

PLAY EXCERPTS

by Ingeborg von Zadow

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HELLO NEIGHBOR (Non)Sense Scenes with Glump

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HELLO NEIGHBOR is an absurd comedy written for adult puppet theater. We all know them: neighbors. The old woman who loves order, bachelors who love loud music, the student with the always barking dog. We greet one another warmly, have a quick chat and are glad that there are walls separating ourselves from the others.

But what if apartments suddenly disappear but the inhabitants stay? What if two apartments melt into one and your neighbors are now your roommates? And who on earth is the Glump that sometimes secretly sits down on your couch? And when and where is all this going to end?

In the staging by Stephan Siegfried, and due to covid restrictions, each character had a small and a big puppet and was also played by an actor (see photos). All stage directions are read out loud by a narrator.

DAY 2

*Lights on in **Apartment 5**. It belongs to the Perfect Family, who is abroad for work. The furniture is covered with dust covers. The only living being in the apartment is a little plant in a pot.*

*Lights on in **Apartment 6**. Mr. von Busekist, who always likes doing things in the same way, has been living here for very, very many years. A couple of years ago, due to the death of his wife, he had to adjust his beloved rituals to the new circumstances. This took some time.*

Mr. von Busekist owns a big wing chair, a watering can and a sink that has seen better days.

Watering the Plant 1: *Mr. von Busekist fills the watering can with water in his apartment. He had gladly volunteered to take over the plant service for the Perfect Family. The daily checking that everything is in order gives structure to his day and gives him the sense of being needed. After his chore, Mr. von Busekist locks the Perfect Family's apartment again and unlocks his own. He therefore doesn't notice that the plant in Apartment 5 spontaneously grows a bit.*

*Lights on in **Apartment 1**. The shared flat of the friends Ranz and Tolle. A normal evening. Ranz is pleasantly surprised that Tolle has come back earlier than usual today. He is standing at the stove, cooking, humming and simultaneously setting the table. He is already using a knife at this point, cutting chicken into pieces etc.*

Tolle, more often than not impressed by his own appearance, is committed to his current Online-Dating-Chat on his mobile phone. As always, he is hoping the girl will take the bait.

*Lights on in **Apartment 3**. There are boxes everywhere. Patricia is lying somewhere in between them, having been busy all day moving into the apartment. The only person she has seen so far is the old man from the top floor. Now, to relax, she is chatting with someone online who is still a stranger, but she hopes he will take the bait. Her dog Entertainer is sniffing around the new apartment.*

Dating Chat 1

PATRICIA *writing* What do you do in your free time?

TOLLE *writing* I listen to music, go jogging, take a shower. I helped a friend move the other day.

PATRICIA That ´s nice. I just moved also.

TOLLE Really? What ´s your new place like?

PATRICIA You don ´t want to know what it looks like at the moment.

TOLLE Without my buddy it would probably look bad here, too. I practically only had my tent with me when I moved in.

PATRICIA You ´ve been around a lot?

TOLLE Being around a lot is my second passion 😊 .

PATRICIA What ´s your first?

Pause.

RANZ Tolle, Dinner ´s ready.

TOLLE Mmmmh.

RANZ Can you please wrap things up?

TOLLE Just a moment.

Pause.

PATRICIA Your passion? VuvuzelaKing?

TOLLE I ´m not telling.

PATRICIA Please.

TOLLE You won ´t be able to avoid my passion soon, I promise you that. 😊
A pause.
 You want to meet up sometime?

*A pause. Patricia isn't writing.
You still there? ArchãoWoman?*

Pause.

PATRICIA I don't know if I want to meet you yet.

Pause.

TOLLE Hey, no hurry. Everything at your pace.

PATRICIA Okay.

RANZ Tolle, come on now.

TOLLE Just a moment.

RANZ The food is getting cold. It's such a pity. Why don't you finish that later. What are you doing anyway?

TOLLE *writing* Listen, my flatmate is being a pain. Write later?

PATRICIA Yes.

TOLLE Cool. Till later.

PATRICIA Till later.

*In **Apartment 3** Patricia cuddles close to Entertainer, suddenly happy that at least he is there for her.*

*In **Apartment 1**, Ranz and Tolle finally sit down at the table of their shared flat.*

RANZ Corn-fed chicken in red wine sauce with rosemary potatoes.

TOLLE Great.

RANZ And your favorite salad: Beetroot salad with goat cheese strips and walnuts.

TOLLE It's cool that you always cook.

RANZ I'm happy to. It's just so nice to eat together peacefully.

*Lights on in **Apartment 2**. As always, Ms. Cary-Nosy's place is spick and span. Everything here has its place and maybe also its crocheted doily. Ms. Cary-Nosy sits lonely on her couch and clings on to her mop. On TV there is a family soap opera with happy grandparents and grandchildren. But the happiness doesn't reach Ms. Cary-Nosy, because she is having one of her moments.*

The smell of despair brings the Glump onto the scene. Naturally attracted to loneliness, bad energy and fear, it approaches Ms. Cary-Nosy, invisible and unstoppable, to delight itself in making her life miserable.

MS.CARY-NOSY *can hardly breathe any more* What on earth am I to do with all this time time time, what should I do, how do I get through it, too much too much too long, even the nights, it always takes forever until I can finally mop the hallway again and at last see someone anyone, always this silence, this silence, this silence silence!

*In **Apartment 1** Tolle puts on some lively music, a bit too loud.*

The music brings Ms. Cary-Nosy back to reality. Almost glad to have a new mission, she wipes away her tears, straightens her clothes and stands in the hallway shortly afterwards, justice on her side.

Pounds on the door of Apartment 1 Turn that music down at once!
We don't do that here! Consideration is probably a foreign concept to you!

Ms. Cary-Nosy goes back into her apartment satisfied, as Ranz turns down the volume of his flatmate's music.

looks out of the window The Perfect Family from the top floor were such good neighbors, so friendly and correct. Father, mother, child, child. They always said hello, even to me. But for now, they're away in America.

*Lights on in **Apartment 4**. Merle and her mother live here. Of course, as usual, Merle is alone. She is playing with her front door key, which is dangling around her neck, and recording a voice message.*

MERLE

Hello Annika. Too bad you've moved to America. My mother always has to work long hours now. Some new project and if she doesn't cooperate, she'll lose her job and where would the money come from then. But now our freezer is fuller than ever. Mum bought me everything I wanted. I'm allowed to operate the stove, the microwave, the deep fryer, the washing machine and the dryer all by myself now. Mama said I'm grown up now, and also, who else would do it, if she's away for work all day.

If you were here, we could be grown up together.

Mr. von Busekist starts his getting-the-mail ritual in his apartment. In these moments, he is always reminded of his wife. It had been so nice back then, to discuss the contents of the mailbox with each other after having gotten the mail. That was especially true for those days when the mailbox had been empty.

Complicated leisurely, Mr. von Busekist walks down the stairs. He opens his mailbox quietly, so as to not attract the attention of any of his neighbors, he closes the mailbox again, fumbles for the key to the mailbox of the Perfect Family, unlocks their mailbox and locks it again, this rattles and there is Ms. Cary-Nosy.

MS. CARY-NOSY Oh, what a coincidence, Mr. von Busekist. Getting the mail as always at this time?

MR. VON BUSEKIST Of course.

MS. CARY-NOSY And? Did you get something today?

MR. VON BUSEKIST No no.

MS. CARY-NOSY But you're holding something in your hand.

MR. VON BUSEKIST For the Perfect Family.

MS. CARY-NOSY Oh, you're supposed to empty their mailbox?

- MR. VON BUSEKIST And forward it, forward.
- MS. CARY-NOSY They could have also asked me. If it gets too much for you any time, I´d be happy to jump in. Also watering the plant in that apartment of theirs.
- MR. VON BUSEKIST But Ms. Cary-Nosy, I can´t just give you the key -
- MS. CARY-NOSY But Mr. von Busekist, I´ve been living here all my life. The nice Perfect Family surely wouldn´t mind. The two of us have to stick together, right? No one has been living as long as us in this house.
Pause.
Have you heard already? The new one from the first floor is supposed to be a doctor. I really don´t know why women have to be everything as well these days, but in any case we´ve gotten something decent into the house. Doesn´t seem to have a man, but who has one of those, right – have you seen her already?
- MR. VON BUSEKIST Well -
- MS. CARY-NOSY One can always use a doctor in the house, right, even if he is a woman.
- MR. VON BUSEKIST Some move out, some move in. Same as always, always.
He leaves.
- MS. CARY-NOSY Have a nice day, Mr. von Busekist. You´re welcome to have a coffee with me some time, you know that, right? Any time!

Ms. Cary-Nosy gets ready to mop the stairwell once more, even though it is not necessary yet. But first she stands in the hallway, listening to what is being said in Apartment 1.

In **Apartment 3**, Entertainer needs to go out. This doesn´t suit Patricia at all, who is longing for the promised next chat. Because Entertainer in principle has no understanding for this, Patricia reluctantly begins to put on her shoes.

*In **Apartment 4**, Merle decides to give a concert and invites everyone that happens to be in her apartment to listen. When her stuffed animals – and unnoticed by her also the Glump – have taken place in front of her, she begins to play them something on her flute.*

When the Glump leaves the concert early, Merle feels lonelier than before.

THE SALT QUEEN

2025

THE SALT QUEEN is a new family play that deals with contemporary topics: our relationship with nature, dealing with strangers and with conflicts, not only between generations.

Plot: After the death of the queen, the king wants his children to promise to stay with him forever. Only Salia, the youngest, is not willing to. But she assures her father that he is worth more to her than all the salt in the world. Angered by this comparison with something supposedly trivial, the king banishes his daughter from court.

Soon the whole empire is running out of salt, and nobody knows why. People are getting sick and leaving the kingdom. On her own and unaware of this, Salia encounters her dead mother in the form of the elements wind, fire and water; she meets Fox and Rabbit, whose friendship is put to a stomach-rumbling test. And she finally finds her way to the Salt World beneath the earth, where she discovers the mystery of the missing salt and manages to save the kingdom, together with one of the Salt People.

Freely adapted by the fairy tale „Salt is more important than Gold” by Božena Němcová with some newly invented characters. For 6 actors.

Scene 6

Forest clearing

Rabbit is trying to pull something out of a hole in the ground. Salia enters.

SALIA *to rabbit* Hello – do you need help?

Rabbit could have a speech impediment, e.g. saying f instead of w.

RABBIT Oh, that would be wonderful. He ´s got stuck once again.
I always tell him he has to be more careful. But it doesn ´t happen. And then I have to pull him out again, all by myself. Sometimes it takes me the whole day.

Salia helps. They manage to free Fox, and they all tumble over each other.

RABBIT Thank you, thank you, thank you! With your help, that was really quick!

SALIA But – that ´s a fox!

RABBIT *proud* A real one.

SALIA Why are you saving him?

RABBIT He is my friend.

SALIA But you are a rabbit. He could eat you.

FOX Why would you say that?

Pause.

RABBIT *to fox* Wait a minute, you could eat -?

FOX Not me.

Pause.

RABBIT Foxi?

FOX Well, it is kind of sort of normal, that foxes eat ra -

RABBIT But I am your friend!

FOX That is the problem.

RABBIT I´m not an ordinary rabbit.

FOX I know.

RABBIT Next time, I´ll leave you stuck! Then you can try and get out of the hole yourself!

FOX Bunny, you´re really safe with me, theoretically. But in practice it would be convenient if I was never hungry.

RABBIT *offers fox a bag* Quick – have some more chips.

FOX Yuck! The things people leave lying around in the forest.

RABBIT But we always clean up the trash.

SALIA Chips? Can I have some? I´m craving something salty.

RABBIT *hands Salia chips* Who are you anyway?

SALIA Princess Salia.

RABBIT And what are you doing here?

SALIA I´m looking for a place to sleep for the night.

FOX Not in my den.

RABBIT I would invite you into my burrow, because you helped me. But I´m afraid you´re too big.

FOX Even I can´t fit into that rabbit burrow.

SALIA *to rabbit* That´s good. At least you´re safe from him there.

RABBIT Right. *Pause.* But I usually sleep in Foxi´s den.

SALIA You sleep next to the fox?!

FOX It´s never good when a third party gets involved. There wasn´t any problem until you showed up. After all, we say good night to each other every evening, don´t we, Bunny?

RABBIT That´s what we do, Foxi.

FOX What could possibly go wrong!

SALIA Really? You say good night to each other?

FOX & RABBIT Do you want to hear?

Fox and Rabbit sing. (Melody: Brahms-Lullaby)

FOX & RABBIT Good ev´ning, good night
 I am holding you ti-ight,
 Tuck you up in no-o time,
 With those lovely paws of mine.

 T´morrow mor- ning, my love,
 Th´ world will be as it was.
 T´morrow mor - ning, trust me,
 Here with you-ou I will be.

Fox and Rabbit fall asleep standing up, leaning on each other. Salia also makes herself comfortable. Night.

In scene 7 Fox bites Rabbit in his sleep and Rabbit decides to flee from him. Fox goes after him, to try to save their friendship. The court servant James arrives. He wants Salia to come back home to help her sick father but Salia declines, since her father is not yet willing to apologize for sending her away. But Salia decides to try and find salt.

Scene 8

Country Road

Salia alone.

SALIA Where on earth can I find salt if James has already searched the entire kingdom?

There is a trickling, bubbling sound. The spirit of the mother appears, in the shape of water.

SALIA Can I drink from you? I had salty chips just now.

WATER Go ahead.

Salia goes to the water and drinks.

WATER Until recently, I was salt water. You wouldn´t have been able to quench your thirst so well.

SALIA You used to be salt water? Why not anymore?

WATER Ever since the Salt People stopped delivering salt to the kingdom, it´s missing in me. But I don´t care about that. I´m as loving as before.

SALIA Who are the Salt People?

WATER They own all the salt in the world. They live in the salt world, under the earth.

SALIA That´s where I need to go.

WATER You can´t go there.

SALIA But why not?

WATER No one has ever been there.

SALIA Then I will be the first. Show me the way.

WATER I can ´t reveal that.

SALIA But I have to find salt. I have to save the kingdom. If I don't act now, it will be too late!

WATER But what if something happens to you? Or if you can ´t find your way out again?

SALIA I have to give it a try, otherwise I ´ll never see my father again.

Pause.

WATER All right. I will help you. And who knows, maybe you can change the Salt People ´s minds. That would really be something.
Shows Salia the way to the Salt World.
This way. Good luck, Salia.

Salia hesitates briefly, when she hears her name, but she then disappears in the direction of the Salt World.

In Scene 9 we are introduced to the Salt World. The Salt People decide to stop delivering salt to the kingdom because the king has insulted nature by calling the salt useless and unimportant. They stop working altogether. They speak a language made out of sounds instead of words, Salt Person Numberthree translates for them.

Scene 10

Salt World

The Salt People have now converted their former salt mining site into a laboratory. They make salt cookies, they play tunes on a saltochord and a saltophone, they shape salt crackers, they play salt ball, they cook salt tea, develop a salt lamp, perfect their salt sculptures etc. The mood is good; they need nothing and no one.

Suddenly, Salia is standing in the Salt World.

SALIA Hello everybody!

The Salt People freeze and stare at Salia. They have never had a visitor.

SALIA I ´m Salia.
Silence.
You ´re the Salt People, right? Your place looks great!

Short conversations between the Salt People in Saltish: „Who is that and where did she come from?“

SALIA Listen, I really need to talk to you. I ´m from the kingdom above. We ´re out of salt. Can you help me get it back?

NUMBERTHREE *translates into Saltish.*

Silence. Then the discussion gets into full swing: "What does she want here? She has to leave! How did she get in anyway? Who showed her the way? No one is allowed to know the way to us. We have to stay secret", etc.

SALIA Excuse me? I don't understand you. Could you maybe say that again in a different way?

The Salt People pounce on Salia and tie her up. Only Numberthree hesitates.

SALIA Hey, what are you doing! What's going on? Let me go at once!

NUMBERTHREE *translates into Saltish.*

The Salt People exit in different directions. Numberthree stays behind to keep watch.

SALIA This can't be happening! How am I supposed to save the kingdom like this?

Numberthree remains silent. Then he sneezes.

SALIA Do you have a cold? *No reaction.* There are some honey candies in my pocket. Do you want some?

Numberthree hesitantly takes the bag of candy out of Salia's pocket. He is fascinated but doesn't know what to do with them.

SALIA Take one out, unwrap it and then stick it in your mouth.

Numberthree does as told and is totally absorbed by the new taste explosion.

SALIA Keep them. The Kingdom's own brand!

NUMBERTHREE Thanks.

SALIA *surprised* You speak my language?

NUMBERTHREE Secretly learned. *Pause.* The collective is against contact with the outside world. I'm not supposed to talk to you. One is never allowed to do anything without the collective.

SALIA Where did the others go?

NUMBERTHREE Controlling the exits. So no more people get in.

SALIA What's your name?

NUMBERTHREE Numberthree.

SALIA Don't you guys have names?

NUMBERTHREE The collective -

SALIA Got it.

Pause.

SALIA Why did you stop delivering salt to us?

NUMBERTHREE You humans don't value salt. Your father said: "Salt is the least important of the unimportant things!"

SALIA But / value salt. / know that it is more important than gold and jewels. *Pause.*
And the other people have surely changed their opinions by now. I am sure
they realize how important salt is.
Numberthree is silent.
Doesn't it bother you at all if everyone in the kingdom is doomed? It's your
fault, too, if you stop delivering salt.
Numberthree is silent.
What if my father apologizes to you? I´m afraid he isn´t very good at it
though.

NUMBERTHREE That would certainly be a good step. But only the collective can decide that.

SALIA Do you always do what everybody does?

NUMBERTHREE That´s how it is here. It´s safer that way, too.

SALIA Not for the people in the kingdom, it isn´t. For them, it´s terrible that nobody
here says that your collective is wrong.

Silence.

NUMBERTHREE But how could I alone help you?

SALIA You could untie me. I could take some of your salt up to the Kingdom. I could
help my father get back onto his feet with it. And then I could make him
apologize to you

NUMBERTHREE I have always wanted to see the kingdom.

SALIA Then come with me. I´ll be happy to show you everything.

NUMBERTHREE That would be wonderful. *Pause.* But if this gets out, I´m done for.

Offstage the other Salt People are heard coming back.

SALIA Quick! Decide!

Numberthree unties Salia. Together they fill a bucket with salt.

SALIA You aren´t sneezing anymore.

NUMBERTHREE The honey candies -

The other Salt People are almost there now.

NUMBERTHREE Come on, this way. I know a secret passage.

Salia and Numberthree go off together.

Either Black or: the Salt People come back and discover the escape.

NO PERFORMANCE TODAY

Clownplay for children from ages 10 and up

Commissioned by Theater und Orchester Heidelberg
funded by the Ministry of Science, Research and Arts Baden Württemberg, Germany
Premiere at the Junges Theater Heidelberg 2023

The two clowns, Saffo and Kanda, are getting ready for their performance, just like every day. But suddenly Teiro, the rope, an integral part of the show, is fed up with everything and leaves. Saffo and Kanda don't know what's hit them, the show is not possible without the usually so-reliable rope. So no show today? What are they supposed to do with this forced break, the newly-won time? They return to their trailers, and for a little while they enjoy the time off. But when a screen forbids them to leave their trailers, they soon start missing each other and have to find ways to come to terms with their isolated situation.

NO PERFORMANCE TODAY explores humorously how people can connect again after a period of being alone. The play addresses social experiences from the Covid pandemic.

Scene 6

SAFFO *talking to himself* Saffo, how about a hobby?
Horseback riding! Swimming! Climbing! Mountaineering! Soccer! Basketball!
Dancing! Badminton! Field Hockey! Ice Hockey! Skating! Stand-up Paddling!
Surfing! Kitesurfing! Canoeing! Pedal boating! Bicycling! Wave pool! Bouncy
castle! Swingboat! Roller coaster! With a rocket into space!!!

Finds himself back in reality. Looks out of the window.

SAFFO Kanda? Kanda. Kanda!

KANDA Hmm?

SAFFO Do you think there will be a performance tomorrow?

KANDA Oh, come on. How?

SAFFO Of course, the rope is still gone.
Teiro, in hiding, is amused.
But I have an idea: let's find another one.
Teiro is alarmed.

KANDA Another rope?

SAFFO Of course.
There isn't just only one in the world.
There are hundreds.
The old rope has run away.
So let's replace it.
We can't be stuck here forever,
because of a stupid rope,
that suddenly has other plans.

KANDA But we're not supposed to go out.

SAFFO Says who.

KANDA The screen says "Please stay inside!".
I'm going to stick to that, Saffo.
I don't want something to happen.

SAFFO What do you think will happen?

KANDA What do I know.
Tornado, famine, a visitor from outer space.

SAFFO At least something would be going on here for a change.

KANDA You're always in such a frenzy.
Isn't it nice, for a change, to not always have to go outside?
To not always have a performance?
To be free?
Why don't you just wait.

SAFFO Kanda!
I'm fed up with waiting.
I'm going outside to find us a new rope.
And then it's showtime today.
Like in the past.
Like always.
Like in the past always.

KANDA No, Saffo, don't. Don't go outside.

SAFFO I'm already out of practice.

KANDA Trust me, there's something out there. We'd better stay inside.

SAFFO Do I still know our numbers?

KANDA The screen isn't just saying that. It really means it.

(...)

Scene 10

Saffo sits lonely at the table. The teapot is also present.

SAFFO *to the teapot* Gee, you and I, we've known each other for -
How long have you been living with me?
It's been some years now, some years.
And all this time,
you were such a loyal friend.
I really have to say that.
Yes, listen to me.
Don't always be so humble.

Hey, you're always there when I need you.
 You never go away.
 You always wait patiently.
 Even when there's tea brewing inside you.
 You never complain.
 You aren't offended when I drink coffee once in a while.
 Even when I wash you,
 when I dunk you or dry you,
 you never complain.
 Try that with Kanda.
Pause.
 Kanda
 Kanda
 Kanda
 Kanda
 Kanda
 Kanda
 Playing together
 Talking together
 Laughing together
 Thinking together
 Being together
 Getting a scarf as a gift
 Kanda

TEIRO *in hiding* "Together". What is that? It must be important.
 Kanda said it one two three five times.
 I want a scarf, too.

In the trailer. Saffo drinks tea. Another try.

SAFFO *to the teapot* Hello you!
 Since you and I were just having such an aromatic conversation,
 I thought maybe we could expand it a little bit.
 I have a suggestion.
 Listen: It would be so nice,
 if not only I would do the talking,
 but if also, from time to time,
 there would be an answer.
 From you.
Pause.
 That's probably a bit of a surprise now.
 But believe me, talking is not so hard.
 I certainly don't expect you to pour everything out right away.
 I really don't.
 A little "hello" would be more than enough for the beginning.
The teapot says nothing.
 Just a "hello".
 That's not much.
 It doesn't even have to be loud at first.
 "Hello".
The teapot says nothing.

"Hello".

The teapot says nothing.

Yells You could at least make a little effort!

Tries to calm down. Drinks tea. Last attempt.

SAFFO

to the teapot I'm sorry.

About just now.

I can understand why you are bitter with me.

I really shouldn't have, not so loud.

That was not okay.

No, you're right.

It's all my fault, really.

It's just: I always wait so long for you

and I never get any reaction.

Pause.

This silence -

I can't stand it anymore.

Surprise me.

Do something different.

Your tea always tastes the same.

You never let go of your stiff posture.

You always have such an empty look.

Change something.

No reaction.

There's only you and me here only you and -

We live together.

So it's quite important, isn't it,

how we treat each other -

Don't you think?

Both of us have to make an effort.

Do you understand?

You **and** me.

Not always just me.

But also you.

Also YOU.

No answer.

YOU TOO!

The teapot still does not answer. This makes Saffo so angry that he sweeps the teapot off the table and it breaks.