

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: So 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?

(All the Girls lean in, eager to hear.)

He doesn't believe in anything. Not in God.

(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, Greek, 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 of 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 lover—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 winter walkin'—after a storm.
It's chill in the wind—but it's warm in your arms.
We stop, all snow blind—may not be true.
But we've all got our junk, and my junk is you.*

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

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

(Georg begins playing Bach's Prelude. As he does, Fraulein Grossebustenhalter touches his hand. He lets out an illicit sigh—a moment of 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.)