

MIDNIGHT MURDER AT HAMLINGTON HALL

BY MARK KILMURRY AND JAMIE OXENBOULD



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Theatre Program at the end of the playtext



Midnight Murder at Hamlington Hall was first produced by Ensemble Theatre, Cammeraigal Country, Kirribilli, on 1 December 2023, with the following cast:

SHANE	Sam O’Sullivan
BARNEY	Jamie Oxenbould
KAREN	Ariadne Sgouros
PHILLIPA	Eloise Snape

Director, Mark Kilmurry
Assistant Director, Emma Canalese
Set and Costume Designer, Simon Greer
Lighting Designer, Verity Hampson
Composer and Sound Designer, Daryl Wallis
Stage Manager, Erin Shaw
Assistant Stage Manager, Christopher Starnawski
Special Observer, Toby Blome
Costume Supervisor, Sara Kolijn

CHARACTERS

KAREN
PHILLIPA
SHANE
BARNEY
RICHARD

ROLES IN THE PLAY

MARGARET MATHEWSON, nurse, nursed the parson in his final months (*played by Karen*)
MADAME ESMERELDA, a clairvoyant (*played by Karen*)
MRS GLORIA WHITTINGTON, actress, a favourite of the parson (*played by Phillipa*)
INGRID, a seafarer (*played by Phillipa*)
LADY SMYTHE, a local society matron (*played by Phillipa*)
BENSON, butler (*played by Barney*)
GILES, farmer who runs Hamlington Estate (*played by Barney*)
TAFFY HEMINGWAY, playboy, distant relation to the parson (*played by Barney*)
COLONEL MUNSTER, served with the parson in the Air Force (*played by Barney*)
ERNEST BLACK, detective, enjoyed playing murder-mystery games with the parson (*played by Shane*)
MR BARTON, the parson's solicitor (*played by Richard*)
DOCTOR *Freddie Pennington-Ermington* (*played by Richard in Scenes One and Three, Barney in Scene Two, Shane in Scenes Five and Six*)
MAID (*played by no-one*)

This play text went to press before the end of rehearsals and may differ from the play as performed.

The setting is a community hall/theatre space somewhere on the North Shore. Home of many community groups, including the Middling Cove Players—an amateur dramatic society that has been going for many years.

Tonight is the opening night of their new play—Midnight Murder at Hamlington Hall.

An empty stage. PHILLIPA—in all the Lululemon exercise gear—brings a yoga mat on and starts to warm up. She is in her thirties and is very keen. She does a lot of ‘red leather, yellow leather’, ‘lion face GRRRR, lemon face OOOO’, and warms up continuously through KAREN’s lines.

KAREN, the stage manager, comes down stairs from the bio box. She is pragmatic and a little dry. But still excited for opening night.

KAREN: Hi, Phillipa, first one in as usual.

PHILLIPA: Well, opening night! I like to be extra warmed up. Steaming. Piping hot!

KAREN: I know, you’re—

PHILLIPA: I actually start my warm-up routine about eleven a.m. Get the body moving. The voice humming. I focus the whole day on tuning the instrument.

KAREN: Don’t you work?

PHILLIPA: God no! Opening nights I always take two or three days off in the lead-up.

KAREN: Lucky you.

PHILLIPA: [*oblivious*] I know, my manager’s great about it, and the office can do without me for a few days. Well they can’t. There’ll be a shit-ton of fires to put out when I get back but ... anyway, not tonight.

KAREN: Absolutely. Is there anything you need?

PHILLIPA: I’m all good.

KAREN: Well, just yell.

PHILLIPA: [*condescending*] You’ve got enough to do, Karen. You’re the real star, I just wish you got to feel all that love us actors do.

KAREN: I’m fine, really.

PHILLIPA: You're the best. Did you manage to fix those speakers?
There's still a hum.

KAREN: I joined a few wires together. Fingers crossed.

SHANE *enters with flowers and a gift.*

SHANE *is the director of the show (and the MC Players). He is enthusiastic and a born optimist—though tonight he has the weight of the world on his shoulders. He has dedicated his life to am-dram.*

SHANE: Good evening! I just saw Tim in the foyer, we are completely full tonight! Like a ...

He struggles for a metaphor.

Ripe Stilton cheese, tonight is about to go OFF!

KAREN: Evening, Shane. Is that a saying?

SHANE: Probably not. Evening, Karen ... everything okay? No catastrophes?

KAREN: Not yet ... but the night is young.

KAREN *continues her set-up.* PHILLIPA *continues to warm up.*

PHILLIPA: Hi, Shane. Who are they for?

SHANE: The whole company! An opening-night dressing room just feels empty without flowers.

PHILLIPA: Oh thank you. You're a doll.

SHANE: A doll ... [*Trying to be funny*] not a ventriloquist dummy
I hope ...

PHILLIPA: No ...

SHANE: Hand up the— Or a sex doll??

PHILLIPA: No ...

SHANE: Dolly ... Parton! ... sorry, I don't know what that was. I'm a little anxious ... [*Re the flowers*] Umm, just a little chookas ... and thank you ... and congratulations.

PHILLIPA: What for?

SHANE: I was going through the records today—slow day at the bank—and I realised, this is your tenth show with the Middling Cove Players. For you.

He gives her a gift. A collage of photos in a frame.

PHILLIPA: Ten! Wow. [*Re gift*] Oh it's beautiful. A collage of all my roles.

SHANE: Took me hours. From your first production of *Funny Girl* when you gave us your Fanny ... Brice.

PHILLIPA: I was awful.

SHANE: Nonsense, I loved your Fanny ... Brice ... you were a star even then. *Cabaret* ...

PHILLIPA: Stop it.

SHANE: What did the *North Shore Times* say?

PHILLIPA: [*too quickly*] 'Brave and daring' ... I think, I don't know ...

SHANE: And her doubling as the Nazi Officer was both 'troubling yet sexy'.

PHILLIPA: It was wasn't it?

SHANE: Your Esmerelda in *Quasimodo*!

PHILLIPA: Now that was a show! Your Quasimodo was just ... oh ...

SHANE: Remember you made me carry you to rehearsals—

SHANE / PHILLIPA: —'Cause that's what he would've done.

PHILLIPA: Till you did your back in.

SHANE: Had to do the show in a brace in the end. Still, made the hunch quite realistic ...

PHILLIPA: [*touched by the gift*] Thank you ... this is very special.

SHANE: Well you know how much you mean to me ... and the Middling Cove Players.

PHILLIPA *acknowledges his feelings*.

SHANE: Anyway, enough about past triumphs. Here's to tonight's triumph! Chookas to us.

PHILLIPA: Chookas to us.

TOGETHER: Toi toi toi!

SHANE *is a ball of suppressed terror; but his optimism and 'never say die' attitude overcomes it*.

SHANE: I am never more alive than just before an opening. I feel like I've got a mixture of coffee, Red Bull and Gatorade coursing through my veins. Which I probably do, 'cause that's all I've had since yesterday.

KAREN *enters*.

KAREN: Shane, bit of a problem backstage, the karate classes left it like a pigsty. There's vomit in the boys' dressing room and, I'm sorry, I do not do boy vomit.

SHANE: Leave it to me. Won't be the first time I've cleaned up a bit of backstage vom. Remember when Doug Hancock played Stanley in *Streetcar* a few productions ago?

PHILLIPA: Oh God don't remind me.

SHANE: Poor man exploded from both ends with nerves. Backstage was like a Jackson Pollock painting.

PHILLIPA: You know one night his eyes actually bled when he yelled 'Stella'.

SHANE: Well, the stage is not for everyone.

KAREN *leaves.*

PHILLIPA: He is an excellent periodontist though. My mum still goes to him.

SHANE: How is Janice? Is she coming tonight?

PHILLIPA: [*a painful subject*] I think she'll be here. It's her Book Club night, so who knows. Typical. And I think Damian's coming.

SHANE: [*wounded*] Damian? I thought that was all off.

PHILLIPA: I'm giving him one last chance.

SHANE: Oh Pip ... After that whole aquarobics debacle.

PHILLIPA: He said he was in the changing rooms looking for me.

SHANE: In the showers?

PHILLIPA: He said he was sweaty ... he'd been bike riding ... Anyway I can't go into this now, I need a clear head.

SHANE: Of course, of course, let's shake it off.

They shake it off.

We'll pop that in a balloon ... and let it go.

He mimes it out. She's a terrible mime.

Gone. But your mum's coming. That's nice. I like your mum.

PHILLIPA: Do you? She doesn't go in for the theatre much. Thinks it's all a bit ... silly.

SHANE: SILLY!! Of course it's silly. That's why we do it. A bit of silliness to distract us from life! Someone famous said that once. Or maybe I just did ... who knows? Anyhoo ... you keep warming up. I'll drop these in the 'room of green', clean the karate-class mess, then join you.

He gives her another, slightly too long, hug.

Tonight's going to be perfect.

PHILLIPA: You betcha.

Just before he leaves ...

SHANE: [*quietly to PHILLIPA—nervous*] Do you think Karen's going to be okay? She seems a bit more annoyed than usual.

PHILLIPA: That's just her. She's fine.

SHANE: Is it weird she chose to do her community service with us? ... She kind of scares me a li—

Just then KAREN enters and scares SHANE.

Yeeaaaa ... ookay yes, Karen, it's ... look ... hello ... Vomit. On it.

He goes backstage.

PHILLIPA *continues to warm up. Weird stretches and vocal exercises.*

KAREN: He was talking about me wasn't he?

PHILLIPA: Hmm? No ... maybe, I don't know. I think he ummm just wondered ... why ... you chose here to serve your sentence?

KAREN: 'Serve my sentence'? It's not like community service with you lot is hard time. Plus it's better than picking up rubbish ... just.

PHILLIPA: Good for you. Gets in your blood doesn't it? And I don't care what you did ... little bit of fraud or if you killed someone??

Trying to get out of her what crime she committed.

KAREN: I did not kill anyone, Phillipa ... yet.

PHILLIPA: Okay. Sure. Hey when you get a moment can you check my blouse, I think I lost a button.

KAREN: When I get a moment? Sure. I'm just fixing some broken props, then I have to get the sound desk to work otherwise we won't have any sound effects tonight, rig the special, iron all the costumes ... then I'll get onto that button.

PHILLIPA: [*oblivious*] Thank you! And I'd love a green tea if you're passing the bar.

KAREN starts to leave.

I'd give you a hand ... but this— [*Indicating her voice and body*] won't warm up by itself.

KAREN: Of course. You're our star.

PHILLIPA: Oh shush, I wouldn't say 'star' ... I can't stop other people saying it though.

KAREN *leaves*. BARNEY *enters from foyer*.

He is the old guard of the MC Players. Very theatrical. Lives for the theatre.

BARNEY: [*singing*] Another opening ... another show!! Aah, Phillipa, look at you, first one in to warm up. First one in, last one out. Like the marines! A woman after my own heart. I played a marine once. *South Pacific*, right here on this stage. He wasn't actually a marine, just a seaman (not that kind), but in my mind he was a marine. [*Singing*] 'There is nothin' like a dame!!' You know I sang 'nothin' like a DANE' that whole show. Thought it was some pro-Scandi thing. How are you feeling lovey?

He burps.

Excuse I m'darling, just had a very decent pub dinner ... [*Whispering*] and a cheeky Shiraz, don't tell Herr Director ...

PHILLIPA: I'm ready to go.

BARNEY: Course you are. Course you are! We're kindred spirits, Pippi Longbottom! Greasepaint in our blood.

He spreads his arms wide and takes a big sniff.

Smell that?

PHILLIPA: Is it the mess from the karate class?

BARNEY: It's the smell of an opening night. It's the smell of expectation, nerves, passion and piss all rolled into one. Peter Brook knew it. Kenny Branagh knew it ... Darryl Somers knew it. I'd bottle it if I could. 'Opening' ... by Calvin Klein.

He's on stage by now. He takes off his coat, does one small stretch. Loudly sings some opera, coughs, then ...

Yep, all there. I'm warmed up and ready to go. Oh, little note, are you choosing to play Ingrid lopsided?

PHILLIPA: Lopsided?

BARNEY: Seemed a little crooked in the dress. Remember! ... Posture ... up, up, up. Stance forty-five degrees. Little hop when you enter, little hop when you exit. And always look at whoever's talking. Right AT them.

Points to her, then to some imaginary character.

Don't look at THEM ... unless you're thinking about them ... then just a quick glance ... then bang ... back to THEM. It's simple stuff.

As he starts to swan offstage, SHANE enters.

PHILLIPA is now concerned about her posture. And her stance.

Evening, Shane.

SHANE: Evening, Barney ... excited?

BARNEY: Any more and I'd get arrested!! [*Exiting*] Oh and two words love ... Camel and toe.

PHILLIPA gives BARNEY the finger as he leaves. She adjusts her warm-up gear.

SHANE is on stage in his pre-show warm-up outfit. Perhaps a leotard.

SHANE: I didn't notice anything.

PHILLIPA: He's giving me notes now. Me!!

SHANE: Right ... that's no good. Anything you want to go over?

PHILLIPA: Actually the reunion scene I'd love to look at when Con gets here. I don't think I really nailed it in the dress-up rehearsal.

SHANE: Really? I thought it was all there. Con's the one who needs to work on it.

PHILLIPA: Well, I didn't want to say anything. I know how much you've got on your plate ... directing, acting and writing this one. I feel like I haven't quite cracked the scene yet ... Con can be a bit ... closed off, emotionally.

SHANE: I thought it might be 'cause he has a little bit of a crush on you.

PHILLIPA: [*disingenuous*] On me! Don't be silly. No he just hates his wife that's all. He's only here because it keeps him out of the house.

SHANE: I mean he'd be silly not to. Anyway ... let's run through it. See if I can help. That's my job.

They run through part of the scene where they discover they are a long-lost couple.

PHILLIPA's acting is enchantingly earnest. SHANE is better, but completely caught up in the moment of being this intimate with PHILLIPA.

Let's remember our intimacy training.

PHILLIPA: Of course. Always ask before you do anything.

They take a breath and start the scene.

DOCTOR (SHANE): Oh good heavens!! Look here ...

He shows her his ring.

INGRID (PHILLIPA): [*gasps dramatically*] They're identical!!

DOCTOR: These were our betrothal rings ... Rebecca?? ... It can't be! ...

(Is it okay if I put my hand here?) But your pale alabaster skin and auburn hair??

INGRID: Sunkissed after years at sea ... (Is it okay if I move a little closer?) and hair bleached blonde by the cruel Mediterranean sun.

DOCTOR: Rebecca. Oh my darling Becky.

INGRID: But I have no memory of a husband—of any life before the shipwreck! ... (Is it okay if I touch your hair?) But the rings ... it's irrefutable ... hang on ...

She tries different ways of saying the line.

But the rings, it's irrefutable?? ... No hang on ... But the rings? It's. IRRRREFUTABLE! That's it.

DOCTOR: Allow me to take you in my arms. Perhaps the closeness of our hearts will reignite our passion.

They awkwardly start to get closer and closer. It starts to build to a climax.

INGRID: Doctor, I—

DOCTOR: Sssshhh ... (Here okay?)

INGRID: Please.

DOCTOR: There?

INGRID: Yes. Do you mind if I ... ?

DOCTOR: Of course ... Is this ... ?

INGRID: Absolutely.

By now they are in each other's arms.

Oh Freddie ...

DOCTOR: Oh Rebecca ...

They stop just before the kiss.

BOTH: And scene.

PHILLIPA: That was ... see, I was relaxed. Felt honest.

SHANE: [*excited*] I felt it too.

PHILLIPA: If only Con could give me that.

SHANE: I'd be happy if he just stopped flailing his arms in the air every time he spoke. Nearly took my eye out in the dress.

PHILLIPA: He wears a dress?

SHANE: Dress rehearsal.

PHILLIPA *looks quizzical*.

Dress-up rehearsal.

PHILLIPA: Aah yes.

SHANE: But ... it's nice to have some new blood in the company.

KAREN *enters*.

KAREN: Shane. Sorry to interrupt ... Umm, bit of bad news. Pam and Percy Begg just called. They weren't feeling well, so they thought they'd do a test before they came in ... and, they're both positive.

PHILLIPA / SHANE: Fuck it!! / You're kidding me!

KAREN: Pam was so apologetic. They're both just gutted, said they shouldn't have gone to that Fondue Festival ... but obviously they won't be coming in tonight.

PHILLIPA *starts to get panicky and potty-mouthed*.

PHILLIPA: Fondue fuckers!! Sorry.

SHANE *paces and figures it out*.

SHANE: Let me think ...

KAREN: I'm really sorry guys.

SHANE: For what?

KAREN: Well, shouldn't we cancel, or postpone tonight?

PHILLIPA: I knew it was all going too well. Something had to go wrong ...

SHANE: Phillipa, breathe, it's okay ...

PHILLIPA: First Damian flashing everyone at the pool, then my mum making fun of my acting, now the fucking Beggs ... sorry.

SHANE: [*working it out*] Phillipa ... it's fine, of course we're not cancelling. Heindrich can play the Doctor and Helen can play Gloria. It'll be fine. It'll work, trust me. The show must go on.

Pause.

KAREN: Why?

SHANE: It just ... must. That's showbiz. It's what we do.

BARNEY *enters in his bathrobe.*

BARNEY: What's all this? Showbiz talk, without me? Of course the show must go on, what's happened?

KAREN: Percy and Pam have the lurgy. They're not coming.

SHANE: It's fine. Heindrich can play the Doctor and Helen can do Gloria.

BARNEY: Heindrich—play the Doctor! You can't be serious, Shane? Let me play the Doc, I can do it on my ear.

SHANE: I know you can, Barney ... and can you close the bathrobe a little ...

BARNEY: Come, come. We're all artists here!!

KAREN: Don't you work at Harvey Norman?

BARNEY: I manage small appliances ... it can be artistic! ... What happened to freedom of expression??

KAREN: Pretty sure that didn't mean having to look at middle-aged balls.

BARNEY: Heindrich hardly speaks English. He doesn't know what he's saying half the time. He said 'shall we tire of the drawing room' in the dress ... up. Luckily I stepped in with some impro and saved the day.

SHANE: Barney, listen, there are too many scenes with the Colonel and the Doctor. It would be impossible.

BARNEY: You saw my one-man show—if anyone in our troupe can play two characters in one scene it's me. (Six is my record.)

SHANE: Trust me, this will work best.

BARNEY: You're the boss.

SHANE: Just over two hours to showtime. We'll do a quick walk-through when Heindrich and Helen get here. Karen, if you could make the necessary adjustments to costume thank you.

KAREN: Sure. By the way, the sound desk is still on the blink.

SHANE: Have you tried—

KAREN: Kicking it? Yes, several times.

BARNEY: It always comes good. It has an actor's temperament. Doctor Theatre always does the trick.

KAREN: My niece is staying with me—she's up there with the manual seeing what she can do.

They all wave up to the bio box.

SHANE: You've got yourself an assistant, great. Her generation have a way with ... gadgets.

Sound comes on way too loud—

KAREN: Please don't touch anything.

—then lowers. KAREN leaves, talking to her niece on her headset.

But that's really helpful thanks.

PHILLIPA: [*flustered*] Alright, I'm going to steam my make-up for a few minutes and start my voice. I mean ... you know what I mean.

PHILLIPA leaves.

BARNEY: Glad we've got a moment before the cyclone hits. Before I put on my slap, Shane, can I have a word?

SHANE: If it's to pitch 'Blarney with Barney' to me again, can we just get tonight over with mate?

BARNEY: Of course, of course, let's put that on the back burner for now. No—what I wanted to say was ... two years you've been at the top job here at the Middling Cove Players, and since you've taken over from Doreen, which couldn't have been easy, you have done a sterling job young man. And yes, I was overlooked for succession ... but, well, if it was going to be anyone else, I'm glad it's you ... And tonight ... writing, directing and acting!

SHANE: Producing, designing, dramaturgy, publicity—

BARNEY: YES ... it's a tour de forza ... as they say in ... the classics.

SHANE: Thanks, Barney ...

BARNEY: And just let me plant a little seed for next year's *Wizard of Oz* ...

SHANE: Well the Wizard's already cast.

BARNEY: No ... Dorothy.

SHANE: Er—

BARNEY: 'I guess we're not in Kansas anymore' ...

SHANE is speechless.

Think about it. Anyway ... from the old guard, what I wanted to say was ... chookas for tonight lovey. Big hug!

SHANE: Thanks, Barney. Coming from you, a founding member, that's—

BARNEY: Only one left. God I remember those early days. Dirty Dicks would let us use their space on Monday and Tuesday when they were closed. That first year, it must have been ... '82 ... we did *Henry V* and *Move Over Mrs Markham* in rep. I played Full-stuff and the flamboyant interior decorator.

SHANE: I think it's pronounced Falstaff.

BARNEY: Common misconception. If you read the First Folio I think you'll find it's ... [*In 'Olde English'*] Feouull-stuff. And it's actually Prince Hooool.

Googie taught me that.

Pause.

That's Withers. Googie Withers.

SHANE: I know, Barn.

BARNEY: One of my mentors ... I played her love interest at Marian Street back in the day.

SHANE: Well ... understudied.

BARNEY: And then Doreen talked the council into making the community centre our permanent home, and here we still are. You at the helm ... producing NEW work ... so exciting.

SHANE: It is isn't it? And I feel we owe it to Mable Shtint to make it work.

BARNEY: Mable—??

SHANE: Shtint. She wrote the novel that I adapted the play from.

BARNEY: Oh yes, I meant to read it but the shop's been busy—end-of-year sales.

SHANE: *Midnight Murder* was her eighty-ninth novel I think. Mostly self-published—but some were quite good. Critics called her a 'fourth-rate Agatha Christie'.

BARNEY: Ouch.

SHANE: I know right?! In my mind she's at least third—and possibly even second-rate!! But I think I've been faithful to the Shtint Legacy. And if it goes well ... I'm hoping we might give it a push to a professional company.

BARNEY: Imagine that! A pro company putting on our work—your work. Actually getting PAID to do this funny old business we call show.

SHANE: Well I guess that's the dream. Not that there's anything wrong

with am-dram of course.

BARNEY: Of course.

SHANE: Always for the love—not the money.

BARNEY: Always. I was that close you know. To going pro. Gaden had my career. Jammy bastard.

SHANE: Now, Barney, keep this to yourself, but as a founder you should know. The council are in tonight. Apparently they're making a decision about if we should still have the hall or not.

BARNEY: What?!

SHANE: They want to give the space to some fitness company.

BARNEY: No!

SHANE: There's money in making people sweat.

BARNEY: We sweat! Actors sweat! I'm sweating now!!

He open his robe to prove it.

They can't do that! We're an institution in Middling Cove!

SHANE: Maybe. But we've got to prove we can put on top-shelf work or it's no space and no funding.

BARNEY: All our work is top-shelf. As good as anything on the main stages.

SHANE: Oh I know.

BARNEY: Classic bureaucratic dream-crushers. I've seen it before, Doreen always managed to put them off somehow ... I think she 'knew' the mayor, if you know what I mean.

SHANE: We need to impress them tonight, Barney.

BARNEY: [*deadly serious*] Oh we will my friend. We ... WIIILL!! See, that's acting.

PHILLIPA re-enters with an an inhaler and a very red-based foundation. Still warming up loudly.

Pip darling. Little heavy on the slap?

PHILLIPA: What do you mean?

BARNEY: That's a lot of Max Factor Red you've got on ...

PHILLIPA: Ingrid's spent half her life outdoors on the sea, it says in the script her 'skin is rosier and hair blonder from the sun'.

BARNEY: Was there a solarium on the boat?

SHANE: Could be a tad too much.

BARNEY: A tad? She's a shade off having first-degree burns.

PHILLIPA: Shane said ‘push the boat out’ in terms of character.

SHANE: I did ... but—

PHILLIPA: I wasn’t allowed to do the ‘Mediterranean’ accent.

SHANE: [*diplomatically*] Well I’m just not sure what that is exactly.

PHILLIPA: And I’m not sure I’ve really nailed her voice yet.

SHANE: No it’s fine, Pip ... Ingrid’s our love interest, she just needs to be a natural ... beautiful soul, like you.

PHILLIPA: Now I’m blushing.

BARNEY: You wouldn’t know.

SHANE: She’s less outdoorsy—more—lovable, cockney girl-next-doorsy.

PHILLIPA: Next door to who?

SHANE: Everyone. She’s everyone’s ‘girl next door’.

PHILLIPA: Girl next door eh.

She thinks deeply.

Hmmmm—I did live next door to someone. And I am a girl. Okay, great, thanks, Shane, I can work with that.

SHANE: Brilliant. Breakthrough moment?!

They high-five.

PHILLIPA: You always know the right thing to say.

BARNEY: That’s the director’s job. Well, the good ones. And Shane’s a good one. I don’t care what a few of our members are saying ...

KAREN enters in a panic.

KAREN: Barney ... robe. Shane, I just got a call from Helen. She and Heindrich and Con have all got it too.

PHILLIPA: Motherfuckers!

BARNEY: All three of them?

KAREN: Apparently they all went to a Pilates class together and the instructor had it.

PHILLIPA: [*quietly to SHANE*] I think they’re in a thruple.

SHANE: Oh God ... And they’ve all done tests?

KAREN: They just got their PCRs confirmed. They want to know what they should do.

SHANE: Well obviously they can’t come in. Council protocol.

KAREN: And I phoned Marcia, ’cause I know she’s immunocompromised ...

PHILLIPA: Oh boo hoo Marcia.

KAREN: ... and she wants to play it safe. She's staying home too.

SHANE: Oh God ...

PHILLIPA: [*incensed*] What the fuck were they doing at Pilates? What happened to our bubble?

KAREN: People still have to live their lives.

PHILLIPA: Do they?

BARNEY: Not everyone's as committed to the cause as us, Phillipa.

You'll learn that when you've been around as long as I have.

SHANE: Okay ... okay ... let me think.

KAREN: What is there to think about? We have to cancel now. Also ... is anyone going to ask if they're feeling okay?

Pause.

SHANE / OTHERS: Oh ... are they feeling okay?

KAREN: I don't know! I didn't ask! Shall I let the box office know?

SHANE: No!! Nobody move. Let me think ...

Long pause. He does some mental calculations. He paces and plays out the play in his head. A Beautiful Mind moment.

BARNEY tells a 'knock knock' joke quietly in the silence. SHANE looks at him.

BARNEY: Just trying to lighten the mood.

SHANE: We can still do this.

KAREN: What??

SHANE: Put the damn show on, what do you think!! Excuse my language.

BARNEY: That's the spirit!!

KAREN: Shane ... I don't think there's—

PHILLIPA: How? There's three actors standing—we have thirteen characters!

SHANE: We are not cancelling!! We've worked too long and hard on this to just throw up our hands. The show MUST go on.

KAREN: Why? I never really got a good explanation. Why must the show go on? Is it a legal thing? Will we be fined by the Amateur Dramatic Society Police Force?

BARNEY: We have our own force?