Melchior.

ILSE (Reading from the letter): "... Ilse, I have been running for days, but at last I am back. Now, I beg you—for the sake of our old friendship. Bring Wendla to meet me tonight, in the graveyard behind the church.

ANNA: Oh no...

ILSE: "... I will be waiting there at midnight... Melchior Gabor."

(Ilse looks up from the letter.)

THEA (Sighs): So, he hasn't heard.

MARTHA: Waiting for Wendla...

THEA: Poor Melchior.

ANNA (Correcting her): Poor Wendla.

SCENE 9

A graveyard. Moonlight. A sort of underworld in mist. Melchior enters, casts about.

MELCHIOR: Wendla ... ?!

(No response. Melchior sighs)

Look at this—spend your life running from the Church, and where do you wind up?

(Melchior approaches a grave kneels.)

Moritz, my old friend...

(A bear.)

Well, they won't get to me. Or Wendla. I won't—I won't let them. Well build that world, together, for our child.

(Church bells chime: midnight. Melchior rises and looks.)

Midnight. (He listens for Wendla. Hears nothing. Sighs.)

My God, all these little tombs... And here—a fresh one... (He pauses, reads the epitaph) “Here Rests in God, Wendla Berg—?!”

No!?

(He bends closer, reads) “Born the... Died— “?! “Of anemia”??

(Melchior realizes, in numbed disbelief, what must have, happened)

Oh my God. Wendla, too?

No. No. No.

(He doubles over bereft. Spore piano chords— an otherworldly music begins. Moritz appears—in song light—as if rising from his grave.)

MORITZ: Those you've known,
And lost, still walk behind you...

MELCHIOR: Moritz?

MORITZ: An alone,
They linger till they find you...

MELCHIOR: I've been a fool.

MORITZ: Without them,
The world grows dark around you—
And nothing is the same until you know that they have
found you.

(Melchior pulls out the straight razor.)

MELCHIOR: Weltl, you had the right idea. They'll scatter a little earth, and thank their God...

(As Melchior draws the razor to his throat, Wendla appears— in song light—as if rising from her grave.)

WENDLA: Those you've pained
May carry that still with them...

(Melchior stops, stunned.)

MELCHIOR: Wendla!

WENDLA: All the same,
They whisper: "All forgiven."

Still, your heart says:
The shadows bring the starlight,
And everything you've ever been is still there in the dark night.

MORITZ:
Though you know
You've left them far behind—
You walk on by yourself, and
not with them

Still you know
They fill your heart and mind,
When they says: "There's a way
through this..."

WENDLA:
When the northern
wind blows,
The sorrows
Your heart holds,

There are those who
still know—
They're still home;
We're still home.

(Melchior is tempted by his blade but Moritz and Wendla gently intercede.)

MORITZ AND WENDLA: Those you've known,
And lost, still walk, behind you.
All alone,
Their song still seems to find you.

They call you,
As if you knew their longing—

They whistle through the lonely wind, the long blue shadows falling...

(Melchior rises in the moonlight resolved. He closes the razor)

MELCHIOR: All alone,

But still I hear their yearning;

Through the dark, the moon, alone there, burning.

The stars, too,

They tell of spring returning—

And summer with another wind that no one yet has known...

They call me—

Through all things—

Night's falling,

But so me, how on I go.

You watch me,

Just watch me—

I'm calling

From longing...

MORITZ:

Still you know

There's so much more to
find—

Another dream, another
love you'll hold

Still you know

To trust your own true mind

On your way—you are not
alone

There are those who still
know—

WENDLA:

When the northern wind
blows,

The sorrows

Your heart's known—

I believe...

(Melchior draws the ghosts of Wendla and Moritz to him, holds them.)

MELCHIOR: Now they'll walk on my arm through the distant night,
And I won't let them stray from my heart.
Through the wind, through the dark, through the winter
light,
I will read all their dreams to the stars.

MELCHIOR:

MORITZ AND WENDLA

(Receding from Melchior):

I'll walk now with them.

Not gone.

I'll call on their names,

Not gone.

I'll see their thoughts
are known.

Not gone.

Not gone—

Not gone—

They walk with my heart

I'll never let them go.

I'll never let them go...

You watch me

Just watch me,

I'm calling.

I'm calling—

And one day all will know...

(Melchior stands alone. The lights fade to black.)

SCENE 10

Coda

Ilse stands alone. A world washed in song light.

ILSE: Listen to what's in the heart of a child,
A song so big in one so small,
Soon you will hear where beauty lies—
You'll hear and you'll recall... —

The sadness, the doubt, all the loss, the grief,
Will belong to some play from the past;
As the child leads the way to, a dream, a belief,
A time of hope through the land...

A summers day;
A mother sings
A song of purple summer
Through the heart of everything.

(The Boys, the Girls, and the Adults enter, joining her in song.)

ALL: And Heaven waits,
So dose it seems
To show her child the wonders
Of a world beyond her dreams

The earth will wave with corn,
The days so wide, so warm,
And mares will neigh
Stallions that they mate, foals they've borne...

And all shall know the wonder
Of purple summer
And so, wait.
The swallow brings
A song of what's to follow —
The glory of the spring.

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

The earth will wave with corn,
The days so wide, so warm,
And mares will neigh with
Stallions that they mate, foals they've borne...

And all shall know the wonder—
I will sing the song
Of purple summer...

And all shall know the wonder—
I will sing the song
Of purple summer...

All shall know the wonder
Of purple summer...

THE END