

Act I, 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)

MELCHIOR

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 has to pull 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)

#7 - The Word of Your Body

(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. 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 & 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.