AGNES: No, I'm not.
DOCTOR: Are you intelligent?
AGNES: Yes, I am.
DOCTOR: Agnes, you're a mistake.
AGNES: I'm not a mistake! I'm here, aren't I? How can I be a mistake if I'm really here? God doesn't make mistakes. You're a mistake! I wish you were dead! (AGNES bursts into tears. The doctor takes her in her arms.)
DOCTOR: It's all right. Just pretend, right? (AGNES nods.) Thank you. (The doctor dries AGNES' eyes.) AGNES, I'd like to ask a favor of you. You can say no, if you don't like what I'm asking.
AGNES: What?
DOCTOR: I'd like permission to hypnotize you.
AGNES: Why?
DOCTOR: Because there are some things that you might be able to tell me under hypnosis that you aren't able to tell me now.
AGNES: Does Mother Miriam know about this?
DOCTOR: Mother Miriam loves you very much just as I love you very much. I'm certain that she wouldn't object...to anything that would help you.
AGNES: Do you really love me? Or are you just saying that?
DOCTOR: I really love you.
AGNES: As much as Mother Miriam loves me? (silence)
DOCTOR: As much as God loves you. (silence)
AGNES: All right.
DOCTOR: Thank you.

CRIMES OF THE HEART
by Beth Henley

ACT III

The three McGrath sisters of Hazlehurst, Mississippi are having their problems. Lenny is thirty today and sure she's going to be an old maid. Meg, the middle sister, left Hazlehurst to seek adventure as a pop singer, but things didn't work out. She wound up losing her voice and spending some time in the Los Angeles County Hospital psychiatric ward. And Babe, the youngest, is out on bail after having shot her nasty husband, Zackery, who was suspicious that she was having an affair with a local black boy named Willie Jay—which she was.

Meg returned home yesterday, after receiving a telegram about Babe's situation, and, with much effort, she finally convinces Babe to tell her entire story to a lawyer, Mr. Barnette Lloyd—who it turns out has a "personal vendetta" against Zackery and who quickly develops a crush on Babe.

But Babe finally decides to follow in her mother's footsteps and hang herself. She finds some red rope and goes upstairs. As the scene begins the kitchen is empty. Lenny has gone out to pick "pawpaws" (a kind of fruit), elated after a phone conversation with a man she loved, but who she mistakenly thought had lost interest in her. Meg has gone off to pick up the cake for Lenny's surprise birthday party.

(There is a moment of silence, then a loud, horrible thud is heard coming from upstairs. The telephone begins ringing immediately. It rings five times before BABE comes hurrying down the stairs with a broken piece of rope hanging around her neck. The phone continues to ring.)

BABE: (to the phone) Will you shut up! (She is jerking the rope from around her neck. She grabs a knife to cut it off.) Cheap! Miserable! I hate you! I hate you! (She cuts the rope violently around the room. The phone stops ringing.) Thank God. (She looks at the stove, goes over to it, and turns the gas on. The sound of gas escaping is heard. BABE sniffs at it.) Come on. Come on... Hurry up... I beg you—hurry up! (Finally, BABE feels the oven is ready; she takes a deep breath and opens the oven door to stick her head into it. She spots the rack and furiously jerks it out. Taking another breath, she sticks her head into the oven. She stands for several moments tapping her fingers furiously on top of the stove. She speaks from inside the oven... Oh, please. Please. (After a few moments, she reaches for the box of matches with her head still in the oven. She tries to strike a match. It doesn't catch.) Oh, Mama, please! (She throws the match away and is getting a second one.) Mama... Mama... So that's why you done it! (In her excitement she starts to get up, bangs her head and
falls back in the stove. MEG enters from the back door, carrying a birthday cake in a pink box.)

MEG: Babe! (MEG throws the box down and runs to pull BABE's head out of the oven.) Oh, my God! What are you doing? What the hell are you doing?

BABE: (dizzily) Nothing. I don't know. Nothing. (MEG turns off the gas and moves BABE to a chair near the open door.)

MEG: Sit down. Sit down! Will you sit down!

BABE: I'm okay. I'm okay.

MEG: Put your head between your knees and breathe deep!

BABE: Meg—

MEG: Just do it! I'll get you some water. (MEG gets some water for BABE.) Here.

BABE: Thanks.

MEG: Are you okay?

BABE: Uh-huh.

MEG: Are you sure?

BABE: Yeah. I'm sure. I'm okay.

MEG: (getting a damp rag and putting it over her own face) Well good. That's good.

BABE: Meg—

MEG: Yes?

BABE: I know why she did it.

MEG: What? Why who did what?

BABE: (with joy) Mama. I know why she hung that cat along with her.

MEG: You do?

BABE: (with enlightenment) It's 'cause she was afraid of dying all alone.

MEG: Was she?

BABE: She felt so unsure, you know, as to what was coming. It seems the best thing coming up would be a lot of angels and all of them singing. But I imagine they have high, scary voices and little gold pointed fingers that are as sharp as blades and you don't want to meet 'em all alone. You'd be afraid to meet 'em all alone. So it wasn't like what people were saying about her hating that cat. Fact is, she loved that cat. She needed him with her 'cause she felt so all alone.

MEG: Oh, Babe... Babe. Why, Babe? Why?

BABE: Why what?

MEG: Why did you stick your head into the oven?!

BABE: I don't know, Meg. I'm having a bad day. It's been a real bad day; those pictures; and Barnette giving up his vendetta; then Willie Jay, heading north; and—Zackary called me up. (trembling with terror) He says he's gonna have me classified insane and send me on out to the Whitfield asylum.

MEG: What? Why, he could never do that!

BABE: Why not?

MEG: 'Cause you're not insane.

BABE: I'm not?

MEG: No! He's trying to bluff you. Don't you see it? Barnette's got him running scared.

BABE: Really?

MEG: Sure. He's scared to death—calling you insane. Ha! Why, you're just as perfectly sane as anyone walking the streets of Hazlehurst, Mississippi.

BABE: I am?

MEG: More so! A lot more so!

BABE: Good!

MEG: But, Babe, we've just got to learn how to get through these real bad days here. I mean, it's getting to be a thing in our family. (slight pause as she looks at BABE) Come on now. Look, we've got Lenny's cake right here. I mean don't you wanna be around to give her her cake; watch her blow out the candles?

BABE: (realizing how much she wants to be here) Yeah, I do. I do. 'Cause she always loves to make her birthday wishes on those candles.

MEG: Well, then we'll give her her cake and maybe you won't be so miserable.

BABE: Okay.

MEG: Good. Go on and take it out of the box.

BABE: Okay. (She takes the cake out of the box. It is a magical moment.) Gosh, it's a pretty cake.

MEG: (handing her some matches) Here now. You can go on and light up the candles.

BABE: All right. (She starts to light the candles.) I love to light up candles. And there are so many here. Thirty pink ones in all plus one green one to grow on.

MEG: (watching her light the candles) They're pretty.

BABE: They are. (She stops lighting the candles.) And I'm not like Mama. I'm not so all alone.

MEG: You're not.

BABE: (as she goes back to lighting candles) Well, you'd better keep an eye out for Lenny. She's supposed to be surprised.
THE GINGERBREAD LADY

by Neil Simon

ACT II

Polly is seventeen—she's sober, mature and responsible. Evy is forty-three—she's erratic, self-destructive, very witty—and an alcoholic just barely on the wagon. She is also Polly's mother, although their roles have somehow gotten reversed with Polly doing all the nagging and scolding and setting up of house rules. During her growing-up years, Polly lived with her father and stepmother while Evy attained some degree of popularity as a nightclub singer. During that time Evy acquired a penchant for too much liquor and food, and nasty men.

The play opens with Evy returning home from Happy Valley, "a sanitarium for drunks." She is dry and forty-two pounds thinner. Enter Polly with suitcase in hand, determined to finally live with, get to know—and take care of—her mother.

This scene begins after they have been together for three weeks. Polly is worried because Evy is late for dinner. (The movie version of The Gingerbread Lady is called Only When I Laugh.)

(It is three weeks later, about nine o'clock at night. POLLY is thumbing through a private phone book. She finds a number and dials. She looks at her watch, concerned.)