

DO NOT GO GENTLE

By Patricia Cornelius
Directed by Heather Fairbairn

Detailed Content Advisory

This document contains warnings and spoilers and may be updated as the production evolves.

The following information includes detailed content notes and spoilers to assist audiences in making informed decisions about attending the performance.

About the Show

In November 1911 Captain Robert Falcon Scott led an intrepid, and ultimately doomed, race to the South Pole. In this searing masterpiece by Patricia Cornelius, the icy expanse of Antarctica becomes a haunting metaphor for ageing — vast, majestic, unknowable, and unyielding.

A group of aged care residents imagine themselves as members of Scott's ill-fated Antarctic expedition — battered by snow, blinded by wind, and trudging through a landscape as unforgiving as memory itself. But this isn't just a journey to the South Pole, it's a lyrical, unflinching exploration of ageing, the resilience of the human spirit and the extraordinary capacity for love to light the way back to ourselves.

Content Advisory

This production contains strong adult themes, including ageing, death and dying, cognitive decline and memory loss, grief, suicide and suicidal ideation, war-related trauma, forced displacement and family separation. It includes brief low-level violence, references to killing and physical injury, infrequent coarse language, sexual references and discreetly implied sexual activity.

The production also contains minimal nudity, discussion of miscarriage, serious illness and medical procedures, and descriptions of physical deterioration including frostbite and rotting flesh.

Detailed Content Notes:

Ageing, Death and Cognitive Decline

- Ageing, death and the fear of dying are central themes.
- Characters discuss losing independence, becoming physically weaker and relying on others.
- Memory loss, confusion and disorientation are shown throughout the production.
- A character becomes confused about where they are and who they are.
- A character does not recognise their husband or remember their children.
- A character confuses another person with their husband.
- The production includes references to older people being placed in care.
- Characters discuss feeling forgotten, becoming a burden and outliving loved ones.

Suicide and Self-Harm

- Suicide and suicidal thoughts are discussed directly.
- A character discusses using opiate tablets as a way to end their life.
- A character describes previous suicide.
- A character is revealed to have died by suicide after returning from war.
- A death by hanging is discussed but not shown.
- A tree connected to the suicide appears symbolically in the production.
- Characters discuss wishing for death and the impact of suicide on family members.

Support information is included below for anyone who may be affected by this content.

War, Trauma and Displacement

- War, military service, patriotism and dying for one's country are discussed.
- A character appears in an Australian Vietnam War uniform.
- Characters discuss the difficulty of talking about trauma and mental health.
- There are references to returned veterans losing jobs and relationships, becoming unwell and drinking heavily.
- A character describes being forced to leave their home and being separated from their family.
- The production includes themes of migration, displacement, homesickness and loss of homeland.

Grief, Family Relationships and Loss

- Characters discuss the deaths of partners, parents, children and friends.
- A character talks about the death of their husband.
- A character discusses the grief of losing their son to suicide.
- A character discusses the death of a family member.
- A character refers to having had a miscarriage.
- Other family difficulties include illness, unemployment and emotional distress.
- Characters discuss loneliness, family separation and feeling abandoned.

Illness, Medical Procedures and Physical Deterioration

- Characters frequently discuss illness, pain and the physical effects of ageing.
- Medical conditions mentioned include arthritis, osteoporosis, gout, angina, anaemia, cystitis and anxiety attacks.
- Characters discuss previous surgeries and medical procedures.

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- Characters become exhausted, collapse and struggle to walk or breathe.
- A character dies during the expedition. The death is not shown graphically.

Violence and Threatening Content

- Physical violence is limited.
- A character is chased and briefly attacked by another character.
- The attack includes being pulled to the ground and bitten at the hand.
- There are verbal references to beatings, killing in war and violent death.
- Arguments, raised voices and emotional confrontations occur.

Sexual Content and Nudity

- Sexual activity is implied but not shown explicitly.
- A character removes clothing and appears in their underwear.
- Two characters passionately embrace.
- A character discusses wanting to remove their clothes and losing their inhibitions.
- Two characters later appear naked together inside a sleeping bag.
- Nudity is minimal and occurs within the context of the story.

Language

- Coarse language is used occasionally.
- Language includes words such as “fuck”, “fucking”, “shit”, “prick”, “bastard”, “bloody” and “arse”.

Drugs and Alcohol

- There is no depicted recreational drug use.

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- Opiate medication is discussed as a possible means of suicide.
- Alcohol is mentioned occasionally.

Sound, Lighting and Sensory Effects

This production includes:

- Blackout at the beginning of the performance
- Moments of complete darkness
- Loud sound effects and amplified music
- Lighting effects

These elements may affect audiences sensitive to sudden sensory stimuli.

Age Suitability

Recommended for audiences aged 15+.

This recommendation is provided as a guide based on the maturity required to engage with the production's themes, language and depictions.

Younger audience members may attend at parent or carer discretion.

Support Services

If the themes in this production raise concerns for you, support is available:

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

Lifeline: 13 11 14

National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500

Griefline: 1300 845 745

Carer Gateway: 1800 422 737

13YARN (support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people): 13 92 76