

Days of Our Nights

By Daniel O'Donnell

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Days of Our Nights

-2-

DEDICATION

To she who must be obeyed –
My beautiful wife, Linda.

STORY OF THE PLAY

The play opens in Television City where we are watching the live taping of "Days of Our Nights." The set of "Days" is a New Year's Eve party on the Buckcannon yacht and the drama begins when Asa Buckcannon is poisoned from drinking his champagne toast. Who is the murderer? Could it be the sickly sweet Marlana, the conniving Erica, or even the long-lost Greta who acts like a wild animal?

Or could it be Beau, who's always wanted to run the Buckcannon Industries but was too inept, or Stefano, a rich, cunning businessman? And how do Dr. Von Quackenhiemer, a strange German scientist, and Palumbo, an idiotic detective, fit in?

Soon there are more murders; one character returns from the dead with a new head; and the yacht becomes out of control heading out to the open sea with hidden toxic plug-in air fresheners on board! Will the chaos -- and laughter -- ever end?

This play is a perfect choice for a full evening of soap opera fun! Performance time about 75 minutes.

SETTING

Set for the TV soap opera "Days of Our Nights" depicts the dining room of a yacht decorated for New Year's Eve. There are four round tables (three-legged night stands can be used) with eight chairs (folding wooden chairs with cloth covers over the backs can be used), a bar with stools, a piano, and a small settee. There are two entrances: stage right and left. Portholes can be made with Styrofoam wreaths sprayed with a brass-colored paint. Nautical items such as anchors, life preservers, lanterns, etc. can be hung on the walls and a few fake palm plants can be placed around room for a richer look.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 m, 12 w, extras)

SARA SPEILBUG: 30-year-old soap-opera director; business-like, phony, and patronizing to the audience.

MARLENA BRADY: 45-year-old mother of Sami and Ben; once married to Asa's son; always happy, helpful, and sickly sweet.

ASA BUCKCANNON: 65-year-old son of Phoebe; large in stature, ruthless, and controlling.

PHOEBE BUCKCANNON: 85-year-old matriarch; ruthless and a bit senile.

SAMI BRADY: 25-year-old daughter of Marlena and sister to Ben; gun-toting, spoiled brat.

BORDEN: 45-year-old nurse and secretary to Phoebe; manly, tough, and mean.

ERICA: 55-year-old ex-wife of Asa; conniving, ruthless.

DORIAN: 55-year-old ex-wife of Asa; conniving, ruthless.

BEAU BUCKCANNON: 60-year-old brother of Asa/Casa; rather short. He is the inept Landfill police commissioner who wants to run Buckcannon Industries but is too dumb and whiny.

DIXIE: 25-year-old friend of the family; poor and trashy but always helpful and friendly.

BEN BRADY: 23-year-old son of Marlena and brother to Sami; cowardly, spoiled, tries to act tough but fails.

GRETA: 21-year-old relative of the Buckcannons'. Lost in the jungle since childhood and recently found, she acts like a dirty wild animal.

STEFANO DEMERIT: 60-year-old international businessman; rich, powerful, ruthless, and cunning.

GENA: 45-year-old who unknowingly has a computer chip implanted in her head; controlled by Stefano, she goes from nice to mean to funny.

STELLA STEIN: 25-year-old piano player; average person who does not fit in with the elite.

DIRK: 26-year-old bartender; handsome, wise, self-assured, and used to the arrogance of the rich.

Days of Our Nights

-4-

FRANS VON QUACKENHIEMER: 50-year-old German doctor and scientist; highly intelligent but scatterbrained.

PALUMBO: 55-year-old retired cop; Columbo-type character but a bit of an idiot.

CASA BUCKCANNON: Asa's identical twin sister; the same character plays Asa. She is loud, controlling, obnoxious, has a large bosom, and wears a muumuu dress.

MARIA: 23-year-old wife of Ben; returns from the dead with a new head.

EXTRAS: Camera, makeup, and prop people as needed.

ORIGINAL CAST

The play was first performed in March, 1997 at Freeport Jr. High School in Freeport, Pennsylvania. The original cast is listed below.

SARA SPEILBUG: Nicole Tomayko

ASA BUCKCANNON: Eric Janoski

PHOEBE BUCKCANNON: Corinna Neely

SAMI BRADY: Katrina Greco

BORDEN: Elizabeth Lindsay

MARLENA BRADY: Bethany Almquist

ERICA PANE: Helen Pflugh

DORIAN: Bethany Krowsoski

BEAU BUCKCANNON: Eric Yagoda

DIXIE: Sherry Faucett

BEN BRADY: Matt Kersten

GRETA: Mauro DeMeno

STEFANO DEMERIT: Greg Brucker

GENA: Laura Corry

STELLA STEIN: Robin Neely

DIRK: Jason Hawk

FRANS VON QUACKENHIEMER: Andrew Wolf

LT. PALUMBO: Mark Medovitch

CASA BUCKCANNON: Eric Janoski

MARIA: Courtney Cummings

CAMERAMAN/SPOTLIGHT: Mike Hanna

EXTRAS: Crystal Williams, Nicole Allenberg, Leah Ehrman,
and Ben Tegethoff

UNDERSTUDIES: Joe Lindsay, Amanda Oertel, Anne
Jeffries, Kasey Betush, Sarah Dudeck, and Nicole Allenberg

DIRECTOR: Daniel O'Donnell

STUDENT DIRECTOR: Leah Ehrman

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: SARA ENTERS wearing a headset and talks to the audience as if they were there for a taping of the TV soap opera "Days of Our Nights." The soap opera set is behind her. ALL are present except for PALUMBO, MARIA, and CASA. In the audience is the CAMERA PERSON.)

SARA: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Television City. My name is Sara Speilbug, and I am the director of the show. Today, you will be watching the taping of America's favorite soap opera, "Days of Our Nights"! When the taping begins, we will be aboard the Buckcannon yacht for a New Year's Eve celebration. And we all know what that means, don't we? That's right! Murder, mayhem, mystery, and a whole bunch of overly rich snobs with too much free time on their hands. All we ask is that you don't talk, whisper, sneeze, cough, scratch, fidget, or belch during the taping. However, we do encourage thunderous applause and standing ovations if the mood strikes. So, please, sit back, relax, and enjoy. Thank you. You're a marvelous group, absolutely marvelous. *(SPOTLIGHT off on SARA. CURTAIN opens and LIGHTS come halfway up. The CAST is busy readying themselves and MAKEUP and PROP PEOPLE are busy at work. Out in the audience is a CAMERA PERSON operating a TV camera.)* Okay, everyone, places! Let's move it!

(MAKEUP and PROP PEOPLE rush off, and ACTORS take their spots.)

MARLENA: Sara, is my hair all right? I'm just not feeling that "Marlena" aura.

SARA: It's fine, darling. It has "Marlena" written all over it. Okay, ready? *(Pause.)* Lights! *(LIGHTS come up.)* Camera! *(Points at CAMERA PERSON.)* Annnnd action! *(SHE EXITS.)*

(CAST members are holding up champagne glasses and singing the last line of "Auld Lang Syne.")

Days of Our Nights

-6-

ALL: Happy New Year!

(ALL blow horns, make noise, etc. ASA raises champagne glass.)

ASA: May I have your attention please? *(PHOEBE is the only one who hears ASA.)* May I have your attention please? I said, "May I have your attention?!"

PHOEBE: *(In a wheelchair.)* Don't worry, dear. Mummy will get their attention for my big strong rich powerful son.

ASA: Thank you, Mother.

PHOEBE: *(Yells.)* Shut up! *(ALL become quiet except for SAMI.)* Listen up, you peons, Asa wants to speak.

(SAMI is talking and laughing with a nervous DIRK.)

PHOEBE: *(To BORDEN.)* Wheel me! Wheel me!

BORDEN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. *(BORDEN wheels PHOEBE over to SAMI.)*

PHOEBE: Shut up, Sami, or you're out of the will.

(PHOEBE pokes SAMI with a cane. SAMI turns quickly and pulls out a pink toy gun from HER purse.)

SAMI: Who the -- ? *(Realizes it is PHOEBE.)* Sorry, Grandmother, I didn't know it was --

PHOEBE: Too late. You are out of the will.

ASA: You got that right.

(Crying, SAMI runs to MARLENA.)

SAMI: Mummy!

MARLENA: *(MARLENA holds HER.)* Put the toy away, dear. Tomorrow will bring sunshine and smiles.

SAMI: But, Mummy, did you hear them? I'm out of the will! I'll be penniless, homeless, destitute! Mother, I'll have to turn to a life of crime!

ERICA: Like you haven't done that before.

(OTHERS laugh. SAMI points the gun at ERICA.)

SAMI: Shut up, Erica, you tramp!

End of Freeview

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