

THE TALL GIRLS
by Meg Miroshnik

About the play (from the playwright):

Welcome to Poor Prairie, the dusty, desolate town where fifteen-and-a-half-year-old Jean has been exiled as caretaker for her wild-child cousin, Almeda. It's a grim, dangerous place to eke out an existence as a teenage girl—until a handsome man with a past arrives, a brand-new basketball in tow. As the town's girls come together to form a team set on making it out of Poor Prairie, a murky committee of townspeople threatens to stamp out girls' sports altogether. Inspired by the flourishing and decline of high school girls' basketball teams in the 1930s rural Midwest, *The Tall Girls* asks: Who can afford the luxury of play? And what is the cost of childhood?

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LURLENE—Female, teens

About the scene:

This speech early in the play introduces LURLENE, the very tallest girl in town. In it, she talks to her best friend—the offstage PUPPY, who is, as always, doing LURLENE’s bidding—about her dreams of transcending their bleak surroundings. As she talks, she plays around with the unlit cigarette, mimicking glamorous poses.

LURLENE

And the thing I see is: Hazel Shoots was given a *tiara*. Hazel Shoots was *crowned* Queen of the Tournament. [...] Well, this leads me to the other bit I noticed in my study of Hazel Shoots’ features, which is: *She isn’t no better looking than me*.

For one, she has an inferior Cupid’s bow. And still! She was given a tiara. Only think on what could’ve happened to me if I’d been old enough to go downstate with my superior Cupid’s bow three years back. It was then I pulled out my old copy of *The Red Book*—you know the one with the photo of the Babe’s Ballers inside. (I don’t spend time on that picture, Babe Dublin looks like a sweaty wrestler in a wig.) No, I flip through the close-ups of starlets and socialites in satin and, again, do you know what I found?

There are plenty of starlets and socialites who don’t look all that much better than Hazel Shoots, meaning that there are plenty who don’t look half as good as me. So now I’m thinking, Could be I should be in satin. To do that, I’d need to leave Poor Prairie. They’re all wearing white in those photos and you know as well as me it’s near unthinkable to keep white bleached and clean here. But what if I could leave Poor Prairie? (And not for trouble of the nine-month variety neither. Lord knows the girls who get sent away for a little less than a year . . . those girls certainly ain’t wearing white.) No, I gotta go somewhere where I could wear nail paint every day.

And donchaknow it was with that thought in my head that I answered the door this morning and saw Cyril Cosgrove standing there with his hat in his hand. I said: “Cyril, I don’t mean to bust up your heart—I never wanted it to end this way—but I come to see that I am a better looker than not only former Tournament Queen Hazel Shoots—” (I showed him the photograph at that point, since I had it, like I been saying, handy.) “—but also a good number of the starlets and socialites in *The Red Book*, which leads me to say that I am not long for Poor Prairie. Which leads me to say that we are not long for our love. Please, go quietly, I don’t think I could survive a scene!”

And with that, I lit up the cigarette I been holding and took a long drag—
(*she mimes the action*)—and blew the smoke in his face like in a photograph from
The Red Book and said again: “Just go, I don’t think I could survive a scene!”

[2:30]

CAPITAL CRIME
by Carson Kreitzer

About the play (from the playwright):

Capital Crime! is set in New York in the Gilded Age, the time of highest levels of income inequality in this country... until now. This is a tale of lust, murder, greed, unfettered capitalism, and the consumption of young girls. A play with songs, in Brecht-meets-Riot-Grrl fashion.

Please choose one of the following selections.

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STANFORD WHITE—Male, 40-60s

About the scene:

Famous architect STANFORD WHITE—of exquisite taste and questionable morals—gives a lecture at three different points in the play.

1.

STANFORD WHITE, on architecture

Architecture.

Is the structure in which we live our lives.
It makes all things possible.

Without structure, everything collapses.
This holds true for a ceiling or a social order.

Structure and support are key. But so is elegance. The structure should appear only as strict as renders confidence in the observer.

The wonderful thing about America is our *class mobility*.
Anyone can do as I have done
all it takes is hard work
very very hard work

And apprenticeships with just the right people
why I haven't even a degree from a prestigious university

I've got my hands. My ingenuity. My understanding
of the needs of those who
commission great works of architecture.

I understand how important it is to have a separate staircase
for the servants

You can't be running into the upstairs maid your son has gotten into an
embarrassing condition
not because it would cause embarrassment
not really

but because it shapes *her* frame of reference

If she runs into him on the stair
Basket with the sweated sheets held to one side of her
swelling belly
she might think a ring is all she'd need
to join this family

when in fact this is not a leap
that can be made.

There is a whole separate staircase
for the likes of her

It's important for her to remember this.

In the end, it saves everyone
from embarrassment.

2.

STANFORD WHITE, on having half your head blown off

It's hard to think. When your head's been blown off. Hard to keep it all, moving.
But you must. Work doesn't stop. Work can never stop. If you stop, well, they'll just
start knocking you down the next thing will come along and it'll be DYNAMITE
suddenly, ash and shards where you had built PALACES. For ordinary people to
receive their mail. Or step aboard a locomotive. Ordinary people, too, could be
surrounded by smooth white marble as they go about their day to day to day to day
to day to day lives. Their lives. Which go on.

(catches himself)

If you let the sleepiness overtake you, if you let the blood run out and down
rushing, rushing from the great cracked melon
at the end of your bending neck
IT WILL ALL BE GONE, THIS WILL ALL BE GONE

They will knock down your beautiful Madison Square Garden with its sensuous
rooftop greenery, it's oriental-style stage, its fairy lights
the graceful arms and ankles you have adored, so many times so many times
the beautiful orange lanterns

they will knock it down, and give another building its name
though it is no longer in Madison Square
AND THERE IS NO GARDEN

they will knock it down and replace it with a lump of mud and rock, a mute horror
in the name of progress and modernity
FUCK PROGRESS AND MODERNITY
what a thing to lose your head over

