

# Works of Nels and Alli Latvala

Jouni Alkula, Espoo, Finland

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Updates May 2024: Added information about known performances in Canada, based on Eklund 1983, pages 260-377.

## Nels Latvala

### 1. **Avustuskassan hoitajat** (Aid Office Clerks)

Three acts, 7 male, 4 female. Happens on the West Coast. Modern theme with humour. Suitable for large and smaller stages. (FOC drama repository)

Performed twice in Port Arthur, Ontario in 1935, directed by Tyko Virtanen.

### 2. **Oikeuden vaaka** (Scales of Justice)

Comedy in 1 act. Nine roles. (FOC drama repository)

3. **Taistelujen aika** (Times of struggle). A speech of celebration by Nels Latvala. Mentioned in Laine 1987, page 377

## Alli Latvala

### 1. **Emäntä lakossa** (Housewife Goes on Strike)

Three act family drama. Eight roles (FOC drama repository). Mentioned also in Laine 1987, page 84. Possibly performed several times in Canada, with several similar titles.

Synopsis in Sundstén 1977, pages 51-54, summarised in English by Jouni Alkula.

The scene is set in an immigrant family and the demands that are placed on the housewife, and the blame that she gets for not following current affairs and not participating in social and political activities. She decides to read herself up to date, and learns about the struggle of the working class, particularly the concept of strike. She decides to go on strike against her family by pretending to be ill. The family sends a doctor to help, and the housewife explains to him the quality of her illness. The housewife wins the strike, and the family decides on new way of sharing the household duties.

Sundstén comments on the play: Despite the simplicity of the plot and the static progression of the events, Latvala succeeds in creating credible characters and comic situations that appealed to the audiences of the time.

### 2. **Joukkovoimalla** (Strength in Numbers)

One act, 4 female, 1 male. Room scene.

### 3. **Kuorotyttö** (Chorus girl)

Synopsis in Sundstén 1977 (pages 50-51), summarised in English by Jouni Alkula.

The scene is set in the time of depression that caused unemployed chorus girls to seek income where they could. The wealthy ladies of the town start an aid society to help the women. One of the ladies takes chorus girl Ethel Darling in her family, and goes on to make her a lord-fearing, humble and obedient servant. The men in the family have other ideas, and Ethel finally makes fools of the entire family. A happy end involves the son of the family marrying Ethel and leaving the family.

Sundstén comments on the play: The author succeeds in showing the emptiness of the ladies' charity activities. The play has a tight and clear structure, the dialogue is clear and understandable. The Finnish is correct without the anglicized aspects of "Housewife Goes on Strike".

### **Kuorotyttö**

Attributed to "H.S." (FOC drama repository). This is probably the same work. Mentioned also in Laine 1987, page 84 and attributed to Alli Latvala.

Comedy in 1 act. Six roles. A "humane" upper class woman interferes in the fates of chorus girls.

4. **Muraalimaalaus** (Mural Painting) (FOC drama repository).

Comedy in 1 act. Happens in Western towns. Eight roles. Suitable also for small stages.

5. **Orjamarkkinat** (Slave Market) (FOC drama repository).

One act. Eight female roles. Room setting. A modern American jobs office.

6. **Rahapulassa** (Short of Money) – Mentioned in Sundstén 1977, page 54

7. **Syntinen enkeli** (Fallen Angel) – Mentioned in Sundstén 1977, page 54

Performed in Sudbury, Ontario in 1923, Toronto, Ontario in 1923, Nollalu, Ontario in 1924, and Salmor Arm, British Columbia in 1926.

8. **Syntinen enkeli naimisissa** (Fallen Angel Gets Married) – Mentioned in Sundstén 1977, page 54

9. **Salainen säiliö** (Secret Container) – Mentioned in Sundstén 1977, page 54

Performed in Port Arthur, Fort William, Beaver Lake, Creighton and Sault Ste Marie, all in Ontario, in 1924.

10 **Punottu juoni** (A Weaved Plot) – Mentioned in Sundstén 1977, page 54

Performed in Vancouver, BC in 1931 and Intola, ON in 1924.

### **Sources**

1. Sundstén, Taru, Amerikansuomalainen työväenteatteri ja näytelmäkirjallisuus vuosina 1900-39, Turku 1977 <https://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/178217>

The works mentioned by Sundstén were in Minnesota University collections at the time.

2. Additions to the FOC Drama Repository, Vapaus, October 1959

<https://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/vapaus2500-43545/page-3>

<https://newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/vapaus2500-43530/page-3>

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3. Laine, Edward, ON THE ARCHIVAL HERITAGE OF THE FINNISH CANADIAN WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT , Turku 1987 <https://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/178217>

4. Eklund, Wm, Canadian Rakentajia, Canadian Suomalainen Järjestö, Toronto 1983