

Patrick Hamilton's

# GASLIGHT

Adapted by Johnna Wright and Patty Jamieson

Directed by Lee Lewis

## Content Advisories

**This information may contain spoilers and is subject to change without notice.**

### About the Show

Young, trusting and fragile — Bella Manningham thinks she's losing her mind. In the evenings, she hears strange noises. The sitting room gas lamps dim for no apparent reason. Is Bella's loving relationship with her urbane partner Jack all that it seems?

Patrick Hamilton's 1938 play introduced us to the powerful term we now use to describe an insidious form of deception and manipulation.

This liberating adaptation by Johnna Wright and Patty Jamieson, which world premiered at the 2022 Shaw Festival, is a gripping, reimagined thriller of daring and doubt. Will the 'gaslighting' have its intended dire effect, or will our heroine find the strength to save herself?

With all the hallmarks of Victorian Gothic, refreshed with intriguing new insights, *Gaslight* is a thrilling theatrical experience.

### Content Advisory

This production depicts psychological manipulation, and uses simulated weapons, lightning, dynamic sound and haze effects.

### Age Suitability

Recommended for audiences 13+.

### In-Depth Content Analysis

#### Psychological Manipulation

*Ill-treatment by someone in a position of responsibility, trust or power that harms or could harm health, survival, development or dignity.*

The play depicts the enactment and effects of psychological manipulation – the titular ‘gaslighting.’ This abuse is gendered, occurring between a husband and wife, and is set in a domestic space. This occurs in a time period where there was little understanding or justice around those involved in coercive control.

This manifests in the play through:

- JACK insisting BELLA has done things she has not, leading to her spiralling self-doubt
- JACK’s enlisting of ELIZABETH and NANCY in unknowingly or willingly perpetuating this violence
- Denial of blame and distraction of BELLA as she uncovers JACK’s motives
- And threatening BELLA with the forced admittance to a psychiatric institution

There are depictions of this:

In ACT 1 Sc 1, JACK manipulates BELLA into thinking that she cannot trust herself, and culminates in making her think she has hidden a painting, of which she has no recollection. JACK reinforces this narrative with ELIZABETH.

In ACT 1 Sc 2, JACK implements a narrative of hereditary psychosis.

In ACT 1 Sc 3, JACK makes BELLA believe she has hidden her pearl necklace, amongst other items, and leads her to wrongly assigning blame to ELIZABETH and NANCY.

In ACT 1 Sc 5, JACK implements a narrative that BELLA took another woman’s bracelet at a dinner party. JACK insinuates committing BELLA to a psychiatric institution, which she overhears.

In ACT 2 Sc 5, JACK threatens BELLA that he will send her to a psychiatric institution as she continues to uncover his motives.

In ACT 2 Sc 6, JACK coerces ELIZABETH into agreeing with his claims around BELLA's behaviour.

In ACT 2 Sc 7, JACK lunges at BELLA. A scuffle ensues. BELLA wields a letter opener as a weapon. JACK chokes BELLA. JACK threatens BELLA with a letter opener. ELIZABETH enters and hits JACK on the head with a cast-iron skillet and he falls to the floor unconscious and alive.

These depictions have been heavily choreographed with a Fight and Intimacy Consultant.

## Suicide / Tendency or Behaviour

*The act of deliberately ending one's own life. Ideation, planning or behaviour that indicates this.*

In ACT 1 Sc 5, BELLA holds a gun to her head briefly, but does not follow through on any ideation.

This depiction has been heavily choreographed with a Fight and Intimacy Consultant.

There are no depictions of death.

## Resources for Further Support

Lifeline (13 11 14)

Lifeline has trained crisis supporters available 24/7. They also offer an online Crisis Support Chat 7 days a week between 7pm-4am AEDT

([www.lifeline.org.au/crisischat](http://www.lifeline.org.au/crisischat))

Translation services available via 131 450

1800RESPECT (1800 737 7232 or <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>)

The national counselling service for anyone in Australia who has experiences, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence. 24/7.