

SEX MAGICK

NICHOLAS BROWN



CURRENCY PRESS
The performing arts publisher

**GRIFFIN
THEATRE
COMPANY**



**SYDNEY
WORLDPRIDE
2023**

CHARACTERS

ARD PANICKER, a half-Indian, half-Australian man, 30. A sports physiotherapist.

CINDY PANICKER, Ard's mother. A Caucasian woman in her 50s. Vice-chairman of the Hyperions Rugby League Club.

LIRAZ, a businesswoman in her early 30s who runs Shakthi Health Spa.

MANMATHA, a tantric guru, 30s. Any ethnicity but South Asian.

BOYD, a nurse/carer in his early 30s. South Asian-Australian man.

KEERAN, Ard's father. A South Asian man in his late 50s/60s.

YOUNG MAN, a young Indian Kathakali dancer from Kerala.

GONDESHWAR, an Eastern European ashram devotee.

ALLI-JANE, an Australian businesswoman.

WINSOME, a queer member of the Body Somatic.

JOJO, a stripper.

YOUNG WOMAN, an Australian woman in Kerala.

DRAYTON, a publicist.

GAZZA, a Rugby League player.

DOCTOR LES, a doctor at St Vincent's Hospital.

NURSE NICK, a nurse.

COREY, a South Asian American ashram devotee.

YOUNG ANAND, a young Kathakali dancer from Kerala.

WAYLON, Cindy's fiancé.

ARDHA-ANARISH-VARA, an Indian deity.

ANAND, a Kathakali dancer from Kerala.

There is also a voiceover or FaceTime video footage required of a phone conversation with TJ, a trans man in his 30s.

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

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

The Indian deity ARDHA-NARISH-VARA appears, dressed in a splendid, ornate Kathakali outfit—adorned with necklaces, bracelets, bangles, and bells.

The right-hand side of the outfit is representative of Goddess Shakthi, the left-hand side represents Lord Shiva.

On their head is an enormous headdress, split through with a long, sharp rod.

Red light fills the stage for a moment as their face twitches and contorts into the Kathakali facial expression of Karunam.

ARDHA-NARISH-VARA: Rasa One: Karunam. Suffering.

CINDY PANICKER, a Caucasian woman in her late 50s, walks to her front door. She's dressed in a power suit. She opens the door to find her son ARD (a half South Indian / half Australian man). He has a large backpack with him and is extremely sweaty and dishevelled. He bursts through the door.

CINDY: Ard. What are you doing here?

ARD: Mum.

ARD falls to his mother's feet in a heap, crying.

CINDY: Get up. Don't cry on my shoes. They're suede. I haven't Scotchgarded them yet. What's happened to you? There are photographers everywhere. Come inside.

CINDY leads ARD inside. He sees several bronze statues of male Rugby League players looking like ancient Greek gods. A large office chair is close by. On the other side of the stage is a large closet.

ARD: What have you done?

CINDY: Just a few renovations. Like my new plaque? Cindy Panicker—co-chairman of the Hyperions.

ARD: Where are the walls?

CINDY: I want expansiveness.

ARD: Is that a statue of Kollam?

CINDY: It's a bronze tribute to your brother—yes. Donated by the prime minister. You look awful darling. What happened while you were gone? I'm all ears.

A car horn beeps.

Shit. That's my ride.

CINDY runs to the door.

ARD: Where are you going?

CINDY: Waylon's ... Waylon and I are ... going to a party.

ARD: Whose party?

CINDY: I ... I didn't expect you'd be back this week, Ard. And I didn't want to tell you like this but ... here we are. It's my engagement party. Waylon and I are getting married.

ARD suddenly gasps as his face starts twitching. He starts to lose control of his facial muscles.

CINDY: What are you doing?

ARD: I can't control it.

ARD sits in the nearby office chair, holds his stomach and shits himself.

CINDY: My ergonomic chair! /

ARD: Aaaargh.

CINDY: / I just had it ergonomically assessed!

ARD: Help me.

CINDY: Get up and go to the bathroom.

ARD: I can't.

CINDY: Go and have a shower. Take the elevator to level two.

ARD: There's an elevator?

CINDY points to the closet.

CINDY: That's my new voice-activated towel cupboard. Grab yourself a towel. The password's kollam.

ARD: Keep talking to me, Mum. I don't wanna pass out.

The horn beeps again outside.

CINDY: Ahhh. We're having the wedding in the stadium. Will you walk me down the field?

ARD: Doesn't Waylon wanna have the wedding in a church?

CINDY: The footy field is our church. We're borrowing the decorations from Hillsong.

ARD: But you're an atheist.

CINDY: I like Christmas and crucifixes. Do you need some water?

ARD: Just keep talking to me.

CINDY: Ahhh. I've been doing Christian cross-fit classes at Waylon's gym. It's called Cruci-fit.

ARD: I can't feel my face.

Cindy's phone rings. It's a 'Simply the Best' by Tina Turner/Rugby League ringtone. She answers it.

CINDY: Waylon. Shit. My battery's just about to run out. I can't come to the party. Because Ard's come home and he's acting really strange.

ARD: Mum—go.

CINDY: I can't come, Waylon. I'm sorry.

ARD: You can't not go to your own engagement party.

CINDY: I don't care, Waylon. Just apologise and say I couldn't make it—

The phone conks out.

ARD: It's in my feet Mum. It's in my hands now.

CINDY: Have you been scratched by a bat?

ARD: Aaaaargh!

ARD's fit moves to his whole body. He stands up and thrashes around the room.

CINDY: I'll call an ambulance.

CINDY exits. The fit soon subsides. ARD stands up, rattled and afraid. A rattling noise is heard from the closet. ARD moves to it and tries to open it. Suddenly ARDHA-NARISH-VARA crashes out of the closet in a blaze of drums and cymbals.

SCENE TWO

The deafening sound of cicadas and jungle birds. Swatting away mosquitos and covered in sweat, ARD and LIRAZ appear, trudging with huge backpacks. LIRAZ carries a crumpled and ripped paper map. ARD throws his backpack on the ground.

ARD: I can't walk anymore!

LIRAZ: Get up. We're nearly there. I think.

ARD: Traffic's insane here.

We hear a loud rikshaw horn.

LIRAZ: Those rikshaw horns are loud. They startle me.

ARD: My horn startles you.

LIRAZ: Ard.

ARD: Where's the resort? I need to taste you. Now.

LIRAZ: Mile-high sex not enough for you?

ARD: So hot. But I want more.

LIRAZ: Let's just check into the luxury huts first.

ARD: Looks dodgy round here. This is like the beginning of one of those horror movies when the honeymooners arrive at a ranch.

LIRAZ: Honeymooners?

ARD: They always hook up and get nude before the baddy comes to get 'em.

LIRAZ: Can you help me with this map? The fax said to walk through the forest to the beach.

ARD: Who faxes anymore?

LIRAZ: Oh! Look at the peacocks!

ARD: They look pretty skanky to me. I bet the resort put them here.

LIRAZ: No. They're wild peacocks. We're in India Ard. The real India. Authentic to the core.

GONDESHWAR enters. She is a Caucasian woman of Eastern European descent, in her 50s. She's dressed in South Indian attire and is holding a hessian bag.

GONDESHWAR: Namaste! Namaskaar! Welcome! I am Gondeshwar. Right hand of Guru-ji. You must be Liraz D'mour?

LIRAZ: Yes I'm Liraz.

GONDESHWAR: This must your husband be, Ard Panicker?

ARD: Yes—I'm Liraz's husband.

GONDESHWAR: Good. I made clear in fax that couples doing this course be married must be.

COREY, a South Asian American man runs onstage, covered in sweat and struggling for breath. He speaks with an American accent.

COREY: Gondeshwar! Gondeshwar!

GONDESHWAR: Corey! Do you have enrolment papers?

COREY: Guru-ji's furious that two students have missed the induction initiation.

GONDESHWAR: It not is my fault. You in charge of administration Corey! Is he really furious? Or just little bit cross again?

COREY: He's really mad Gondeshwar. He's got that look in his eye.

GONDESHWAR: I hope he does not beat us again.

COREY: Are these the late comers? Guru-ji's waiting. You both need to move into the amphitheatre immediately.

GONDESHWAR: You may call him Guru-ji or Manmatha-ji. Always say ji after saying his name for respect. And if he put his foot near your face, kiss it.

COREY: Wait. They don't have their tilaks.

GONDESHWAR: I was about to just do it Corey.

COREY: But Guru-ji asked me to—

GONDESHWAR: Corey. Don't rain on my grenade.

COREY: I think you actually mean—

GONDESHWAR: Go!

COREY exits.

Don't mind Corey. He very new here. Only been here ten years and want to be Guru-ji's right hand. Corey's right hand only good for washing my ass. This is your tilak. It help you open up your chakras.

GONDESHWAR pulls out a small bottle of red dye from her bag and marks LIRAZ on her forehead.

LIRAZ: Mmmm. Thank you Gondeshwar-ji. Should I wear a scarf around my head too?

GONDESHWAR: Whatever. Just make sure you have loose pants on. Panicker. Your turn.

ARD: Gondeshwar-ji—which chakra will it open up?

GONDESHWAR: Most say third eye but I say base chakra.

ARD: [*joking to LIRAZ*] That's the one between my balls and a-hole hey?

LIRAZ is embarrassed. GONDESHWAR marks ARD's forehead—unimpressed.

GONDESHWAR: Smartie-ass jock huh? I must also collect your phones. It is part of process here. No phones. Put phones in itchy sack.

ARD takes his phone out of his pocket and puts it in Gondeshwar's hessian bag.

LIRAZ: I expected just this and I didn't bring a phone.

GONDESHWAR: You good girl. Nice girl. Pretty girl. You wasting your time with shitty jockstrap here. Come.

The world shifts, and we are now in an amphitheatre—with ARD and LIRAZ seated. MANMATHA is onstage, smiling patiently. He is an unassuming, handsome white man.

MANMATHA: One month with me and you will be gurus yourself. And that concludes the initiation ceremony. Namaste. Welcome to my latecomers. We will all be latecomers shortly and you'll understand what I mean in a moment. We shall meet here for meditation every night after our evening classes, which will be held in the huts just over yonder way.

ARD whispers to LIRAZ.

ARD: Liraz? Why's he teaching this course?

LIRAZ: He seems lovely.

ARD: But he's not Indian. I thought you wanted authentic.

LIRAZ: He could be from Kashmir. They're very fair in the north.

MANMATHA: Do not be late to any of my classes. Broth will be served for breakfast. Plain rice for lunch and salt-free dahl for supper.

ARD whispers to LIRAZ.

ARD: This guy's a fake.

MANMATHA moves to ARD.