

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# The Last Time I Saw Calvin

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by A. F. Lall

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EXTRACT

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## THE LAST TIME I SAW CALVIN

ACT ONE, Scene 1:

Ray and Peter's living room in their St Kilda warehouse apartment. Furniture is minimal and consists of some shelving, a timber coffee table, three directors' chairs, a couple of large floor cushions. A kitchen/bar area is sectioned off by a curved black counter. There is a mezzanine level with a bed and dressing table.

RAY and PETER are preparing crudites in the kitchen. PETER, 32, is tall, thin, quick-moving. He wears a chef's apron over jeans and shirt. RAY, 55, is shorter, neatly dressed, and spends more time watching than helping, being focused on his glass of wine.

RAY:           You've got enough vegies here to feed the fucking fleet.

PETER:         Don't knock it. They're cheap, colourful, and I'm saving you heaps.

RAY:           Still it's a bit ordinary, isn't it?

PETER:         Don't pass judgement till you've sampled my dip.

RAY:           (Sampling) Mm, luscious. But is that all you're doing?

PETER:         Chef's night off, I want to have fun too.

RAY:           Fun!

PETER:         Well, whatever. I want to be in it, not tied to the stove all bloody night. Oh, don't look so woebegone. I didn't forget your party pies and baby quiches.

RAY:           That's all right then. Do you think we will, Petey?

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PETER: What?

RAY: Have a good time?

PETER: Fuck knows. I'm not even sure who's going to turn up.

RAY: Didn't you keep a copy of his list?

PETER: Of course I did, but with only four official replies it's anybody's guess.

RAY: Nobody knows the meaning of RSVP any more, it's a bloody disgrace.

PETER: Dave, of course.

RAY: Now there's a dead loss for starters.

PETER: If it comes to that, so's the guest of honour. (Winces) Oops, sorry.

(RAY smiles, shakes his head and refills his glass.)

Hadn't you better slow down, Ray? It could be a long night.

RAY: I don't need a watchdog.

PETER: I know but...

RAY: You just can't help yourself. (Moves into the living area.) I still say we

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should've held off till the new sofa arrived.

PETER: We've been through all that. If we don't have it on the day then I can't see any point, can you?

(He picks up two platters of crudites and sets one on each end of the coffee table.)

There. Beautiful, no?

(RAY brings the dip over, sets it in the centre. PETER moves to the CD player and puts on some mood music. The doorbell buzzes.)

RAY: Hell's bells! What's the time?

PETER: Dead on eight. And the only dog I know who'd actually arrive on time is...

(He opens the door with a flourish.)

Dave! Good to see you.

(DAVE is a tall, lean man in his 30s, sandy-haired and tanned from years of outdoor labouring. He is casually dressed in jeans, checked shirt and boots, and carries two items: an esky and a large object draped in a table cloth.)

DAVE: G'day, Peter. Brought a few cans...

PETER: Lovely, I'll just bung these in the kitchen. (He takes the esky.)

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DAVE: How's it going, Ray?

RAY: Oh, can't complain. Well, don't just stand there. Let's hear it from the expert.

(DAVE moves around, still holding the draped object.)

DAVE: Um, yeah. Good, solid design. I finished a job like this not long ago in Port Melbourne. You've got the space but it's still homely, doesn't scream warehouse.

RAY: Of course the furniture thing isn't happening yet. There's a leather sofa and dining suite still to come.

DAVE: Ah, right. I thought maybe you were being minimalist and trendy.

RAY: Check this out.

(He indicates an area offstage. DAVE peers around, whistles.)

DAVE: Paved courtyard with barbecue – nice. Must've cost a packet.

RAY: Took a fair whack out of the super, let me tell you.

DAVE: The super? You've ditched the accountant's shingle then?

RAY: Doctor's orders, chronic stress syndrome or something. Still do the odd tax

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return though, so if you ever need any help in that area...

DAVE: Thanks, I'll bear it in mind.

(PETER, having shed his apron, returns from the kitchen.)

PETER: Dave, can I put that bundle somewhere for you?

DAVE: Oh, yeah. Listen, this wasn't my idea, okay?

(He uncovers a heavy silver antique urn.)

PETER: Yikes!

DAVE: He was really looking forward to this, the big four-o. Almost made it too.  
Missed the goalpost by two weeks.

(PETER and RAY exchange looks.)

RAY: So this is his way of being here, a joker to the last.

(He takes the urn, finds a central place in some shelving and positions it there.)

Now he can oversee the whole proceedings.

PETER: Reckon we could all do with a drink. Dave?

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DAVE:            Make mine beer, thanks.

(DAVE sits on a chair. PETER fixes drinks in the kitchen.)

DAVE:            By the way, thanks you two for the groceries, the flowers, the Sunday gossip sessions. He really used to look forward to them.

RAY:             The flowers or the gossip?

DAVE:            Both.

(Awkward pause.)

PETER:           So are you back working, Dave?

DAVE:            Went back on the job straight away. Wouldn't know what to do with myself otherwise.

RAY:             Yes, it's not easy, is it?

DAVE:            Nope. (Pause) No, sir, it is not.

(PETER brings the drinks.)

RAY:             Well, here's to tonight – cheers.

DAVE:            Yeah, cheers.