

DAYS OF OUR (SCHOOL) LIVES

By Jack L. Nuzum

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Tune in for the best and funniest soap opera ever, *Days of Our (School) Lives*. It's half-time at the big basketball game but Trish, Joannie, and Crystal ignore their pep squad duties to gossip about the latest surprising developments at their school. The new female teacher seems to have a persistent five o'clock shadow, and the English Department has taken over the administration of the school. The new leader, Mr. Dickens, is a Shakespeare fanatic, who is in league with the evil custodial staff, who in turn spend their time collecting gum wads and blackmail evidence on the teachers.

All the classic conventions of soap operas are here: memory loss, mistaken identities, love triangles, villains and heroes, with even a politically-correct Coke machine thrown in. Each scene ends in melodramatic suspense, complete with long stares and dramatic music. Satire, slapstick, puns, and literary allusions combine into a farcical feast of fun.

The plot strands converge on a hilarious exorcism of Shakespeare's ghost and an impromptu trial where the hapless Grammar Governor is exposed. The sets are simple, the laughs non-stop, and the large cast is perfect for a faculty/student production.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 m, 9 w, 5 flexible, extras)

(Male roles)

COACH SIMPSON: Basketball coach.

***HENRY WEBSTER / HENRIETTA MALONE:**

Former principal, teacher.

JEREMY: Basketball center.

GEORGE PATTON: Head custodian.

CHARLES DICKENS: "Grammar Governor," head of school.

PLAYER 1: Basketball team member.

PLAYER 2: Basketball team member.

PLAYER 3: Basketball team member.

EXTRA BASKETBALL PLAYERS: As needed.

(Female roles)

CLARA WRIGHT: Art and photo teacher.

NORMA STEWART: Biology teacher, pep squad sponsor.

TRISH: Pep Squad member.

JOANNIE: Pep Squad member.

CRYSTAL: Pep Squad member.

BETTY: Secretary.

JOYCE: Secretary.

PEP SQUAD 1

PEP SQUAD 2

EXTRA PEP SQUAD MEMBERS

(Flexible roles)

LIEUTENANT: Custodian.

MARTINEZ: Custodian.

FOSTER: Custodian.

GRABOWSKI: Custodian.

COKE MACHINE VOICE

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I

- Scene 1: During a basketball game.
- Scene 2: After the game, hall and locker room.
- Scene 3: Next day, teachers' lounge.
- Scene 4: Short time later, hall.
- Scene 5: Principal's office.
- Scene 6: Immediately after.
- Scene 7: Moments later, the hallway.
- Scene 8: Custodians' room.
- Scene 9: In front of the curtain.
- Scene 10: Later that night, various locations.

Act II

- Prologue: Monday after the dance, hallway.
- Scene 1: Custodians' room.
- Scene 2: Cafeteria.
- Scene 3: At the Coke machine.
- Scene 4: In the principal's office.
- Scene 5: Moments later, principal's office.

SOUND EFFECTS

Melodramatic soap opera music and dramatic stingers; game buzzer/horn; crowd cheering, groaning and reacting in horror; vacuum sound; tardy bell; groans, squeaks, beeps and buzzes of Coke machine; rock n' roll music; exotic dance music; and cymbal crash.

PROLOGUE

(Soap opera melody MUSIC during the voice-over in the BLACKOUT.)

VOICE-OVER: Like granules of silicon through a transparent, non-crystalline chronometer, so drip the "DAYS OF OUR (SCHOOL) LIVES!"

(At end of the line, there is a set of MELODRAMATIC MUSIC chords. These occur throughout the play and the chords can vary appropriately.)

ACT I Scene 1

(AT RISE: The last quarter of an exciting basketball game at the McDonald Carey Memorial High School. LIGHTS up on a set of risers that represent the sidelines facing the audience DS, which is the basketball court. CS on the risers is the pep squad section. MRS. STEWART, a biology teacher and pep squad sponsor, is seated with the PEP SQUAD. MRS. WRIGHT, the photo and art teacher, moves around taking pictures of the game. Various other EXTRAS, both adults and students, are scattered in the stands. COACH SIMPSON and his bench players are on ground level SR on a bench in the very front, pantomiming reactions to refs, etc. The CROWD pantomimes watching by moving their heads from right to left and back according to the flow of the game, timing cheers and other vocal reactions so as to not cover dialogue. TRISH, CRYSTAL, and JOANNIE are seated CS one row up on the risers, but on the front row of the pep squad section. They are deep in pantomimed conversation, only occasionally noticing the game. Trish and Crystal are accomplished flirts, vain, and a little trashy. Crystal is brighter, but also harder. Joannie is sweet, but not too bright or coordinated.)

Days of Our (School) Lives

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(As the LIGHTS come up, the crowd noisily watches the action as a fast break moves from left to right. Home team scores { Home court is focused at a point in the audience DSR, visiting team basket is DSL.} to a large cheer from the crowd. { A stage manager in the light booth at the back of the theater can use a flashlight to coordinate the focus of the crowd.} The three girls glance up briefly and give perfunctory yell and return to gossip. Crowd watches game, moving to focus to visitors' court DSL.)

TRISH: So, I heard that when the English Department took over the school, they fired our old principal, Mr. Webster.

JOANNIE: I really liked Mr. Webster. He never made me feel dumb.

CRYSTAL: Well, what I heard is that he got on the bad side of the custodians when he wouldn't approve the money for their crazy vacuum tables. I guess they had something on him, so he got forced out. It's ironic how the guys who clean the dirt play so dirty.

(CROWD groans as visiting team scores a basket. Eyes move back to DSR. MRS. MALONE enters from SL unsteadily on her low heels and takes a seat.)

TRISH: Look at that; that's the new teacher?! Nice legs but check out the rag on her head.

JOANNIE: Golly, she's not that bad looking. I have her for math this semester. She's kind of a klutz, like me. She wore high heels the other day and nearly stumbled down the stairs.

CRYSTAL: Maybe you ought to share the "Kiss Me, I'm a Klutz" sign we pinned on you last year.

JOANNIE: *(Dreamily.)* Yeah, Jeremy saw the sign and pulled it off.

TRISH: Who? Our Jeremy? Star center of the mighty Carey High Crickets?

CRYSTAL: Whose only active body parts are his triceps and sweat glands?

End of Freeview

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