



LALLY KATZ is one of Australia's most performed playwrights. Her plays display a rare and original voice for the stage in works including *The Eisteddfod*, *The Black Swan of Trespass*, *A Golem Story*, *Starchaser* and *Neighbourhood Watch*. Lally started her career making theatre with director Chris Kohn at Stuck Pigs Squealing wherever they could find an audience and created a strong reputation for their work, winning the 2005 Producer's Choice Award at the International Fringe Festival in New York. Lally has developed new work with the National Theatre in England, was a writer in residence at Melbourne University, won the British Council's Realise Your Dream Award and received a Churchill Fellowship. *Goodbye Vaudeville Charlie Mudd* won the Victorian Premier's Award in 2009 and other work has variously won Green Room awards, Sydney Theatre awards and the RE Ross Trust Award.

Neighbourhood Watch

LALLY KATZ



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Cover shows Robyn Nevin as Ana in the 2014 MTC production. (Photo: Jeff Busby.)

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Dedicated to Anna Bosnjak and Robyn Nevin

Neighbourhood Watch was first produced by Belvoir at Belvoir St Theatre, Sydney, on 27 July 2011, with the following cast:

KEN	Charlie Garber
MUSICIAN, CHEMIST	Stefan Gregory
CATHERINE	Megan Holloway
MILOVA (now JOVANKA)*	Kris McQuade
MARTIN	Ian Meadows
CHRISTINA (now KATRINA)*	Heather Mitchell
ANA	Robyn Nevin

The remaining roles were played by the company.

Director, Simon Stone

Set and Costume Designer, Dale Ferguson

Lighting Designer, Damien Cooper

Composer and Sound Designer, Stefan Gregory

Dramaturg, Eamon Flack

Stage Manager, Luke McGettigan

Assistant Stage Managers, Mel Dyer and Michael Maclean

* In this revised edition playwright Lally Katz made a number of changes to character names. Please see Note on next page.

PLEASE NOTE

Playwright Lally Katz has made three character name changes in this revised edition: MILOVA is now JOVANKA; DOCTOR VALKER is now DOCTOR WHITE and CHRISTINA is now KATRINA.

CHARACTERS

In Australia:

ANA, an 80-year-old Hungarian woman

CATHERINE, a woman in her late 20s

KEN, a man in his early 30s

MARTIN, a man in his late 20s

KATRINA, a woman in her early to mid 50s

JOVANKA, a Serbian woman in her late 70s

NANCY, a woman from 45 to 65 years old

DOCTOR WHITE, a woman in her mid to late 40s

CHEMIST, a man in his late 20s/early 30s

POSTMAN, any age

POLICEMAN, a young man

DOCTOR'S RECEPTIONIST, any age

SAFEWAY EMPLOYEE, any age

WOMAN WITH SMALL DOG, any age

SAFEWAY DELIVERY BOY, a teenage boy

WOMAN WORKING AT CINEMA, any age

AMBULANCE OFFICER, any age

In Hungary:

ANA'S FATHER
ANA'S MOTHER
ANA'S SISTER
GYPSY
SOLDIER
ARTUR
SOLDIER IN INFIRMARY
RUSSIAN SOLDIER
SOLDIER'S MOTHER
SOLDIER'S FATHER
MEAN GIRL AT ANA'S WORK
POLICEMAN IN HUNGARY

CASTING NOTE

Many of the roles in this play are tiny and any actor can play multiple roles.

The Hungarian roles can be doubled by the actors playing the characters in modern Australia. However, consideration should go into this doubling as it will inevitably bleed into the story of the characters in modern Australia (especially the roles that the actors playing Martin and Ken play in the past in Hungary).

LOCATIONS

The play is set mainly on a street in suburban Australia. In this current script it is in Sydney, Australia, but it can easily be set in the suburbs of Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra or any other Australian city depending where it is performed. The play has multiple locations, including the outside street, Ana's house, Catherine and Ken's house, the doctor's surgery, the chemist, the cinema, and Hungary during World War Two. It is up to the director and design team to work out the best way to represent these shifts in location and time.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Mary Street. It is dawn. The dawn light is a sort of thin violet colour, similar to evening, but with the feeling of it rising.

The street is still and quiet, not quite woken up yet.

Only CATHERINE is out there. She's wearing pyjamas and is sitting cross-legged on the brick letterbox, on the street, out the front of her house.

She looks out into the street, as though she is a prisoner looking out into the world. Her mobile phone sits beside her. It begins to ring. It rings and rings. She looks at it, heartbroken. But she doesn't answer it.

KEN, her housemate, in his early to mid 30s, comes outside. He's wearing tracksuit pants and an old jumper. He's carrying a laptop computer. He stands behind her, bemused, but also slightly authoritative.

KEN: Happy Kevin '07, my friend.

CATHERINE: Happy Kevin '07.

KEN: You're up very early.

CATHERINE: So are you.

KEN: All-nighter.

CATHERINE: Did you win?

KEN: We killed the monster. But we had to spend a lot of gold.

CATHERINE looks out into the street.

CATHERINE: Do you think the street looks more hopeful?

KEN: Why would it look more hopeful?

CATHERINE: Because Labor won the election?

KEN: Governments schoverments.

CATHERINE: What about 'The West Wing'?

KEN: If Jed Bartlet was our prime minister then I'd be excited.

CATHERINE: I wish something would happen. That would change the whole world.

KEN sits down, on the driveway, next to the letterbox. He begins to play World of Warcraft on his laptop.

Mary Street is starting to wake up now. On the other side of the street, KATRINA, very attractive, well-groomed, in her 50s, comes out the front of her house. She is shaking out a rug, but she is doing it quite feebly.

A head peeks up over the fence. KATRINA doesn't seem to see it. And then, ANA, 80 years old, Hungarian, wearing all maroon, with her golden-tinged hair piled neatly on top of her head, comes out from behind her white picket fence gate, shutting it quickly behind her. She is carrying a bag of leaves. The sound of terrifying dog barking comes from behind the gate. ANA makes a shushing motion at the dog.

ANA: Shht! [*She makes her way over to Katrina's porch, carrying the bag of leaves.*] Katrina, I return these leaves which fall from your tree into my yards.

ANA hands KATRINA the bag of leaves.

KATRINA: Oh I'm sorry Ana, I'll have to get it pruned soon.

ANA: I don't ask for the bother, only return to you what is yours.

You want help with the rug? I can bang it and you hold.

KATRINA: That's alright, Ana, I'm just giving it a little shake. It's not too dusty.

ANA: Is too dusty! Should to bang.

ANA begins to bang the rug, whether KATRINA wants her to or not.

KEN takes his computer and stands up.

KEN: I'm gonna have a nap. What are you up to today?

CATHERINE: I've got a lot of ironing to do.

KEN: Again?

CATHERINE: It gets wrinkly.

KEN: You're a freak.

KEN walks inside.

CATHERINE holds her phone.

Across the street, ANA is still banging on Katrina's rug. She can hit very hard for an 80-year-old lady.

KATRINA coughs and turns her head from the commotion of it. ANA speaks in a very polite voice as she bangs.

ANA: I want to ask you, Katrina, my Doctor White send me to the very big appointment with the stomach bowel specialist next week. They will put me unconscious for the camera. I want to ask you can drive me back home?

KATRINA: Which day?

ANA: Tuesday.

KATRINA: I'm sorry, Ana, I'm looking after my grandchildren on Tuesday. Can you catch a taxi?

ANA: No, I must to be picked up by someone who know me. Doctor said it is the law.

KATRINA: You can hire a nurse for the day, Ana.

ANA: I don't like the nurse. Worst than Gestapo. Ana never like the nurse.

KATRINA: I'm sorry, Ana, I have to stick to my program.

ANA: Ja. I understand. You are busy with the grandchilder.

ANA is walking down the driveway. CATHERINE is walking down her driveway too, onto the street. It looks as if she and ANA will meet in the road.

Just then the POSTMAN arrives. He speaks to CATHERINE.

POSTMAN: I've got a delivery for number three.

CATHERINE: That's me.

POSTMAN: Just sign here.

She signs and then opens the package as she walks inside. KEN watches her.

KEN: What is it this time?

CATHERINE: A kettle.

KEN: Does your mother know that we have two kettles already?

CATHERINE: Yes.

ANA comes out of Katrina's gate, onto the street.

On the street, ANA meets JOVANKA, an elderly Serbian woman. JOVANKA's movements are heavy and laboured. She has been dragging herself up the road. JOVANKA is very excited to see ANA.

JOVANKA: Hello, Ana!

ANA is not so excited to see JOVANKA.

ANA: Jovanka.

JOVANKA: I come by bus here to see if you like to have one coffee.

ANA: You should to call first. I am very busy.

JOVANKA: I was calling you, Ana, but you never answering the phone.

ANA: I am very busy with many friend. With many important appointment.

That is why I am not answering the telephone.

JOVANKA: You want to have one coffee?

ANA: No. No coffee. I'm sorry, Jovanka, I must to stick to my program.

JOVANKA: Ja, the program. I will call again tomorrow.

A new day.

CATHERINE *is ironing*. KEN *calls out to her*.

KEN: Do you want to watch a lunchtime ep?

CATHERINE: Not right now.

KEN: I'm making sandwiches, you want one?

CATHERINE: No. I've eaten already.

KEN: What did you eat?

CATHERINE *thinks for a moment before answering, it's obvious she is lying*.

CATHERINE: A sandwich.

KEN: What kind of sandwich?

CATHERINE: I can't remember...

KEN: That's such a pathetic lie. I'm making you a sandwich.

CATHERINE: I hate your sandwiches.

The POSTMAN arrives at the door.

Saved by the bell!

POSTMAN: Delivery. Just sign here.

CATHERINE *signs*.

CATHERINE: Thank you.

The POSTMAN leaves. CATHERINE looks inside the package.

KEN: Now what?

CATHERINE: A food processor.

KEN: Does your mother know that you can't cook?

CATHERINE: You don't need to be able to cook, the food processor does it for you.

KEN: Uh... yeah.

KATRINA *is outside, sweeping her porch. ANA approaches*.

ANA: Katrina, I just wake up now from stomach bowel specialist.

KATRINA: So you got someone to drive you? Good.

ANA: Ja, I find.

KATRINA: How are you feeling?

ANA: They put camera right in—very far! They look for everything! [*She holds out some flower cuttings to KATRINA.*] I bring you from my garden.

KATRINA: Oh, thank you, Ana. Lovely.

ANA: You want me to show you where is good to plant?

ANA indicates to the cuttings.

KATRINA: I was just headed inside to make a phone call, Ana. But thank you.

ANA: Ja. The phone call.

KATRINA: Well, I look forward to planting these.

ANA: Ja. We will see what grow.

KATRINA hastily leaves. ANA heads back to her house.

JOVANKA comes trudging up the street.

JOVANKA: Ana!

ANA: Jovanka.

JOVANKA: I come on the bus. I was calling you. But again no answer.

Just then, the CHEMIST comes. He's a young man.

CHEMIST: Hi, Mrs Brajovik. I brought your prescription by.

ANA: Ah! Here is my boy!

The Bella, Ana's huge German Shepherd dog, barks and barks, invisibly, from behind the fence.

No how-how, Bella! [*To the CHEMIST*] Thank you. Thank you. You are the very special boy. Very good chem-ist. Make delivery to the old lady. No-*von* will do this but you. How much I owing you?

CHEMIST: Just settle it next time you're in.

ANA: Thank you! Thank you! I will coming next week. Ana will never make the robbery.

CHEMIST: Ha ha, I know! How are you feeling?

ANA: Not too good. I all the time got some problem. I am very allergic to the sun. But no matter. Keep going.

CHEMIST: That's a good attitude. You take care of yourself, Mrs Brajovik.

As he is leaving, the CHEMIST sees CATHERINE coming out of her house, carrying her phone. They catch eyes, but then she looks into her phone.

ANA: Vait—you vill leave the broken hearts!

CHEMIST: Pardon?

ANA: Your girl. Look how sad she is looking. She tink you forget her. She all the time love you.

CHEMIST: Who?

He thinks that she means CATHERINE, though they obviously don't know each other.

ANA: The Bella! Look—she vatching you from back garden, through her fence. Poor sveetheart.

Bella barks. The CHEMIST laughs and calls out over the fence at Bella. CATHERINE is gone.

CHEMIST: Sorry, Bella! Hello!

Bella barks threateningly.

ANA: Now she is the happy! She all the time liking you.

CHEMIST: I'd hate to see how Bella acts when she doesn't like someone! See you soon, Mrs Brajovik, see you soon, Bella!

The CHEMIST leaves. ANA looks JOVANKA in the face.

ANA: You see, I am all the time busy.

JOVANKA: Coffee?

ANA: No.

JOVANKA: I come again next week. We miss you on Creswick Street, Ana.

CATHERINE is in the lounge room, rehearsing for an audition. She is reading a script, silently to herself, acting it out. KEN is on the computer. He occasionally looks up at her and laughs.

KEN: What are you doing?

CATHERINE: Rehearsing.

KEN: Did you get a role?

CATHERINE: No.

KEN: An audition?

CATHERINE: No.