

SOAP OPERAS

In the POETICS, Aristotle writes:

Of simple Plots and actions the episodic are the worst. I call a Plot episodic when there is neither probability nor necessity in the sequence of its episodes. Actions of this sort bad poets construct through their own fault, and good ones on account of the players. His work being for public performance, a good poet often stretches out a Plot beyond its capabilities, and is thus obliged to twist the sequence of incident. (ss 9)

Following is a list of episodic plot summaries for 14 soap operas, taken from the New York Daily NEWS for Saturday, August 14, 1982. Notice how few actions are included; notice how many expository off-stage episodes are mentioned; notice how there does not seem to be any probability or necessity to the sequence of the episodes.

SOAP OPERA NOTES By JON-MICHAEL REEO

ALL MY CHILDREN: Erica returned from a tacky hideout to learn that Lars is auditioning a new-model. Jenny didn't tell Jesse she's modeling lingerie.
ANOTHER WORLD: Alma threatened to harm Maggie if Cecile tries to back out on their deal to get Blaine. Steve had surgery for internal bleeding.
AS THE WORLD TURNS: Ariel cringed when John mentioned he wanted kids. Maggie realized Betsy planned a mountain cabin tryst with Steve.
CAPITOL: A devastated Julie secretly witnessed Tyler in a clinch with Sloane. Lawrence panicked when Kelly accepted a date with Trey.
DAYS OF OUR LIVES: Trish agreed Scotty could spend the summer with David. Roman was suspicious of Anna's story of being forced into white slavery.
THE DOCTORS: Matt left for a marrow transplant, putting Althea in charge of the hospital. Jeff was jealous when Adrienne's doctor friend arrived.
EDGE OF NIGHT: Calvin was suspended for roughing up Tony who was arrested for carrying a gun sans permit. Loomis schemed to kill Damien.

GENERAL HOSPITAL: Monica and Alan joined to keep Susan from the Quartermaine coffers. Noah and Tiffany had a spat when she dated an old boyfriend.
GUIDING LIGHT: Kelly sped home from St. Croix after finding Morgan's birth control pills. Quint searched London for Silas who has Nola hidden.
ONE LIFE TO LIVE: Pat said she'd marry Tony and agreed Jimmy can live with them while Georgina is in California. Cassie refused to sleep with Gary.
RYAN'S HOPE: Johnny was miffed that Maeve practiced for a dance contest with David Newman. Kim was dazzled by Amanda but jealous of her.
SEARCH FOR TOMORROW: Rusty told that Travis Alex had plastic surgery, took Rusty's identity and planned to grab Sunburst. Travis supported Rusty.
TEXAS: Mark dated Allison while Ruby promoted Rikki's record in Nashville. Joel regained his sight, moved in with Mark and accepted a KVIK job.
THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS: Robert wanted to tell Angela of his love for Leslie. Jabot researcher hired Ashley not realizing she was an Abbott.

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