

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 wingin' over things, and nothin' deep inside.
Nothin' goin', 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 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.**(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 what's the use of looking?

(A beat.)

START

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 a 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 an 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.

Blowin' 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: We'll 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.

ILSE: 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
rising 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.

Just don't care.

(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.

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 . . .
Spring and summer . . .

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.

END

(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 Stiefel, 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, yearning 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—*

*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, yearning for the fool it called a home.*

MELCHIOR:

*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;*