

WU?@therep

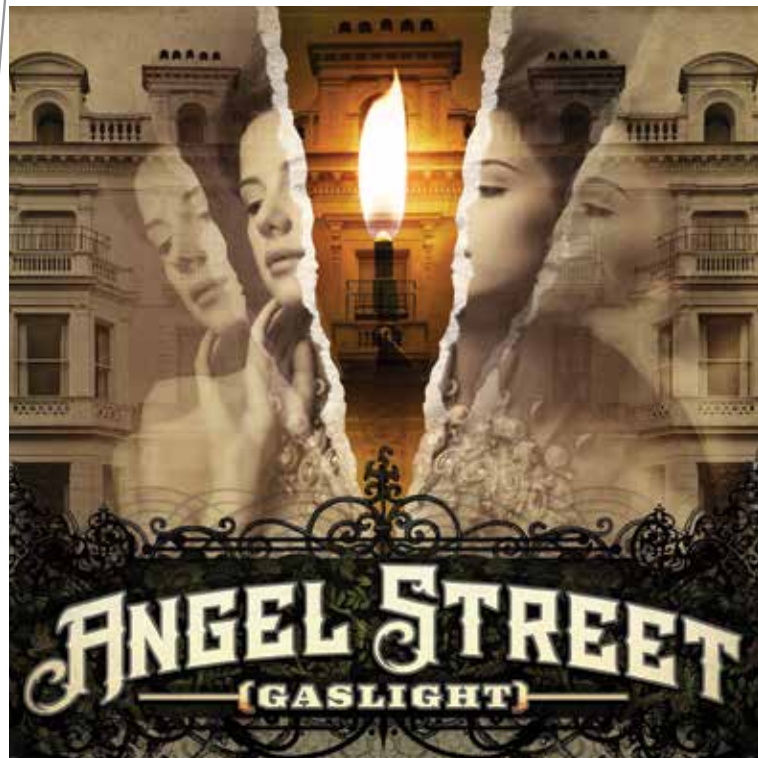
ANGEL STREET

by Patrick Hamilton

Directed by Jenn Thompson

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**THE REPERTORY THEATRE
OF ST. LOUIS**



Shaping a Vibrant Arts Community For All
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Missouri Arts Council
The State of the Arts



the 411

At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some things are worth

slowing down for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together **WU? @ THE REP**—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions (**A/S/L**), a plot summary (**FYI**), biographical information (**F2F**), historical context (**B4U**), and other bits and pieces (**HTH**). Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means **IRL**, anyway.

CU@therep!



The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials accessible to students and easy for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, www.repstl.org, for additional information including activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom.

NEATO!

As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

WELCOME!

The desire to learn, insatiable when awakened, can sometimes lie dormant until touched by the right teacher or the right experience. We at The Rep are grateful to have the opportunity to play a role supporting you as you awaken the desire for learning in your students.

Though most of your students think of slasher movies or Steven King when they hear the word, "thriller" we know the psychological dramas that play with your perceptions can be much more horrifying. *Angel Street* will have your students questioning what they see, what they hear, even what they believe they know. Your students won't think that "nothing exciting happened in the Victorian Age" after experiencing the suspense and mystery of this play.

It would be a good idea to take a minute to give your students these quick theatre etiquette reminders:

- This show has one intermission; there will be time for bathroom breaks before the show and halfway through.
- The actors can hear the audience and appreciate the laughter, gasps and quiet attention to action. However, talking, moving around and eating is very distracting to others and can dampen the energy on stage.
- Pictures, phone calls and texting are not allowed at any time during the performance.

Live theatre won't allow your students to take a passive role—they must work with us to create the experience which takes the learning deeper. Our unique ability to fuse words and images onstage allows your students to explore new ideas as well as excites their imaginations. We will do our part so your students will be stirred to understandings and self-awareness while delving into new and familiar worlds. You are doing your part by using The Rep to extend your intellectual and aesthetic curriculum. Thank you!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marsha".

Marsha Coplton, *Director of Education*

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A/S/L

JACK MANNINGHAM: A mysterious man in his 40s who is domineering yet suave

BELLA MANNINGHAM: Jack's wife is in her 30s and has a fragile and frightened disposition

ELIZABETH: The Manninghams' amiable middle-aged housekeeper

NANCY: The Manninghams' cheeky young maid

ROUGH: A middle-aged former police detective who is friendly but brusque

R/B/T/L

POWER

In this story, it's very clear who has power and who doesn't. Jack dictates everything his wife is and isn't allowed to do. The rules are very clear, and the punishments are very harsh. Although this is an extreme example of a dysfunctional and abusive relationship, it's not entirely surprising that that a marriage during the Victorian period could take this shape. Gender roles during this time gave men the majority of power (see B4U), which, when placed in the hands of a manipulative person with no morals, can be very dangerous.

ISOLATION

Another one of the reasons Jack is able to have so much power over Bella is because he isolates her from the outside world. She has no friends, and he has hidden letters from her family. Essentially, Jack has cut her off from the world and has left her with no one to trust but him, giving him complete control. Bella is left with only her own thoughts, which are being constantly manipulated by her husband. In that type of environment, it's no wonder she feels her sanity slowly slipping away.

SUSPENSE

One of the defining characteristics of a good thriller is suspense, and the best type of suspense is very subtle. In many stories, we're warned of a villain's arrival not by being told that they're coming but by other means, such as footsteps down a hall or slowly intensifying music. In this story, we're warned of its villain's arrival by the dimming and brightening of a gaslight. Much like Jack's subtle manipulations, this type of anticipation is especially unnerving because it's so understated.

EY

SPOILER ALERT!

JACK MANNINGHAM AND his wife Bella are living in a large but rundown home in London. One late afternoon, Jack is taking a nap in front of the fire while his wife tiptoes around him. It's obvious she's not doing it out of politeness so as not to interrupt her husband's sleep, but rather out of fear. She's greatly on edge around her husband, so much so that she's afraid she'll get in trouble by directing their servant Elizabeth to buy muffins for teatime.

JACK AWAKES and asks Bella what she's doing, and she hesitatingly tells him. It's obvious she doesn't complete even the smallest task without her husband's permission. However, she is surprised when Jack tells her she's not in trouble. In fact,

he tells Bella that he actually has a surprise for her—he plans to take her to the theatre. Bella, who does not get to leave the house often, is beyond delighted.

HOWEVER, her joy is very short-lived. All of a sudden, Jack's demeanor changes and he tells her that he has "just observed something very much amiss."

He asks her politely, but very sternly, to rectify the matter.

Bella is bewildered. She truly has no idea what her husband is talking about, yet he continues to needle her until Bella realizes a picture in the living room has been taken off the wall.

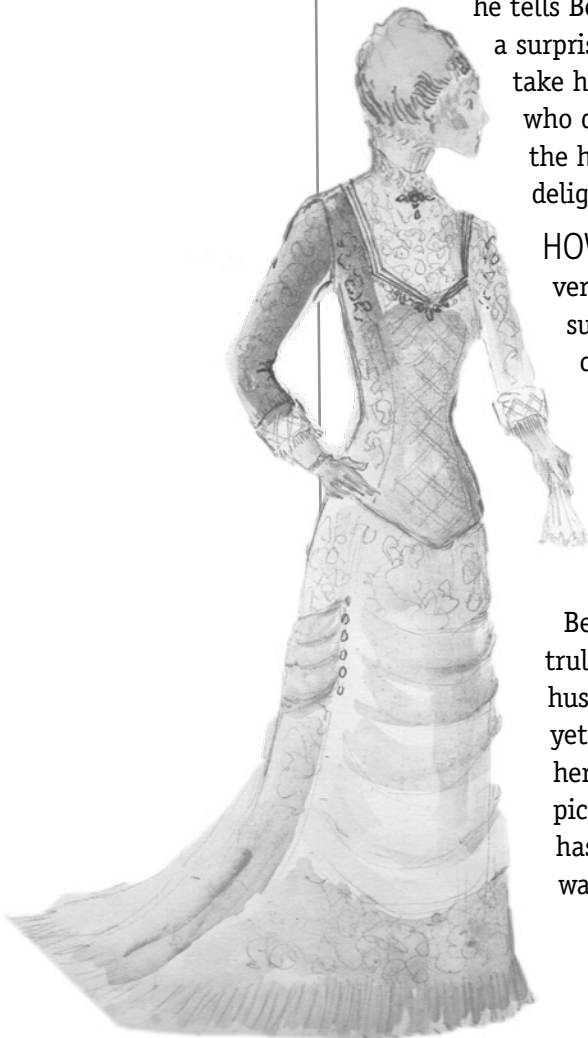
JACK ACCUSES HER of mischief, but Bella, now in a panic, insists she never touched the picture. Jack calls in Elizabeth and Nancy, another servant, and asks if they moved the picture. Both swear they didn't. Bella offers to swear on the Bible as well, but it makes no difference. Jack says she must not remember moving the picture, and this is just one of many incidents of Bella stealing or losing things. They've had this same argument many times before over various items, including a brooch and a watch.

JACK SAYS HE believes this missing picture is just another sign that Bella is losing her mind, and he strongly insinuates that she may have to be institutionalized in the near future. Bella begs for his faith and his patience. Still angry, Jack tells Bella he must go out until his temper has cooled down. Just before he leaves, Jack tells Bella she can forget about the theatre.

BELLA IS SEVERELY distraught; she feels strongly about her sanity, yet there is obviously a shadow of doubt—if she was going mad, then she probably wouldn't know it, would she?

SOON AFTER JACK leaves, a former police detective named Rough arrives. Convinced that he's there to see Jack, Bella tries to get him to leave, but Rough insists that he came to see her specifically. He waited to visit until he was sure her husband wasn't at home. Rough says he's there because he's heard talk about the strange relationship between Jack and Bella.

ROUGH ASKS ABOUT their relationship, and Bella tells him that they've been married for five years. They lived abroad for a while and moved into the house six months ago. The house was purchased with her money because Jack thought it would be an investment.



Costume rendering by costume designer Dave Toser

HE ASKS BELLA if Jack often leaves her alone like this in the evenings. She says yes and that Jack often needs to go to his club and do business in the evenings. After additional questions from Rough, Bella admits that neither she nor any of the servants have been up to the top floor of the house because Jack said they wouldn't need it until they have children, therefore it is locked up.

ROUGH ASKS HOW LONG Bella has felt that her "reason was playing [her] tricks." Bella confesses that her mother died young and insane. She's been feeling vibes of uncertainty ever since they moved into the house. At night when she's home alone, she gets the idea that someone is walking around the top floor. Rough suggests it's her husband walking around up there, and Bella admits that the thought has often crossed her mind. She can tell by the gaslight on the mantle. Every time her husband leaves at night, she "finds [herself] waiting for something." Then in about 10 minutes, the gaslight goes down—as if someone has turned the light on somewhere else, taking up the energy. That's approximately when she starts hearing tapping sounds upstairs. Eventually the gaslight goes up again, and 10 minutes later, her husband returns.

ROUGH THEN TELLS Bella he has a story to share with her. Many years ago, the house was occupied by a very wealthy old woman named Alice Barlow, who possessed some extremely valuable rubies. Rough tells Bella that Barlow was murdered for the jewels, but the killer never found them and was never caught. Rough believes Jack was the murderer. His theory is that Jack murdered Barlow but couldn't find the rubies before the police arrived, so he found a woman of means to marry so that he could buy the house and search it until he finally found

the jewels. Rough tells Bella that he believes Jack is purposely driving her insane.

EVENTUALLY ROUGH IS able to pick the lock to Jack's bureau where they find several things: letters from Bella's family that she never received as well as items that Bella has been accused of losing, including the watch and brooch, the latter of which Jack had given her as a gift. When Bella mentions that it's secondhand because it has an inscription on it from the previous owner, Rough examines it more carefully and finds the brooch contains the Barlow rubies! Jack had unknowingly gifted it to his wife.

ROUGH LEAVES BUT tells Bella he will come back to save her. In the meantime, she should fake a headache and spend the rest of the night in bed.

LATER ON, Jack returns home and begins chatting with Nancy. He flirts with her, and they both confess to a mutual attraction. Nancy expects Jack to leave Bella, for whom she has no respect. However, before the talk turns too serious, Jack realizes that his bureau has been broken into. He orders Nancy to fetch Bella for him immediately—he doesn't care how bad her headache is. Even though she claimed to be in bed all night, Bella is fully dressed and seems even more afraid of him than usual. Suspicious, Jack tells her he's had enough of her "physical and mental deficiencies," and he believes it's finally time for her to be institutionalized.

ROUGH THEN APPEARS with the police and tells Jack that he is to be arrested for the murder of Alice Barlow. However, before they take him away, Bella asks to speak to her husband alone. During their conversation, Jack asks her to help him escape—manipulating her once again. Will Bella find the strength to refuse him?





PATRICK HAMILTON

Patrick Hamilton was born in 1904 in Sussex, England, the youngest of three children, to Bernard and Ellen Adèle Hockley Hamilton. The family did not have much money, and spent much of Hamilton's young life in boarding houses and rented rooms.

As a teenager, Hamilton dabbled in acting but mostly immersed himself in writing. His first published work, a poem titled "Heaven," was printed in the respected magazine *Poetry Review* in 1919. Just a few years later, Hamilton became successful as a novelist with his two books *Monday Morning* and *Craven House* being published in 1925 and 1926, respectively.

But it was his play *Rope*, first performed in 1929, that brought him the critical acclaim and financial success that established him as famous writer. A thriller that featured murder, among other gruesome subject matter, was eventually made into a 1948 Alfred Hitchcock film of the same name starring Jimmy Stewart.

Between 1929 and 1934, Hamilton published his semi-autobiographical "pub trilogy" *Twenty Thousand Streets Under the Sky*, which included three individual but interconnecting novels, *The Midnight Bell*, *The Siege of Pleasure* and *The Plains of Cement*. Each story featured a main character—including a bartender, a barmaid and a prostitute—frequenting *The Midnight Bell* pub in London. Drawing on his own lower middle-class upbringing, Hamilton's trilogy explored "low-lives" in urban London.

The early 1930s were a turbulent time for Hamilton, starting off in 1930 with the death of his father. Later that year, Hamilton did find happiness in his marriage to wife Lois Martin, who took over his finances, moved him to the countryside and helped to conquer his alcoholism for a brief period.

However, he then sustained several injuries from a car accident in 1932 that required many years of rehabilitation and surgeries. The injuries left Hamilton with devastating emotional and physical scars for the rest of his life, which reignited his heavy drinking. In 1934, Hamilton's mother took her own life, adding to Hamilton's personal tragedy.

Later in the decade, Hamilton was able to again find success in his work. His next play was originally titled *Gaslight*. It premiered in London in 1938, and was renamed *Angel Street* when it was later produced in New York City. Like *Rope*, it was a huge success for Hamilton that was eventually made into a film. The first film adaptation was British and was closely based on Hamilton's play.

The American version was released in 1944—in the U.S. as *Gaslight* and in Great Britain as *Murder in Thornton Square*. It was directed by George Cukor and starred actress Ingrid Bergman as the protagonist (re-named Paula in this version) and an 18-year-old Angela Lansbury in her film debut as Nancy. The film wasn't as faithful to the play's details; for example, Alice Barlow was re-named Alice Alquist, a world-famous opera singer instead of an eccentric old woman, who was actually Paula's aunt who raised her as young girl. However, it still featured the dominant theme of Paula's husband "gaslighting" her in a deceptive and sinister manner. The film was a major success and was nominated for seven Oscars that year, including Best Picture, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Actress for Bergman, which she won.

With the success of *Rope* and *Gaslight*, Hamilton was a rich man. He continued to write, publishing the novel *Hangover Square* in 1941, which was considered by many to be his best work in the way it explored social inequality during World War II and the

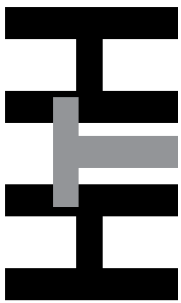


rise of Fascism. Like its author, the novel's protagonist also battled alcoholism.

In the early 1950s, Hamilton's personal life took another tumultuous turn when he divorced his wife to marry his mistress, an aristocratic fellow author named Ursula Stewart. He continued to publish fiction with dark subject matter to moderate success, most notably with another trilogy of novels

about the sociopathic criminal Ralph Ernest Gorse: *The West Pier* (1951), *Mr. Stimpson and Mr. Gorse* (1953) and *Unknown Assailant* (1954).

Tragically, Hamilton's alcoholism finally claimed his life in 1962, when he died of cirrhosis of the liver and kidney failure at the age of 58.



REPROACH: to criticize or admonish

IMPUDENT: rude

ADROITLY: skillfully

PALLOR: paleness

TRIFLING: trivial or petty

HUSSY: an impudent or immoral girl

INDUCEMENT: a stimulus or incentive

SACRILEGE: blasphemy; treating a holy thing with disrespect

PERSONAGE: an important person

RETRIBUTION: punishment or revenge

INDISCRETION: a tactless lack of judgment or an unwise action

SUPPOSITION: a hypothesis or the act of presuming something

INCESSANTLY: ceaselessly or doing something nonstop

METHYLATED SPIRITS: a type of alcohol

ECCENTRICITY: a quirk or peculiarity

WAN: to appear pale or faint

MORBID: morose or gruesome

COMPULSION: an urge that makes somebody feel they must do something

SYSTEMATICALLY: to do something in an organized or a methodical manner

CIRCUITOUS: indirectly

FORMIDABLE: frightening or difficult to deal with

SCULLERY: a room for kitchen chores

CUNNING: crafty or sly

DEPUTIZE: to sub in for someone or represent them

LATITUDE: freedom or liberty

PRETENSE: an insincere or fake behavior

SHAMMING: pretending

ROW: a fight

RUSE: a trick or con

SOMNAMBULIST: someone who sleepwalks

GYRATORY: rotating or revolving

DIGRESS: to move off the central topic

GIBBERING: babbling or ranting

WRETCH: a victim or somebody who is pitied

GENDER ROLES IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

The relationship between Bella and her husband is probably not one most couples strive for. However, the fact that it takes place during the late 19th century makes this type of relationship even more common than it might be today. Named for the reign of Queen Victoria, the Victorian Era featured very distinct gender roles. Queen Victoria herself was described as the “mother of the nation” who embodied the domestic space, especially after her husband Prince Albert passed away, and Victoria retreated to her home and nine children and rarely participated in public engagements.

HOME IS WHERE THE WIFE IS

Also contributing to the gender roles was the Industrial Revolution, which created new kinds of work and urban living. Men were involved in the public sphere of business, politics and even socializing, while women existed solely in the private sphere at home. However, most Victorian women didn't spend their time leisurely practicing needlepoint and reading books. Rather, because the home was considered a sanctuary away from the chaotic grind of factory work and the business world, women kept very busy creating a warm and welcoming home with beautiful, plush furnishings and nourishing food and drink always at the ready. In fact, to ensure this domestic haven, most middle-class households had at least one servant to assist the wife on a daily basis.

MORAL AND MATERNAL INSTINCTS

In her 2001 essay *Ideals of Womanhood in Victorian Britain*, Dr. Lynn Abrams, a Senior Lecturer in Modern History at Glasgow University, described the Victorian woman as someone who “drew strength from her moral superiority and whose virtue was manifested in the service of others.”

Dr. Abrams also mentioned in her essay that Victorian women took a lot of pride in their maternal duties as they spent more time with their children than previous generations and were expected to bond with their children emotionally more so than in the past. They were also expected to play with and educate their children rather than leave those tasks to a governess.





THE CHALLENGES

Although many women did draw strength from their position, it's not surprising that many were weakened by it because it was forced upon them. Per English law, women had no legal identity apart from their husband, who had complete control over the property and children.

Another downside of the Victorian gender roles was that because men and women were expected to exist in different spheres with vastly separate interests, it made companionship difficult; many marriages existed almost as business partnerships.

THE NATURAL FIT OF PHILANTHROPY

One way in which women existed in the public sphere was through participating in charity work, which Dr. Abrams said was informed "by religious commitment as well as by a sense of moral superiority." This sentiment led to the creation of several female associations, such as missionary and Sunday school societies and institutions that cared for orphans and the sick.

In fact, according to Dr. Abrams, women from this philanthropic movement were among the first feminists who were able to achieve effective change for equal rights.



"By 1900, women's moral mission had also become a political mission," she said. "The aim of first-wave feminists was to gain better education and employment opportunities for middle-class women, better working conditions and wages for working-class women, and eventually the vote, so that women might have some influence over their fate."



FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Now that you know a little bit more about gender roles during this time, can you see how easy it was for Jack to manipulate Bella the way he did? If yes, how so?

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF “GASLIGHTING”

One of those most interesting things about *Angel Street* is the fact that it coined the term “gaslighting,” which is frequently used in psychology. The term comes from the way Bella was tortured by the constant dimming and brightening of a gaslight in her home.

The term “gaslighting” describes a sophisticated manipulation tactic used to create doubt in the mind of someone and drive them mad. When the victim expresses their perception of reality, the manipulator attempts to cause confusion and paranoia so that the victim no longer trusts his or her own judgment and subsequently gives in to the manipulator’s control. The tragic irony of a situation like this, as seen in *Angel Street*, is that sometimes the thing that causes a person to go insane is to constantly question his or her own sanity.

Those who gaslight are typically narcissistic and aggressive (whether it be physical, verbal or emotional) personalities who take every opportunity to gain an advantage over others. They also tend to be very intelligent, which is evidenced in the way they can influence someone so strongly and yet appear they’re not being malevolent.

Many times gaslighting is used to convince someone they saw or didn’t see something or that something did or didn’t happen. As is common in most abusive relationships, gaslighting is often paired with shaming a person to make them feel more inadequate and vulnerable to the manipulator’s power.

There are several tactics a manipulator uses in gaslighting:

- Being so assertive about a conviction that the other person doubts their own perspective; i.e. “You’ve met her husband before. I know you have. I absolutely remember you meeting him.”
- On the other side of the spectrum, being so unwavering in one’s denial of something; i.e. “There is no way I met her husband. I’ve never seen him before. I didn’t even know she was married. Why would I lie about that?”
- Discussing historical circumstances that are for the most part accurate but contain tiny, hard-to-prove alterations to the facts and then using those “facts” to “prove” a manipulator’s version of the truth; i.e. “Don’t you remember talking to her at the Christmas party at your cousin’s house? You were talking about movies and how you both love comedies. Her husband was standing there the whole time. Your memory is so bad, you never remember faces—I’m not surprised you don’t remember meeting him, but you definitely did.”



FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Now that you’ve learned a bit more about the psychology behind gaslighting, can you think of examples between Jack and Bella that illustrate each tactic listed here?

SWDYT?

Rough: *Well, it seemed to me, from all that I gathered here and there, that the old lady might have been an eccentric, but that she was by no means a fool.*

► Rough mentions that although someone might appear loony, that doesn't mean they should be completely discredited. Alice Barlow was eccentric, but she hid her extremely valuable rubies in a very clever manner so that they've been under Jack's nose the entire time without him ever realizing it. To many, Bella might seem crazy, but in her suspecting her husband before Rough even came along, it's clear that she actually has some wits about her.

Do you see Bella as a strong or weak character? Why so? Is it possible she could be a bit of both?

Jack: *That funny, glazed, dazed look of the wandering mind—the body that acts without the soul to guide it? I have often thought you had that look, but it's never been so strong as tonight.*

► It's tragic how strongly Jack attempts to undermine Bella. He makes veiled threats and passive insults. Here he makes this statement as if he's concerned for her well-being but is actually saying that she appears to have no soul.

Why is this type of remark especially cutting? Have you ever had someone speak to you like that? How did it feel? Why is a statement like this sometimes even more hurtful than a direct insult?

READ MORE ABOUT IT

Want more information? Explore the following resources, picked by our friends at the St. Louis County Libraries.

FICTION

The Asylum
by John Harwood

The Forgotten Room
by Lincoln Child

The Woman in White
by Wilkie Collins

NONFICTION

The Gaslight Effect: How to Spot and Survive the Hidden Manipulations Other People Use to Control Your Life
by Robin Stern

Inside the Victorian Home: a Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England
by Judith Flanders

Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty, and the Mad-Doctors in England
by Sarah Wise

Madness: a Brief History
by Roy Porter

FILM

Rope

The Woman in White



WORD SEARCH

Angel Street

Detective Rough likes to do puzzles to keep his mind sharp between cases.
Help him solve this word search, full of words you'll find in the play and study guide.

A	I	A	C	U	J	G	T	W	D	M	A	K	L	Z
S	N	T	H	G	I	L	S	A	G	A	A	D	K	B
F	S	G	J	B	J	I	L	Y	A	N	J	K	B	V
T	W	E	E	T	R	R	R	C	O	N	B	K	O	J
I	Q	W	N	L	P	O	K	O	B	I	N	L	J	Z
Y	B	F	Y	D	S	D	O	N	X	N	U	X	K	N
A	C	N	S	E	A	T	H	C	D	G	Z	S	M	C
N	N	G	I	S	E	M	R	E	H	H	N	B	K	D
J	M	B	Z	K	V	O	T	E	T	A	O	E	I	W
M	U	R	D	E	R	E	F	N	E	M	D	L	B	O
R	U	E	B	B	C	W	E	N	M	T	N	L	R	Z
B	H	Z	B	T	Z	K	L	R	G	H	O	A	U	S
F	P	O	I	P	G	R	Y	T	W	Q	L	A	F	X
M	Y	V	J	C	P	V	Y	T	O	M	Q	W	W	Q
I	E	L	G	G	F	V	G	F	S	N	T	E	V	J

Angel Street

Bella

Brooch

Detective

Gaslight

London

Madness

Manningham

Murder

Rubies