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*Dramatic Publishing*



# Spring Awakening

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A Full Length Play

By  
FRANK WEDEKIND

Translated by  
EDWARD BOND

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THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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# Spring Awakening

***Drama. Translated and adapted by Edward Bond. From the play by Frank Wedekind.***

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A Full-Length Play

# **Spring Awakening**

By  
**FRANK WEDEKIND**

Translated by  
**EDWARD BOND**

*To the  
Masked Man*

*The Writer*



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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## SPRING AWAKENING

### C H A R A C T E R S

CHILDREN:	Melchior Gabor	Wendla Bergmann	
	Moritz Stiefl	Martha Bessel	
	Hanschen Rilow	Thea	
	Ernst Robel	Ilse	
	Otto		
	Georg Litschnitz		
	Robert		
	Lammermeier		
	BOYS IN A REFORMATORY:	Dieter	
		Reinhold	
Rupert			
Helmut			
Gaston			
PARENTS:	Herr Gabor	Frau Gabor	
	Herr Stiefel	Frau Bergmann	
	Ina Muller (Wendla's sister)		

**TEACHERS:** Headmaster Sunstroke

Prof. Gutgrinder

Prof. Bonebreaker

Prof. Tonguetwister

Prof. Flyswatter

Prof. Thickstick

Prof. Apelard n.s.

**OTHER ADULTS:** The Masked Man

Dr. Lemonade

Dr. Procrustes

Rev. Baldbelly

Fastcrawler (The School Porter)

Uncle Probst

Friend Zieg

Locksmith

# ACT ONE

## Scene One

SCENE: The living room of the Bergmann home.

WENDLA. Why have you made my dress so long, mother?

FRAU BERGMANN. You're fourteen today.

WENDLA. I'd rather not have been fourteen, if I'd known you'd make my dress so long.

FRAU BERGMANN. Your dress isn't too long, Wendla. What next. Can I help it if my child is four inches taller every spring? A grown girl can't still go round dressed like a little princess.

WENDLA. At least the little princess's dress suits me better than this nightshirt. Let me wear it once more, Mother. One more long summer. Fourteen or fifteen, that's still soon enough for this sackcloth. Let's keep it till my next birthday. I'd only trip over the braid and tear it.

FRAU BERGMANN. I don't know what I should say. I'd willingly keep you exactly as you are now, darling. Other girls are stringy or plump at your age. You're not. Who knows what you'll be like when they're grown up?

WENDLA. Who knows -- perhaps I won't be anything anymore.

FRAU BERGMANN. Child, child, where d'you get these ideas?

WENDLA. Don't, Mummy. Don't be sad.



FRAU BERGMANN (kisses her). My precious.

WENDLA. They come to me in the evening when I can't sleep. It doesn't make me the least bit sad, and I know I'll go to sleep better then. Is it a sin to think about such things, Mother?

FRAU BERGMANN. Go and hang the sackcloth in the wardrobe. Put your little princess dress on again, and God bless you. When I get a moment, I'll sew a broad flounce round the bottom.

WENDLA (hanging the dress in the wardrobe). No, I'd rather even be twenty than that . . .!

FRAU BERGMANN. Only so that you don't catch cold! There was a time when this little dress was too long on you, but --

WENDLA. Now, when summer's coming? O, Mother, even children don't catch diphtheria in the knees! How can you be so fussy? You don't feel cold when you're my age -- least of all in your knees. Would it be better if I was too hot? You ought to thank God your precious doesn't rip the sleeves off her dress early one morning and come to you before it's still light without her shoes and stockings on! When I wear my sackcloth, I'll be dressed like a fairy queen underneath. Don't be cross, Mummy. No one can see it then.

### Scene Two

SCENE: Sunday evening. On a street lined with trees.

MELCHIOR. It's too boring. I give up.

OTTO. Then we'll all have to stop! Have you done your

homework, Melchior?

MELCHIOR. You go on play!

MORITZ. Where are you going?

MELCHIOR. Walking.

GEORG. It'll be dark soon!

ROBERT. Have you done your homework already?

MELCHIOR. Why shouldn't I walk in the dark?

ERNST. Central America! Louis the Fifteenth! Sixty verses  
of Homer! Seven quadratic equations!

MELCHIOR. Damned homework!

GEORG. If only the Latin essay wasn't wanted tomorrow!

MORITZ. You can't think of anything without homework  
getting in the way!

OTTO. I'm going home.

GEORG. And me. Homework!

ERNST. And me, and me.

ROBERT. 'Night, Melchior.

MELCHIOR. Sleep tight! (They all go except MORITZ and  
MELCHIOR.) I like to know exactly what we're in this  
world for!

MORITZ. School makes me wish I was a cart horse! What  
do we go to school for? We go to school to be ex-  
amined! And why are we examined? So we can fail.  
Seven have got to fail simply because the next class  
room is only big enough for sixty. I've felt so odd  
since Christmas . . . O, hell, if it wasn't for Papa, I'd  
pack my things tonight and sign on board a ship.

MELCHIOR. Let's talk about something else. (They walk.)

MORITZ. Look at that cat with its tail poking up in the air!

MELCHIOR. D'you believe in omens?

MORITZ. Don't really know. It came from over there. It's  
nothing.

MELCHIOR. In my opinion, that's the Charybdis people fall into when they try to rise out of the Scylla of religious superstition. Let's sit under this beech. The warm wind's blowing over the mountains. I'd like to be a little animal and be rocked and swayed in the tops of the trees the whole night.

MORITZ. Undo your waistcoat, Melchior.

MELCHIOR. O, the way the wind blows your clothes!

MORITZ. God, it's getting pitch dark, you can't see a hand stuck up in front of you. Where are you, actually? Melchior, don't you also think that man's sense of shame is just a product of his education?

MELCHIOR. I was thinking about that only the other day. It seems to me, at least, that it's deeply rooted in human nature. For example, suppose you had to completely strip off in front of your best friend. You wouldn't do it, not unless he does it at the same time. But then perhaps it's just a question of whatever happens to be in good taste.

MORITZ. I've already decided that when I have children, I'll let them sleep together in the same room, in the same bed if possible -- boys and girls. I'll let them help each other to dress and undress in the mornings and at night, and when it's hot, the boys and the girls will both wear nothing all day except a white woolen tunic and a leather belt. I think that then when they grow up they won't be as tense as most of us are.

MELCHIOR. I'm sure of it! The only question is, what about when the girls have babies?

MORITZ. Why have babies?

MELCHIOR. I believe in a definite instinct in these things. For example, suppose you keep two cats - a tom and

a bitch -- shut up together from when they're kittens. You keep them away from all contact with the outside world so they've only got their instincts left. Sooner or later the cat will become pregnant, even though they had no example to follow.

MORITZ. With animals that must finally happen by itself.

MELCHIOR. Even more so with men, I think! Listen, Moritz, when your boys are sleeping in the same bed with your girls and suddenly they feel their first masculine itch -- I'll take a bet with anyone that --

MORITZ. You may be right. But still.

MELCHIOR. And I'm sure it would be just the same with the girls! Not that girls actually -- obviously one can't speak definitely -- but at least you can surmise -- and their natural curiosity would do the rest!

MORITZ. By the way, I've got a question.

MELCHIOR. What?

MORITZ. But you will answer?

MELCHIOR. Of course!

MORITZ. Promise!

MELCHIOR. My hand on it. Well, Moritz?

MORITZ. Have you really done your homework?

MELCHIOR. Come on, you can tell me. There's no one else here.

MORITZ. Of course, my children will have to work all day in the farm or the garden -- or play games that are good for their bodies as well. Riding, gymnastics, climbing -- and certainly no sleeping on soft beds like us. We're terribly weak. I don't believe you'd ever have dreams if you slept on a hard bed.

MELCHIOR. From now till after the harvest I'm only going to sleep in my hammock. I've put my bed away. It

folds up . . . Last winter I dreamed I whipped our Rufus so long he couldn't move. That's the worst thing I've dreamed. Why are you staring at me like that?

MORITZ. Have you already felt it?

MELCHIOR. What?

MORITZ. How you said.

MELCHIOR. The masculine itch?

MORITZ. Hn-hm.

MELCHIOR. And how!

MORITZ. Me too.

MELCHIOR. I've been able to for a long time. It's almost a year now.

MORITZ. It was like being struck by lightning.

MELCHIOR. Did you have a dream?

MORITZ. But only very short -- some legs in bright blue ballet tights climbing over the teacher's desk or at any rate I thought they wanted to climb over -- I only caught a glimpse.

MELCHIOR. Georg Zirnschnitz dreamed about his *mother*!

MORITZ. Did he tell you that?

MELCHIOR. Out on Hangman's Hill.

MORITZ. If you knew what I've gone through since that night!

MELCHIOR. Bad conscience?

MORITZ. Bad conscience? *Fear of death!*

MELCHIOR. My God!

MORITZ. I thought I was incurable. I believed I was suffering from an internal defect. In the end I only quieted down when I started to write my memoirs. Yes, yes, Melchior, the last three weeks have been a Golgotha to me.

MELCHIOR. I was more or less all set for it. I felt a bit

ashamed. But that was all.

MORITZ. And on top of that you're almost a whole year younger than me!

MELCHIOR. I shouldn't give it another thought, Moritz. In my experience there isn't a set age for the first time these feelings turn up. You know that tall Lammermeier with the blond hair and hooked nose? He's three years older than me. Hanschen Rilow says he still dreams about apple tart and custard.

MORITZ. Chuck it, Melchior, how can Hanschen Rilow know?

MELCHIOR. He asked him.

MORITZ. He asked him? I wouldn't dare ask anyone.

MELCHIOR. You just asked me.

MORITZ. Good Lord, yes! Perhaps Hanschen also wrote his Last Will -- The games they play with us! And we're supposed to be grateful. I don't remember ever wanting to get worked up like this! Why couldn't I just sleep in peace till it was all over? My poor parents could have had a hundred better children than me. But I came, I don't know how, and then it's my fault I didn't stay away! Haven't you ever thought about that, Melchior, exactly how we came into this madhouse?

MELCHIOR. You don't even know that, Moritz?

MORITZ. How should I know! I see how hens lay eggs, and I hear mother's supposed to have carried me under her heart! Is that enough? And I remember that when I was five, I was already embarrassed when anyone turned up the Queen of Hearts with the low-cut dress. That feeling's gone. But now I can't even speak to a girl without something I ought to be ashamed of coming into my head and -- I swear to you, Melchior -- I don't know *what*.

MELCHIOR. I'll tell you everything. I got it partly from books, partly from illustrations, partly from looking at nature. You'll be surprised. It turned me into an atheist. I've already told Georg Zirnschnitz! Georg Zirnschnitz wanted to tell Hanschen Rilow, but he'd already had it from his governess when he was a kid.

MORITZ. I've gone through the encyclopedia from A to Z. Words -- nothing but words, words! Not one single straightforward explanation. O, this feeling of shame! What good is an encyclopedia if it doesn't answer the first questions about life?

MELCHIOR. Have you ever seen two dogs running across the street?

MORITZ. No! . . . You'd better not tell me now, Melchior. I've got to face Central America and Louis the Fifteenth! As well as sixty verses of Homer, seven quadratic equations, the Latin essay . . . I'd just get into hot water with everyone again tomorrow. When you have to study like a cart horse, you need to be as docile and stupid as a donkey.

MELCHIOR. Come back to my room. In three quarters of an hour I'll do the Homer, the equations, and *two* essays. I'll decorate you with a few simple mistakes, and the ball's in the hole! Mother will make us some more lemonade and we'll have a pleasant chat about reproduction.

MORITZ. I can't. I can't have a pleasant chat about reproduction. If you want to do me a favor, give me some written instructions. Write down all you know. Write it as simply and clearly as possible and stick it in my book during PT tomorrow. I'll take it home without knowing it's there. I'll come across it some time when

I'm not expecting to. I won't be able to stop my tired old eyes running over it . . . If it's absolutely unavoidable you can go as far as a few diagrams in the margin.

MELCHIOR. You're like a girl. Well, have it your own way!

It'll be rather interesting homework. One thing, Moritz.

MORITZ. Hn?

MELCHIOR. Have you seen a girl?

MORITZ. Yes!

MELCHIOR. Everything?

MORITZ. The lot.

MELCHIOR. And me! So you won't need many diagrams.

MORITZ. At the fair. In the cubicle at the back of the wax works. If I'd been caught I'd have been chased out of school! So beautiful and O! as clear as daylight!

MELCHIOR. Last summer I was with mama at Frankfurt -- Are you going already, Moritz?

MORITZ. Homework. Night.

MELCHIOR. Good night.

### Scene Three

Scene: THEA, WENDLA and MARTHA come along the street arm in arm.

MARTHA. How the water gets inside your shoes!

WENDLA. How the wind blows into your face!

THEA. How your heart thumps!

WENDLA. Let's go to the bridge. Ilse said the river's full of trees and bushes. The boys have taken a raft out on the water. They say Melchior Gabor was nearly drowned last night.



THEA. O, he can swim!

MARTHA. Of course he can, brat!

WENDLA. If he couldn't swim, he could easily have been drowned!

THEA. Your braid's coming undone, Martha! Your braid's coming undone!

MARTHA. O -- let it come undone! It annoys me day and night. I mustn't have short hair like you, I mustn't have natural hair like Wendla, I mustn't have a fringe, I even have to go round the house with it done up -- all to please my aunts!

WENDLA. Tomorrow I'll bring some scissors to Bible class. While you recite "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked", I'll cut it off.

MARTHA. For God' sake, Wendla! Papa beats me till I'm crippled, and mama locks me up in the coal cellar for three nights.

WENDLA. What does he beat you with, Martha?

MARTHA. Sometimes I think they'd miss something if they didn't have a disgraceful brat like me!

THEA. But, Martha!

WENDLA. And they wouldn't let you thread a bright blue ribbon through the top of your petticoat like us?

THEA. Pink satin! Mama insists pink satin goes with my pitch-black eyes.

MARTHA. Blue looked so well on me! Mama pulled me out of bed by my braid. Well -- I fell head first flat on the floor. You see, mother comes up to pray with us every evening --

WENDLA. If I was you, I'd have run far away long ago.

MARTHA. There you are, see what it'll come to! Well, there you are! But she'll learn -- O, she'll soon learn!

At least I'll never be able to blame my mother when anything goes wrong --

THEA. Hoo hoo!

MARTHA. D'you know what my mother meant by that, Thea?

THEA. No. Do you, Wendla?

WENDLA. I'd have asked her.

MARTHA. I lay on the floor and screamed and roared. There, papa comes. Rip -- petticoat down. I'm out through the door. There you are! Now I want to go out on the street like that!

WENDLA. But that wasn't true, Martha!

MARTHA. I was freezing. I'd got the street door open. I had to sleep in a sack all night.

THEA. I couldn't sleep in a sack to save my life!

WENDLA. I'd like to sleep in your sack for you once.

MARTHA. If only they wouldn't beat.

THEA. But you'd suffocate in it!

MARTHA. Your head's free. They tie it under your chin.

THEA. And then they beat you?

MARTHA. No. Only when it's something special.

WENDLA. What do they beat you with, Martha?

MARTHA. O, whatever they lay their hands on. Does *yours* maintain it's indecent to eat in bed?

WENDLA. No, no.

MARTHA. I always think, they have their pleasure -- even though they never talk about it. When I have children, I'll let them grow up like the weeds in our rose garden. No one looks after them, but they grow tall and strong -- and every summer, the roses get weaker and hang down from the stems.

THEA. When I have children, I'll dress them all in pink --