

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

O-o-o-o-o—

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

MELCHIOR, BOYS AND GIRLS:

O-o-o-o-o . . .

O-o-o-o-o . . .

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

MELCHIOR:

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

(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 epidemic 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 of 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 (*Supplying 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 With" . . . 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.