

DON'S PARTY

David Williamson

Currency Press, Sydney

Don's Party was first performed by the Australian Performing Group at the Pram Factory, Melbourne on 11 August 1971 with the following cast:

DON	Wilfred Last
KATH	Evelyn Krape
SIMON	Tony Taylor
JODY	Yvonne Marini
MAL	Bruce Knappett
JENNY	Lindy Davies
MACK	John Smythe
EVAN	Graham Hartley
KERRY	Ros Horin
COOLEY	Rod Moore
SUSAN	Kerry Dwyer

Director, Graeme Blundell
Designer, Craig Haire

A revised version of the play was presented at the Jane Street Theatre, Sydney, opening on 29 June 1972 with the following cast:

DON	Martin Harris
KATH	Pat Bishop
SIMON	Mervyn Drake
JODY	Wendy Blacklock
MAL	Allan Lander
JENNY	Judith Fisher
MACK	James H. Bowles
EVAN	Ken Shorter
KERRY	Darlene Johnson
COOLEY	John Ewart
SUSAN	Barbara Stephens

Set design by Lindsay Megarrity
Directed by John Clark

CHARACTERS

DON
KATH
SIMON
JODY
MAL
JENNY
MACK
EVAN
KERRY
COOLEY
SUSAN

All characters are in their early to middle thirties, with the exception of SUSAN, who is in her early twenties.

SETTING

The action of the play takes place in the home of DON and KATH HENDERSON in the Melbourne suburb of Lower Plenty. The set is constructed in such a way that the living room and the kitchen of the house can be viewed simultaneously. The living room is spacious, with trendy decor. The walls are hung with abstract prints and large, ceiling-high bookshelves are stacked with books.

The date is 25 October 1969: election night.

ACT ONE

8.40 p.m. Guests are expected any minute. DON is in the kitchen. He plugs in the television set and begins to adjust it. The audience can't see the screen but can hear the soundtrack. KATH is tidying the living room.

KATH: [*edgy, preoccupied*] Put the peanuts and crisps around, will you?

DON: I'm tuning in the television.

KATH: People will be arriving any minute.

DON: I'm tuning in the television.

KATH: Just switch it on and leave it.

DON: I'm adjusting the vertical hold.

KATH: [*barely controlled*] Just switch it on and leave it.

DON: The picture's rolling.

KATH: Well, it wasn't last night.

DON: Well, it is now.

KATH: Adjust the vertical hold.

DON: That's what I'm doing.

KATH: Could you come back to it? The guests'll be arriving any minute now.

DON: So what!

KATH: They might like something to eat!

DON: I'm adjusting the contrast.

[*DON turns up the sound on the TV. We hear this announcement:*]

TV: Polling closed tonight at eight o'clock and the counting of votes for the 1969 Federal Election has begun. We are now in the Central Tally Room in Canberra and as soon as the results come to hand we will bring them to you. Our panel of experts is standing by ready

to interpret voting trends for you, and will be conducting interviews with party representatives throughout the evening. Stay tuned to this channel for a complete coverage of the 1969 Federal Election.

[KATH glares at him, puts down whatever she's doing, picks up the trays of chips and Twisties, and starts distributing them herself in the living room, banging the trays down unnecessarily hard to give vent to her annoyance. DON stands back from the television set, satisfied that it's working.]

DON: There's no need for you to do it.

KATH: I've done it.

DON: I would've done it.

KATH: *[sharply]* Try and act like a host tonight, will you?

DON: *[complaining]* Cut it out.

[DON turns down the sound.]

KATH: It wouldn't take much effort.

DON: Since when have I been rude to guests?

KATH: You usually point them in the direction of the fridge and that's it.

DON: That's all my friends need.

KATH: I can't see the point of coming to a party with the sole intention of drinking yourself into a stupor.

DON: That's not the intention.

KATH: Hmm.

DON: There's a bloody important event on the television tonight. Or perhaps you haven't heard.

KATH: It's just an excuse for a booze-up.

DON: *[flaring]* A booze-up? That's why I've been out there all day handing out how-to-vote cards? Just an excuse for a booze-up?

KATH: I've never noticed Cooley showing much interest in politics.

[Pause.]

DON: *[indignant]* Cooley's left of centre!

KATH: The only thing Cooley's left are a trail of used up women and more empty beer bottles than anyone else in Australia.

[Pause.]

Who's he bringing tonight?

DON: [*surlly*] I don't know.

KATH: Is he bringing that air hostess?

DON: No.

KATH: What happened to her? She was nice.

DON: I don't know.

KATH: Probably got too serious.

DON: Probably.

KATH: Who's he bringing then?

DON: I told you. I don't know. He just flew down from Sydney yesterday.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Would you like a drink?

KATH: I can't. [REDACTED]

DON: [REDACTED]

KATH: [*sharply*] Lay off. And try and show me a little bit of affection tonight, will you?

DON: I show you a lot of affection. You just don't notice it.

KATH: Neither does anyone else.

[*Pause.*]

If you want the honest truth, I think that your friends are the biggest bunch of pricks I've ever met.

DON: Yeah... well, it would be a pretty sparse party if we threw one for your friends. Unless we invited the pottery class.

KATH: Why did you marry me if I'm so bloody mundane?

DON: I didn't want my personality swamped.

[DON *moves to the record player and puts on the Beatles' "When I'm Sixty-Four".*]

~~KATH: As well as filling up the odd beer glass, try and make sure everyone mixes.~~

~~DON: Everyone knows each other.~~

KATH: Jody and Simon don't know anyone.