

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Crystal

by Caleb Lewis

EXTRACT

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Act One

Still Life

“When Mum and Dad broke up it felt like the end of the world.”

Bedroom. Night. Sam is in bed, a small torch on, reading up late. A noise outside the door. Sam flicks off the torch; she pretends to sleep.

The door opens. Dad stands in the doorway. The room is dark and it is difficult to see him.

Dad Sam?

Dad enters the room and looks down on Sam. He places her book on the floor and looks at her; he smooths Sam's hair out of her face, tucks her in tight and leans over to kiss her forehead.

He stands by the door and lingers in the rectangle of light.

Dad Good night Poppet.

Dad closes the door behind him. Darkness.

Sam Dad?

End of Scene.

* All of Brian and Wendy's dialogue is in **bold** and should be spoken with a raised voice, close to yelling. Brian and Wendy's argument takes place in a separate space to the children.

Lounge room. Night. Kait and Bridget, watching TV. From the sound of it, a wholesome family sitcom - a la "The Brady Bunch"

In contrast: Sounds of an argument from the bedroom. A baby cries continuously. Brian and Wendy rage at each other unseen. The girls watch telly in silence. Occasional canned laughter.

Wendy **I just got her to sleep.**

Brian **I didn't do it on purpose.**

Wendy **So it's my fault is it?**

Brian **No, I tripped! The bulb's blown; I couldn't see!**

Wendy **It blew a week ago Brian. If you replaced it when I asked you – Shhhhh. Shhhhhh. Good girl, go to sleep. Please go to sleep for Mummy.**

Brian **Where's Kait?**

Wendy **In her room. Bridget stayed over. Can you drive the girls to netball tomorrow?**

Brian **They can walk.**

Wendy No they can't walk Brian. Someone has to drive them and I guess that'll be me.

Brian I've been driving for eighteen hours Wen'.

Wendy And what am I doing? Resting?! The carpet is filthy! Someone spilled salt all over it - of course Kait's denying everything! – And I'm sure it wasn't you?

Brian I wasn't here!

Wendy You're never here –And when you are home, you sleep all day.

Brian Wendy, be reasonable, it's my one day off.

Wendy When do I get a day off? Brian?! Huh? I need help.

Brian You need a new car, Kait needs braces, we need to pay off the house. Who do you think is paying / for all of that?

Wendy I work just as hard –

Brian *(Yells)* I KNOW!

The baby starts up again. Wendy screams out in frustration.

Brian I'm sorry – Wendy I'm sorry - Don't you walk out that door
Wendy!

A door slams.

Brian Wendy? Wendy!!!

Kait turns up the volume on the TV. It drowns out all other sound.

Brian **Kait?... KAIT! TURN THAT DOWN!**

Kait does so. Silence.

Bridget Maybe I should go –

Kait looks to Bridget pleadingly.

Brian **I can't do this any longer.**
D'you hear me?

Bridget Want to listen to my iPod? *(Kait nods)*

Both girls listen to the iPod. They block out everything else.

Brian **It's over.**

A thin trickle of salt begins to pour down out of the sky.

* *This flow maintains throughout the action as more and more salt builds up onstage. The descending stream serves as both a stylised*

theatrical representation of the growing crisis as well as an hourglass counting down.

End of Scene

Kitchen. Night. Late. A vase of fresh flowers sits on the table. All the lights are off. Alan enters. He is drunk. He bumps into the wall and drops his bag.

Alan Deirdre? Deerj! Marty! Deerj!

Marty enters in pyjamas, half asleep.

Alan Marty!

Marty Hi Dad.

Alan gets Marty in a headlock and starts noogying him.

Alan Marty, marty, marty, marty, marty.

Marty Dad!

Alan Where's your mum?

Marty Asleep.

Deirdre enters. She switches the light on.

Deirdre What's going on in here?

Alan There she is. The love of my life.