

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)

adults

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

MELCHIOR

SEE THE FATHER BENT IN GRIEF,

TOUCH ME,

THE MOTHER DRESSED IN MOURNING.

HOLD ME CLOSE...

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

MELCHIOR

HISTORY...

NO MORE WHISPERING --

LITTLE MISS DIDN'T DO RIGHT.

WENT AND RUINED ALL THE TRUE PLANS --

ONLY YOU...

SUCH A SHAME, SUCH A SIN.

MYSTERY...

NO MORE LISTENING --

HOME ALONE ON A SCHOOL NIGHT.

ONLY YOU...

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 HE TOUCHED ME,
AND I LET HIM LOVE ME.

SO, LET THAT BE MY STORY...

MELCHIOR

HOLD ME,

DON'T LET GO...

DON'T LET GO...

WENDLA

LISTENING...

FOR THE HOPE, FOR THE NEW LIFE –
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL, A NEW CHANCE.

HEAR, IT'S WHISPERING, THERE, AGAIN...

(End of Act II, Scene 6)