

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,

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WENDLA (starts away): Oh. I'm sorry

MELCHIOR: No—no, Please,

(She pauses.)

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 pulls 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.)

Just too unreal, all this.

Watching the words fall from my lips.

MELCHIOR: Baiting some girl—with hypotheses!

WENDLA AND 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 AND 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.

WENDLA: Watching his world slip through my fist

MELCHIOR: Playing with her in your fantasies.

WENDLA AND MELCHIOR: 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.

(The lights shift. Back to the woods.)

WENDLA: The sun's setting, Melchior. Truly, I'd better go.

MELCHIOR (Touches her): We'll go together. I'll have you on the bridge in ten minutes.

(She hesitates, then allows him to take her hand. They walk off together.)