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Willow Parks: The Final Episode

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*To the lady
who instilled in me many awesome things,
including my love of nighttime dramas and soap operas—
my mom, Ginny B. Sweezy.*

Willow Parks: The Final Episode

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Willow Parks: The Final Episode was first performed January 30, 2016, Forte Studios, Mount Horeb, WI: Rex Winters, director.

NORA MARX: Justine Mattson

CASSIE/MAGGIE: Sara Thompson

WILL/NIGEL: Brett Fredrickson

DEAN/DASH: Max Luke

LEANNA/MINX: Tia Vasen

LINDSEY/SAMANTHA: Evelyn Santoirre

DOROTHY/BEVERLY: Tabbitha Parent

LEAH/ALLISON/CAMILLA/TAYLOR: Olivia Elinchev

MIRA/DR. FORRESTER: Gracie Hamberg

ADAMARIS/NICOLE: Grace Haroldson

TODD/DRAKE: Kobi Johnson

HAROLD TRUMAN: Carter Coon

Willow Parks The Final Episode

SPOOF/FARCE. It's the final episode of "Willow Parks," the longest-running primetime soap opera in the history of TV, and they're airing the show live for the first time. All goes smoothly until the show's matriarch falls asleep and the cast has to drag her body off the set. Having played a doctor on TV for 15 years, Mira discovers that she's not a real doctor and that her medical instruments are actually props. Midway through the show, an actor quits and the other cast members have to play the scene as if the character is there even though she isn't. Then when an actor is murdered, the security guard agrees to fill in but only if he can play the part with Shakespearean flair. The laughs are nonstop in this wildly funny soap opera spoof!

Performance Time: Approximately 75-90 minutes.

Characters

(4 M, 8 F)

- NORA MARX:** Producer and writer of “Willow Parks,” a TV soap opera; wears all-black clothing; female.
- HAROLD TRUMAN:** A security guard on the set of “Willow Parks”; a big fan who has seen every episode and writes “fanfic” scripts; fills in by playing the role of Drake Shakespearean-style; wears a security guard uniform with a blue button-up shirt, khakis, and a badge; male.
- CASSIE TYSON:** Plays the character of Maggie Mittens, the most beloved character on “Willow Parks”; female.
- LEANNA HARRIS:** Plays Minx Mittens, Maggie’s sister who is in love with Dash; female.
- WILL DREEKS:** Plays Nigel Nichols; male.
- DEAN WINTERS:** Plays Dash Nichols whose entire family was killed by rabid rabbits except for his brother and his Aunt Eunice; male.
- LINDSEY NOEL:** Plays Samantha Sterling; later plays the role of Ellen, a blind woman in the city; female.
- DOROTHY NIELAND:** Plays Beverly Crane, the matriarch on “Willow Parks”; female.
- LEAH TATE:** Plays Allison Crane, Beverly Crane’s daughter as well as the roles of Camilla and Taylor; female.
- MIRA MERKLIN:** Plays Dr. Forrester; female.
- ADAMARIS WINDHORSE:** Plays Nicole Quartermain; female.
- TODD KYLE:** Plays Drake Stone; male.
- ANNOUNCER:** TV announcer for “Willow Parks”; can be prerecorded, if desired.

Costumes

Actors wear stock character costumes from 1980-1990's daytime soap operas or nighttime dramas.

Setting

1980-1990s. Soundstage and set of “Willow Parks,” a TV soap opera.

Sets

The sets may be as simple or elaborate as your budget allows.

“Willows Park” park set. There is a bench and some foliage.

Living room at Crane Manor set. There are two fairly nice chairs and two end tables for drinks, bottles, and other decorations. At CS is a coffee table behind a rug strong enough to hold an actor’s weight and large enough to wrap a body in.

Warehouse. A backdrop may be used or a bare stage will suffice.

Hospital set. There is a counter that Nurse Camilla can either sit or lean on or a desk and desk and chair may be used. Folders and miscellaneous items are on top of the desk/counter.

Police station set. There is a desk and chair.

Outside Crane Manor. There is foliage and a backdrop of the manor, if desired.

Note: For a more flexible set, you may leave the living room set onstage for the entire play. The other scenes at the park, hospital, warehouse, police station, and outside Crane Manor may be performed DSR and DSL depending on your stage.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Soundstage.

Scene 2: Park set for "Willow Parks."

Scene 3: Living room at Crane Manor set.

Scene 4: Soundstage.

Scene 5: Hospital set for "Willow Parks."

Scene 6: Warehouse set for "Willow Parks."

Scene 7: Soundstage.

Scene 8: Police station set for "Willow Parks."

Scene 9: Soundstage.

Intermission, opt.

ACT II

Scene 1: Outside Crane Manor.

Scene 2: Living room at Crane Manor set.

Props

Papers	Piece of paper
Wristwatch, for Nora	Dark glasses, for Ellen
Clipboard	Walking stick, for Ellen
Headset, for Nora	Dark dress, for Ellen
Cell phone, for Dash	Envelope with pictures
Folder with pictures of Minx with Drake and Dash	"Poison" (Can be Kool-Aid powder)
Bag, for Allison	Sword, for Harold
Jacket, for Allison	Dossier with grocery list
Sofa pillow	"Poisoned" syringe
Duct tape	Drinks and a bottle
Blanket	Contract
Medical bag	Pen
Stethoscope	Shirt with jam on it
"Bloody" syringe (fake blood)	Letter
Hospital patient folders	Phone
"Corpse" of Aunt Eunice wrapped in a quilt (See special effects)	Something to hit Drake with. (May use a wine bottle from the living room set or something else.)
Bag and makeup kit, for Lindsey	Handcuffs
Sculpture	Dress similar to the one that the original Beverly was wearing, for Nora
Walkie-talkie	Black tights with a light and fluffy shirt, for Harold when he plays the role of Drake
Rug large enough to wrap around Todd	
Bag with a syringe in it	

Special Effects

Lighting to differentiate between the soundstage and the sets of "Willow Parks." You can use stage lighting for the actual show and house lights for everything that happens backstage. You may also make use of a camera and actually film it as if you were actually on a soundstage.

Corpse of Aunt Eunice. Take three pillows of various sizes and put them on top of the blanket. Using duct tape, tape the pillows to create the basic shape of a human body. You may also order a stuffed corpse online but remember to make sure it is taped up in the blanket well. There are also many how-to videos on YouTube.

Prerecorded voiceover with music (can be done offstage, if desired)

"Willow Parks" theme music

Cell phone ringing

House phone ringing

Sound of a door opening

Doorbell

Thump

Police siren

Fake blood

Production Notes

Nora never leaves the stage in the first act. She is “off-camera” but is seen by the actors and audience at all times.

Black out the lights quickly so that no one sees Leanna take Todd out.

*"Know your friends well
and your enemies...
better."*

—Minx

Act I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Soundstage of "Willow Parks." Cassie Tyson is looking out forlornly. Will enters and crosses to her.)

WILL: There you are, Cassie. I've been looking all over for you. *(Cassie doesn't turn to him.)* Is something wrong?

(Cassie turns to him.)

CASSIE: Of course, there is. *(Turns away. Silence.)* I'm dying, Will.

WILL: What? No. How long do you—?

CASSIE: I'll be dead by the end of the night.

WILL: Are you—? *(Crosses away from her.)* This is crazy. I didn't even know you were sick. How could you not tell me?

CASSIE: Because you already knew.

(Will looks confused and is about to say something until Cassie starts gently crying. Will crosses to her.)

WILL: We can go through this together, Cassie. How are—?

CASSIE: Poison. By poison, Will.

(Confused, Will stares at Cassie for a moment.)

WILL: Poison? *(Realizes.)* Wait...are you talking about Maggie?

CASSIE: What does it matter? I don't want to die! Not when I've only begun to live!

WILL: You're not dying. Your character is. There'll be other parts.

(Angry, Cassie crosses away from him.)

CASSIE: I don't want other parts! I am Maggie, and Maggie is...me.

WILL: Look, Cassie, we got canceled. We had a great run, but—

(Nora, the writer and producer of the show, enters, holding some papers. Cassie crosses to her.)

CASSIE: *(To Nora, angrily.)* How dare you kill me off!

NORA: Look, I had no choice. Corporate wanted something big for the finale and you're the most beloved character. And with Nigel's death as well, we'll have ourselves a little Romeo and Juliet action. *(Cassie just stares at her.)* It's the final show. We have to make it memorable.

WILL: For the show or for your career?

NORA: Can't it be both?

CASSIE: I don't want to die tonight, Nora!

NORA: And I don't want to be out of a job, but it is what it is. Besides, you two will be part of one of the most talked-about moments in the history of our show. Social media will blow up after it happens.

(Cassie stares at Nora.)

CASSIE: That means nothing if I have to die for it.

(Nora and Will watch as Cassie exits, crying.)

NORA: *(To Will.)* I think she's taking it well.

WILL: I'll talk to her before the show. *(Pause.)* So that new writing gig?

NORA: All based on tonight.

WILL: So not much of a chance, then?

NORA: Nope. At least it's one of my better scripts.

(Will agrees.)

WILL: I'll come through for you, Nora. You gave me my start, after all. *(Pause.)* I suppose I should go talk to Cassie.

NORA: Good luck with that.

(Will exits. Nora begins checking her notes. Unbeknownst to her, Harold Truman, a security guard, enters and looks around happily. He fondles various pieces of the furniture and then sits.)

HAROLD: Hard to believe it all ends tonight.

(Startled, Nora looks back and sees Harold.)

NORA: What are you doing, Harold? Don't you have some security to do?

(Harold jumps up and crosses to her.)

HAROLD: Sure do, but as you know, Harold Truman, here, is the biggest fan of "Willow Parks" that has ever been, and I couldn't miss my chance to talk to the writer and director of the show. Do you know that I've seen every episode...even the WPBN ones?

NORA: What's—?

HAROLD: WPBN? *(Nora nods.)* Oh, that means "Willow Parks Before Nora." They're not as good. As a matter of fact, with some of my Willow Parks fanfic, I actually try to rewrite those episodes as if they had been written by you.

NORA: I don't know what that means but...wonderful. We're about to go live, though, so—

HAROLD: That has to be so much pressure...no retakes. At least you have a talented cast.

NORA: Somewhat. I'm counting more on the longer commercial breaks because of the highlight reels and interviews. I really need to go—

HAROLD: One more thing. *(Nora nods "go ahead.")* Who does Dash end up with? I like Minx because she's the bad girl,

but Samantha seems like the one he's meant for even though she has that thing with Drake. *(Pause.)* So...?

NORA: I think you're going to have to watch and find out.

HAROLD: Oh, you! I will be watching...everything. Last night, I installed a lot of extra cameras so I don't miss anything when I'm in my security booth. Nifty, right?

NORA: You could call it that...or other things, I suppose. Great talking to you, Harold.

HAROLD: The pleasure was mine. All mine! *(Starts to exit. Leah Tate enters. Harold stops.)* Ms. Tate, break a leg tonight! That is what you actors say, right?

LEAH: It is. Thanks, Harold.

(Harold smiles and winks as he exits.)

NORA: Hey, Leah, did you get my message?

LEAH: No.

NORA: You're playing Nurse Camilla and Taylor tonight.

LEAH: But I'm Allison Crane.

NORA: And tonight you'll be Taylor and Camilla as well. The network cut our spending on talent so that we could go live. I couldn't cut the parts, so I cut the actors. *(Shrugs.)*

LEAH: *(Annoyed.)* Thanks for letting me know...right before the show.

NORA: I left you a message.

LEAH: Apparently. It'll be fine. Adding more roles to my resume is always good... *(Under her breath.)* ...even pointless ones. *(Starts to exit.)* Did someone tell Dean and Lindsey yet...especially Dean?

NORA: I'll tell them... *(Dean and Lindsey enter.)* ...now. *(Crosses to Dean and Lindsey. Leah exits.)* Dean, Lindsey. Leah's playing Nurse Camilla tonight.

(Dean stares at her.)

LINDSEY: *(Putting up her phone.)* And I care for what reason?

NORA: Because you're in the scene with her.

LINDSEY: Maybe.

NORA: Maybe? What does that mean?

LINDSEY: Nothing.

NORA: Okay. Dean, did you hear what I said about Leah playing Nurse Camilla?

DEAN: I did, but I don't know what it means.

NORA: It means... *(Looks at her watch.)* Never mind. I'm sure you'll figure it out at some point, and we go live in 20 seconds. *(Realizes.)* Where's Leanna?

(Leanna enters.)

LEANNA: Don't ask about my whereabouts, Nora! I'm a star!

NORA: Yes, you are. All right, places, people. The live feed starts in 3, 2, 1— *(Makes action gesture as music begins.)*

ANNOUNCER: *(Voiceover.)* Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining us on this special night. For tonight, the longest running primetime drama in the history of television airs its final episode ever. And for the first time, the show will be performed live. So sit back and enjoy, one last time, the show that's meant more to you throughout the years than your own children..."Willow Parks." *(Music fades as the lights shift to the night scene.)*

Scene 2

(AT RISE: Park set for "Willow Parks." Dash is standing between Minx and Samantha, who appear ready to fight.)

LEANNA: (As Minx.) "Samantha, there is no way that Dash would ever be with someone like you!"

LINDSEY: (As Samantha.) "Someone like me? Well, at least I haven't been married five times."

LEANNA: (As Minx.) "And each one of those times was for love."

LINDSEY: (As Samantha.) "Love? (Minx nods.) They all died while married to you!"

LEANNA: (As Minx.) "Which makes it all the more tragic. How could you bring that...that pain up again?" (Starts to cry, turns away.)

DEAN: (As Dash.) "That was cruel, Samantha. How could you—?"

LINDSEY: (As Samantha. Taking Dash by the shoulders.) "Because I'm trying to protect you, Dash. Don't you find it suspicious that each one of her husbands died mere months after marrying her and happened to leave everything to her?"

DEAN: (As Dash.) "That is quite strange, Minx. Some would almost say...suspicious."

LEANNA: (As Minx.) "Oh, really? Suspicious?"

DEAN: (As Dash.) "Yes."

LEANNA: (As Minx.) "Well... (Crosses away.) ...since I'm more interested in changing the subject than talking about that subject anymore, perhaps Samantha would like to tell you what she dressed up as on Halloween when she was six. Hmm, Samantha?"

LINDSEY: (As Samantha.) "I don't see how that's— (Realizes.) How would you know what I dressed up as, anyway?"

LEANNA: *(As Minx.)* "Because I live by the old saying, 'Know your friends well and your enemies... *(Searching for the right word.)* ...weller."

(Minx and Samantha stare at each other.)

DEAN: *(As Dash.)* "Could you tell me, Samantha? As you know, I am such a fan of Halloween...ever since I was a wee child. What were you?"

LINDSEY: *(As Samantha.)* "I was —"

(Minx jumps in front of Samantha.)

LEANNA: *(As Minx.)* "She was a rabid bunny!"

LINDSEY: *(As Samantha.)* "I was going to tell him."

LEANNA: *(As Minx.)* "I know, but I wanted to."

DEAN: *(As Dash. To Samantha, shocked.)* "You were a rabid bunny?"

LINDSEY: *(As Samantha.)* "Yes, I was."

DEAN: *(As Dash.)* "How could you?! *(Turns away.)* When I was nine, a band of rabid bunnies killed my entire family, except for me, my brother, and my dear Aunt Eunice." *(Looks off.)*

LINDSEY: *(As Samantha.)* "I don't see how bunnies, even rabid ones, could kill your entire family."

DEAN: *(As Dash.)* "They did. Trust me! The memory haunts me to this day! *(To Samantha.)* How could you?!"

LINDSEY: *(As Samantha.)* "I'm sorry about what happened to your family, Dash, I really am. But I was six. I didn't know you and had no idea that your family would one day be killed by —"

(Dash places his fingers to Samantha's lips to shush her.)

DEAN: *(As Dash.)* "Don't say it. Even though you didn't know, you would've known if you really loved me."

(Samantha is about to speak when Minx shoves her aside and grabs Dash.)

LEANNA: *(As Minx.)* “Dash, I knew even though I didn’t know...because love always knows...even when it doesn’t.”

DEAN: *(As Dash.)* “Really? *(Minx smiles and nods.)* Then maybe there is a future for us.”

[END OF FREEVIEW]