

= Charlene Robinson =

Charlene Edna " Lenny " Robinson (also Mitchell) is a fictional character from the Australian soap opera Neighbours played by Kylie Minogue . Charlene was introduced to the show along with several new characters , as part of a revamp by Network Ten to increase ratings . Minogue auditioned for the role in 1985 , shortly after finishing her high school exams . She attended the audition dressed as the character and casting director Jan Russ cast her in the role . Minogue was initially contracted for a week , but this was later extended through to mid @-@ 1988 . She made her first screen appearance during the episode broadcast on 17 April 1986 .

Charlene was portrayed as a feisty , quick tempered and outspoken tomboy . She had a difficult relationship with her mother and did not like being patronised . Minogue thought viewers liked the character as she was an average Australian teenager . Reinforcing her tomboyish image , Charlene trained as a mechanic and she often wore khaki overalls and baggy sweatshirts . Her relationship with Scott Robinson (Jason Donovan) was central to many of her storylines . They became a popular couple with viewers and the relationship helped boost ratings for Neighbours . Despite breaking up several times during their first 12 months together , the couple stayed together and their relationship eventually culminated in a wedding during " Episode 523 " , which was first broadcast on 1 July 1987 .

During her time as Charlene , Minogue also started singing and released two successful pop singles during 1987 followed by her debut album the following year . In mid @-@ 1988 , Minogue decided to leave Neighbours to concentrate on her music career . She filmed her final scenes in June 1988 and Charlene made her final screen appearance on 26 July . Minogue won four Logie Awards for her portrayal of Charlene , including the Gold Logie , becoming the youngest person to do so . Critical reaction to the character has been positive . Soap Opera author Dorothy Hobson said Charlene broke stereotypes when it came to careers for women in the 1980s .

= = Creation and casting = =

After the Seven Network dropped Neighbours in 1985 , rival channel Network Ten picked the series up . It initially attracted low ratings and Ten began working hard to publicise the series . They revamped the show and added several new cast members . Kylie Minogue had had a fairly successful career as a child actress , having appeared in various television dramas , including Skyways and The Henderson Kids , but she was considering giving up acting after failing to find further work . After finishing her school exams in 1985 , Minogue then auditioned for the role of Charlene . She attended the audition dressed as the character and won the role . Of hiring Minogue , Neighbours casting director Jan Russ commented " Kylie had done a couple of things before I saw her , but she was only 18 and as shy as a mouse . She really hadn 't evolved into anything at that stage , but the camera loved her and I knew I had my Charlene . " Minogue initially signed up to play Charlene for one week , this was then extended to 13 weeks and then through to mid @-@ 1988 . She made her debut screen appearance in the episode broadcast on 17 April 1986 .

= = Development = =

= = = Backstory and characterisation = = =

In her fictional backstory , Charlene was born in Coffs Harbour as the youngest child of Fred (Nick Waters) and Madge Mitchell (Anne Charleston) , and sister of Henry (Craig McLachlan) . When she was a teenager , Charlene drank alcohol , fell pregnant to her first boyfriend and had an abortion . In their 1989 book The Neighbours Factfile ' , Neil Wallis and Dave Hogan described Charlene 's life as " one long series of scrapes and scraps " . After her parents divorced , Charlene remained living with her father , but when he felt he was incapable of looking after her , Charlene followed her mother to Erinsborough . Hilary Kingsley , author of Soap Box , observed that Charlene

left behind her " life as Lolita " upon moving to the suburb .

Charlene was a self @-@ described tomboy , who preferred to be known by her nickname " Lenny " . She was known for her quick temper and her " heart of gold " . She always stuck up for those who were considered the underdog . In her book *Neighbours : The First 10 Years* , Josephine Monroe wrote that Charlene did not like to be patronised and had a sharp tongue . Monroe observed that Charlene 's feisty side helped endure her to viewers . In keeping with her tomboyish nature , Charlene trained as a mechanic after leaving school and got an apprenticeship with Rob Lewis (Ernie Bourne) . The character 's style often consisted of khaki overalls , baggy sweatshirts and her hair set in a perm . A reporter for the *Daily Mail* said this look helped to launch Minogue " into the public eye " as Charlene .

Minogue thought people liked Charlene because she was portrayed as an average Australian teenager , experiencing a difficult relationship with her mother . She continued , " She is a bit of a rebel and they probably relate to that , and while she has her problems she will always come out on top . " Minogue shared some similarities with her character , but thought Charlene was far more outspoken and tomboyish than she was . Minogue liked that Charlene often said what she thought , but joked that if she were in trouble and tried to punch someone like Charlene did , she would probably get " flattened " . Minogue also said Charlene was sensitive , but she was unlikely to show it and would " rather die than be caught crying . "

= = = Relationship with Scott Robinson = = =

Charlene 's first scenes were with Scott Robinson (played by Jason Donovan) . He thought she was trying to break into the Ramsay house and confronted her , which resulted in Charlene punching him . Minogue ended up punching Donovan for real during the take . Producers soon created a story arc for the characters that saw them enter into a romantic relationship . Scott and Charlene 's relationship helped boost ratings for *Neighbours* and the show 's publicist , Brian Walsh , capitalised on Minogue and Donovan 's increasing popularity with viewers and rumoured off @-@ screen romance . Of Scott and Charlene , Minogue commented " People like Scott and Charlene being a couple . It 's probably the most normal relationship in the show . " Kelly Bourne from *TV Week* observed that Scott and Charlene struck a chord with fans , who could identify with them .

Scott and Charlene had problems during their first 12 months together and they broke up several times . One such break @-@ up occurred after Charlene 's mother thought she should date other boys , while Scott had to repeat his final year of school without her . Scott was initially unsure how to win Charlene back , but after speaking with his grandmother , Helen (Anne Haddy) , who mentioned that her husband gave her a friendship ring , Scott went out and bought one for Charlene . While they were enjoying a barbecue at Charlene 's caravan by Lassiter 's lake , the couple argued about Charlene spending time with Warren Murphy (Ben Mendelsohn) and Scott decided to leave . When Charlene started to go after Scott , she found herself trapped by a fire that had been accidentally started by Greg Davis (Alex Papps) . Greg had been storing petrol under the caravan and spilled it as he was removing the cans , causing the petrol to head towards the still burning barbecue . Scott rescued " a terrified " Charlene from the flames , but an explosion threw them both to the ground and Charlene was knocked unconscious .

Donovan commented that Scott loved Charlene , so when he saw she was in danger , he forgot to think about himself and he just went in to rescue her . Donovan added that Scott was " devastated " when he saw Charlene had been injured . At the hospital , Scott gave Charlene the friendship ring and declared that they would live together . Minogue told Bourne that Charlene was flattered by the gift , while Donovan stated that it proved that they loved each other and were not going to break up again . Minogue agreed with Donovan , saying " There is that underlying love whether they are together or not . " After learning about the couple 's plans to move in together , their friends and neighbours expressed their shock at how serious the couple had become . When Charlene showed the ring to Daphne Clarke (Elaine Smith) and told her how she and Scott wanted to live together , Daphne was taken back . Scott 's friend Mike Young (Guy Pearce) also voiced his opposition , but Scott was determined that no one would stop them from moving in together . Bourne noted that

Daphne 's shock at the couple 's plans was " the start of a major controversy , splitting apart the inhabitants of Ramsay Street . "

When older Neighbours viewers expressed their concern about a young unwed couple moving in together , producers decided to have them marry instead . On @-@ screen , neither family approved of Scott and Charlene 's plan to move in together , but when Scott learned his father was only 18 when he got married , Scott found the solution to their problem and asked Charlene to marry him . Minogue said Charlene was shocked at first , but she became " very excited " about the idea of getting married . She continued , " She knows they want to live together and they have had so much trouble getting their parents ' approval that I suppose getting married seems the logical thing to do . They will be together anyway , so they may as well finalise it . " After getting over her initial shock , Madge gave the couple her blessing to get married . Minogue and Donovan both agreed that they would not get married so young , and Donovan thought that younger couples should live together first . He also believed that Scott was rushing into things . Scott and Charlene were married during " Episode 523 " , which was first broadcast on 1 July 1987 to two million Australian viewers . The episode became " a TV phenomenon " and Minogue said it was what Scott and Charlene 's romance had been building up to .

After returning from their honeymoon , Scott and Charlene moved in with Madge and Henry , and they struggled financially . Just three months after their wedding , producers decided to throw temptation at the couple to keep their relationship interesting . Andrew Mercado , author of Super Aussie Soaps , quipped that " a happy soap couple is considered the kiss of death " . Scott was the first to cheat when he kissed Jane Harris (Annie Jones) , while she helped him study for his HSC . After Jane confessed to Charlene , she threw Scott out and refused to talk to him . In a bid to reunite the couple , Jane told Charlene that she would steal Scott away from her unless she did something about it . The couple soon reunited . The following year , Charlene had a brief affair with her driving instructor Steve Fisher (Michael Pope) .

= = = Other storylines = = =

One evening in July 1986 , Charlene came home with a newborn baby and shocked her mother by claiming that he was her son . Charlene told Madge a story , so convincing that Madge believed she had become a grandmother . However , Charlene soon revealed that the baby was actually her half @-@ brother Sam (Thomas Hamston ; Scott Wealands) . She explained to Madge that she had been helping to care for him , after his mother Susan (Gloria Ajenstat) , turned to Charlene for help . Susan had had an affair with Charlene 's father Fred , until he threw her out . Charlene knew Madge would not be happy looking after another woman 's child , so she claimed he was her son . Soap Box author Hilary Kinglesy noted the situation helped expose Charlene 's " soft heart " and her sensitive side .

In the same year , Charlene acted as a backing singer for Scott and Mike Young 's band . Scott and Mike entered a demo tape into a song competition , and the judges , Molly Meldrum and Brian Hanson (Jon Finlayson) , sought out Charlene as they were impressed with her vocal ability . Molly and Brian invited Charlene to their music studio to record some tracks , but she soon realises that she is not interested in singing and wants to complete her HSC instead . Scott also apologised to Charlene for being jealous of her talent .

= = = Departure = = =

Minogue ventured into music during her time on the show and her cover of " The Loco @-@ Motion " spent several weeks at the top of the Australian music chart . In late 1987 , Minogue flew to England to record " I Should Be So Lucky " , before returning home to continue with Neighbours . The press speculated that she would soon have to make a decision between acting and singing . Shortly after , Minogue chose to concentrate on her burgeoning music career and decided to leave Neighbours after two and a half years . She filmed her final scenes in June 1988 . Charlene 's exit storyline saw her move to Brisbane , after her grandfather , Dan (Syd Conabere) , bought her and

Scott a house there . Scott was initially unable to go with his wife , so she said goodbye to him , on the understanding that he would join her as soon as he could get a job transfer . All of the cast gathered in the street , while Charlene said goodbye to her brother , mother and friends . She then got into her green Mini and drove out of Ramsay Street .

In November 2004 , Minogue was invited to film a cameo appearance for the show 's 20th anniversary the following year . A report then emerged that Minogue was willing to film an appearance as Charlene while she was on tour in the UK , but the producers had refused the offer . However , in a statement from production company Grundy Television , the producers said that they " made every effort to accommodate Minogue " , including filming the cameo anywhere in the world , but that their offer was turned down . In May 2010 , Minogue pondered a return to Neighbours during an interview published in The Sun . Minogue commented on how fun it would be to appear as Charlene again , after years of saying no , and added " I 've decided how it would work . Charlene would screech up the drive in her souped @-@ up Mini which she 's been working on all the time " .

In 2014 , Scott and Charlene 's son , Daniel Robinson (Tim Phillipps) , was introduced to Neighbours . While Phillipps has yet to have any contact with Minogue , Daniel has been seen making several phone calls to Charlene on @-@ screen . Phillipps also said Scott and Charlene were still together and had become " really loving , supportive parents " to Daniel and his sister , Madison (Sarah Ellen) , who was introduced in 2016 . In August 2014 , a Network Ten spokeswoman told the Australian Associated Press that Minogue had been invited to return to Neighbours for the show 's 30th anniversary celebrations in 2015 , but she chose not to return . However , Minogue agreed to take part in the documentary special Neighbours 30th : The Stars Reunite , which aired in Australia and the UK in March 2015 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Accolades = = =

For her portrayal of Charlene , Minogue won Most Popular Actress at the 1987 Logie Awards . She had also been nominated for Most Popular New Talent , but lost to her co @-@ star Donovan . The following year , Minogue became the youngest person , at nineteen , to be awarded the Gold Logie Award for Most Popular Personality on Australian Television . She also won the Most Popular Personality On Victorian Television and Most Popular Actress Logie awards . In 1989 , she earned another nomination for the Gold Logie Award for Most Popular Personality on Australian Television .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Reception for the character has been positive . The BBC 's official Neighbours website stated that Charlene most memorable moments were " her wedding to Scott and punching Scott in the face during their first meeting . " The Independent said Minogue 's " elfin prettiness " won Charlene a huge following in Australia and Britain . During a TV Week feature on Minogue , a columnist said she " brought to life one of the most loved and memorable characters of Australian TV . " Colleen Last from MSN TV branded Charlene " iconic " and " beloved " . During a column on the " Top five ex @-@ Neighbours stars " , The Daily Telegraph 's Robin Wilks placed Minogue at number one , commenting that " Kylie was once best @-@ known as the sharp @-@ tongued , permanently overalled tomboy Charlene " . The Age 's Jo Roberts said that the " slightly goofy " Charlene was a " tousle @-@ headed teenager with an oil rag and hoop earrings " .

In Tony Johnston 's 2005 book , Neighbours : 20 Years of Ramsay Street , Charlene placed sixth in the twenty classic characters chapter . Johnston said Charlene and her mother represented " the old and the new " , that her career choice was unusual and her " razor @-@ sharp tongue " put the fear into all the men who lusted after her . Johnston added that the younger female viewers admired Charlene , while the boys loved her feisty nature . In her book Soap Opera , Dorothy Hobson

believed Charlene broke stereotypes , especially when it came to careers for women in the 1980s . She wrote , " The sight of one of the most attractive female characters , dressed in overalls , with her cascading blonde curls tied up on top of her head , was one of the most positive images for breaking the stereotypes of what jobs are suitable for girls . " Hobson also praised Charlene 's on @-@ screen relationship with Scott branding the positive images for young people as " immense " . The BBC News noted that Charlene became one of Neighbours ' most popular characters .

Hilary Kingsley , author of Soap Box , dubbed Charlene " soap 's teen queen " and the " darling of the show " . Kingsley also said the character was an inspiration to girls all over the country with mother problems , calling Charlene and Madge " a marvellous double act " . Sky included Charlene in their feature on the twenty @-@ five most memorable Neighbours characters . They stated ,

Charlene was only in the show for two years , but she remains one of the iconic characters because (a) she 's Kylie Blooming Minogue , and (b) she married Jason ' Scott Robinson ' Donovan . Charlene 's name has become the by @-@ word for girl @-@ next @-@ door characters in Soapland , thanks to her tireless efforts to promote the cause of denim dungarees while working as a mechanic , and as a crucial member of the most successful set of teens that Ramsay Street has seen .

In October 2006 , Minogue and Donovan , as Charlene and Scott , were included on a postage stamp issued by the Australia Post to celebrate 50 years of television . The Holy Trinity Church experienced an increase in interest after Scott and Charlene 's wedding aired . Backpackers visit the nave where the couple were wed , while some viewers have held their own weddings there . Charlene 's wedding dress was donated to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery by Grundy Television in 1989 . It has since gone on display in the Powerhouse Museum and travelled to the UK . In 2013 , The Daily Telegraph included Scott and Charlene in their list of the " 20 best TV couples " . They called them " a supercouple " and " a bit of a Romeo and Juliet " pairing .