

Sixth Decade 1980-1989/90

Crimes of the Heart, Beth Henley, selection with cuts from Act I (1985--86)

Set in the kitchen of Lenny's home. It's her birthday and the afternoon after her youngest sister Babe was arrested for shooting her husband Zachery, not fatally

MEG: (*Off stage door slams, Lenny starts. The middle sister Meg enters.*) I'm home... Anybody home?

LENNY: Meg? Meg! (*Meg enters carrying a worn-out suitcase.*)

MEG: (*Dropping her suitcase, running to hug Lenny.*) Lenny--

LENNY: Well, Meg...Oh, Meggy! Why didn't you call? Did you fly in? You didn't take a cab, did you? Why didn't you give us a call?

MEG: (*Overlapping*) Oh, Lenny! ...Dear, Lenny! (*Then she looks at Lenny's face.*) My God, we're getting so old! Oh, I called for heaven's sake! Of course, I called! ...I let the phone ring right off the hook!

LENNY: Well, as a matter of fact, I was out most of the morning seeing to Babe--!

MEG: Now just what's all this business about Babe? How could you send me such a telegram about Babe? And Zachery! You say somebody's shot Zachery?!?

LENNY: Yes, they have.

MEG: Well, good Lord! Is he dead?

LENNY: No. But he's in the hospital. He was shot in the stomach.

MEG: In his stomach! How awful! Do they know who shot him? (*Lenny nods.*) Well, who? Who was it? Who? Who?

LENNY: Babe! They're all saying Babe shot him! They took her to jail! And they're saying she shot him! ... It's horrible! It's awful!

MEG: (*Overlapping.*) Jail! Good Lord, jail! Well, who? Who's saying it? Who?!

LENNY: (*Overlapping as she falls apart.*) Everyone!! The policemen, the sheriff, Zackery, even Babe's saying it! Even Babe herself!!

MEG: Now calm down, Lenny. Just calm down....Why? Why would she shoot him? Why?

LENNY: I talked to her this morning and I asked her that very question. I said, "Babe, why would you shoot Zackery? ...your own husband. Why would you shoot him?" And you know what she said? (*Meg shakes her head.*) She said, "'Cause I didn't like his looks. I just didn't like his looks."

MEG: (*After a pause.*) Well, I don't like his looks.

LENNY: But you didn't shoot him! You wouldn't shoot a person 'cause you didn't like their looks! ...Oh, I hate to say this...but I believe Babe is ill. I mean in-her-head ill.

MEG: Oh, now, Lenny, don't you say that! There're plenty of good sane reasons to shoot another person and I'm sure that Babe had one. Now what we've got to do is get her the best lawyer in town....

LENNY: Well, Zackery is the best lawyer in town, of course; but he's been shot!

MEG: Well, count him out! Just count him and his whole firm out!

LENNY: Anyway, you don't have to worry; she's already got her a lawyer...Barnette Lloyd. He just opened his office here in town...And Uncle Watson said we'd be doing him a favor by hiring him up.

MEG: ...Doing a favor?! Well, what about Babe? Have you thought about Babe? Do we want to do her a favor of thirty or forty years in jail?!?...

LENNY: Now, don't snap at me! ...I try to do what's right! All this responsibility keeps falling on my shoulders...

MEG: Well, boo hoo, hoo! And how the hell could you send me such a telegram about Babe!

LENNY: Well, if you had a phone, or if you didn't live way out there in Hollywood and not even come home for Christmas...!!!

MEG: (*Overlapping.*) Babe's in terrible trouble—Stop! Zachery's been shot—Stop! Come home immediately—Stop! Stop! Stop!

LENNY: And what was that you said about how old we're getting? When you looked at my face, you said, "My God, we're getting so old!" ...

MEG: (*Takes a moment to realize.*) Why, Lenny! It's your birthday... How could I forget? Happy Birthday!

LENNY: Well, it's not. I'm getting old and my pony Billy Boy died last night. He was struck by lightning. Struck dead.

MEG: Struck dead. Oh, what a mess. What a mess...Is Old Granddaddy here?

LENNY: Why no, Old Granddaddy's at the hospital.

MEG: Again?

LENNY: Meg!

MEG: What?

LENNY: I wrote you all about it. He's been in the hospital over three months straight.

MEG: He has?

LENNY: Don't you remember? I wrote you about all those blood vessels popping in his brain?

MEG: Popping--

LENNY: And how he was so anxious to hear about your singing career? ...Didn't you get my letters?

MEG: Oh, I don't know, Lenny. I guess I did. To tell you the truth, sometimes I kinda don't read your letters.

LENNY: What?

MEG: I'm sorry. I used to read them. It's just since Christmas reading them gives me these slicing pains right across my chest.

LENNY: I see. I see... We never did all that much to make you hate us. We didn't!

MEG: Oh, Lenny! Do you think I'd be getting slicing pains in my chest if I didn't care about you? If I hated you? Honestly, now, do you think I would?

LENNY: No.

MEG: Okay, then. Let's drop it. I'm sorry I didn't read your letters. Okay?

LENNY: Okay.

MEG: Anyway, we've got this whole thing with Babe to deal with. The first thing is to get her a good lawyer and get her out of jail.

LENNY: Well, she's out of jail. ...That young lawyer, he's gotten her out....on bail. Uncle Watson's put it up...

MEG: Well, good. That's good. So, Babe shot Zachery Botrelle, the richest and most powerful man in all of Hazlehurst, slap in the gut. It's hard to believe.

LENNY: It certainly is. Little Babe—shooting off a gun.

MEG: Little Babe.

LENNY: She was always the prettiest and most perfect of the three of us. ...Why, remember how proud and happy Old Granddaddy was the day she married Zackery? ...

MEG: Oh, Lordy, Lordy. And what does Old Granddaddy say now?

LENNY: Well, I haven't had the courage to tell him all about this as yet. I thought maybe tonight we could go to visit him at the hospital and you could talk to him and...

MEG: Yeah, well, we'll see. We'll see. Do we have anything to drink around here—to the tune of straight bourbon?

LENNY: No. There's no liquor.

MEG: Oh hell! (*Looking around and at Lenny, then as is speaking to herself.*) Lordy, Lordy....what a mess. Little Babe shooting her own husband.....

SCENE