

SOAP OPERAS



RHODA BURACK

Q: What is the name of the daytime soap opera you watch?

R: *As the World Turns*.

Q: When is it on?

R: Twelve-thirty Monday through Friday on Channel 2.

Q: How long have you been watching?

R: Two years.

Q: And how did you start watching it?

R: My mother came to visit me from New York and she watched it, so I would sit down with her everyday at 12:30 and we would both have lunch and watch it.

Q: Have you watched any other shows?

R: No, I have never become hooked on any other shows. No, I don't want to become hooked again.

Q: What happens when you miss a show? Do you have somebody watch for you?

R: Not really, except that sometimes there is more going on than other times. Then I will question some of my friends who watch it too.

Q: You are not fanatical about it then.

R: Only during crucial times when there is something very interesting happening. Then I will call a friend and ask what happened.

Q: What do you mean by crucial times?

R: Something drastic happening—somebody dying or somebody having a love affair about to be discovered.

Q: Could you tell me anything that is going on in *As the World Turns*?

R: What holds my interest the most is the intrigue. There is a couple who were in love, and he was married and he was going to get a divorce, but he was having an affair with someone else, and she became pregnant and he didn't know about it. The night he was going to ask his wife for a divorce, he got drunk and she became pregnant, so he couldn't ask for a divorce at that time. He never knew that the girl he really loved was pregnant, and she ended up marrying his stepbrother. So now there is an unhappy child, and she had a nervous breakdown. Now the question is will they ever get together, will anybody find out, things sort of leak out; we don't know what will happen next.

Q: Do you get very involved?

R: Yes, in this particular one I do get involved.

Q: Why is that?

R: Maybe it's sympathy for the woman having been pregnant and marrying a man she didn't love, and as a result having a nervous breakdown. She went through a lot. Even though I haven't had such things in my life. When I was younger my mother used to tell me don't do this with a guy, don't do that with a guy—as far as sex goes she never said anything specific, but she said you will get pregnant. That's all I ever heard. This one got pregnant. And she would cut out newspaper articles for me, and I was always in fear of getting pregnant throughout my young life. I guess maybe I think that is the reason I watch soap operas. Also because the men are so handsome.



BARBARA EDER

Q: What soap operas did you once watch?
B: *General Hospital* and *Secret Storm*. They were both on at 3:30, so I stopped watching *Secret Storm*.
Q: How did you start watching them?
B: My sister used to watch. She was home with the baby and she got me started. And when the plot started getting boring in *Secret Storm*, I would turn the channel to *General Hospital*.
Q: Was there anything in particular that you did while you watched?
B: I would read the paper sometimes.
Q: Did you watch consistently?
B: Yes. If I was not at home I would turn on a set wherever I was. One time I was back East and I watched everywhere I went. And then once my mother watched for me. Something very crucial was going to happen that day and I was studying for a final and there was no way I could watch. But it is really very funny. You think something crucial

is going to happen that day, but it takes about two weeks to happen.
Q: What did you like about the show?
B: I got involved with the characters?
Q: Do you think they are realistic?
B: I guess not. They have extra traumas. They do not react like normal people.
Q: Why did you get hooked?
B: I guess it is an escape.
Q: I used to watch *House of Dark Shadows*.
B: That was really weird because it was not like the others. It was supposed to be supernatural so you could not really relate to the characters. Did you ever watch *General Hospital*? Jessie is in it and she is like an unreal person and she has been married dozens of times and every man is crazy about her and no one knows what they see in her and why does everyone go to her with their problems? It seems like she has had everything possible happen to her! She has lost babies, been involved in murders, etc.
Q: Did you ever watch *Peyton Place*?
B: Yes, I was going to bring that up. Would you consider it a soap opera? I used to watch it often.
Q: Did you think it was different because it was on at night?
B: Yes, and also because it was filmed, not taped. I loved the people on that show. They were not very real but they were romantic characters. And I loved to see what was going to happen to them. I never saw the movies nor read the book, but I got involved in the show one day. It was the day Barbara Parkins was getting married in the show and I wanted to see how she would look.
Q: What do you watch now?
B: I watch some of the movies that are made for TV and *Monday Night Football*.
Q: There are 14 soap operas on now.
B: Really?
Q: What do you feel about the changing of regulars with new talent?
B: It really turns me off. I remember one character who was a nurse and she left for some reason. So this other woman came in and did it and I just could not stand her. I think the days she was on I watched something else.
Q: Why was the show you watched called *Secret Storm*?
B: Maybe because of the stormy lives the people led. I remember my niece at the time was four or five and her name was Amy and on *Secret Storm* there was a character named Amy. And one day I was watching it in my parent's home and in the story that day they found out that Amy was pregnant. My sister and mother were out shopping and they came in through the door and I ran out screaming "Amy is pregnant," and all they could think of was my sister's daughter. They could not imagine I could be so involved.



MARLENE WEST

Q: What soap operas do you watch?

M: I watch *Days of Our Lives*.

Q: When is that on?

M: It is on Monday through Friday 12:30 p.m., Channel 4. I have been watching it for five years.

Q: Do you watch any other soap operas?

M: No I don't. I don't have the time.

Q: So you make the time for that one?

M: I started watching *Days of Our Lives* when my children were small and that is why.

Q: What happens if you miss it?

M: I do miss it, but rarely.

Q: Do you have somebody else watch it for you?

M: No.

Q: What has been happening on *Days of Our Lives*? Can you give me a general story line.

M: It is too involved. After you have been watching the show that many years. One life is intertwined with a lot of the other characters so it is not as simple as it sounds.

Q: Have the same characters been carried out through all five years?

M: Yes, they are regulars.

Q: Where does it take place? What is the setting?

M: It is a small town.

Q: So it is not a hospital type of story.

M: A lot of the regulars are doctors and psychologists. So much action does take place in hospitals.

Q: Can you tell me what has been happening lately. Is it a marriage and divorce type of thing. Love affair type?

M: They all seem to be very consistent. There is marriage and divorce, court room scenes, which I find is the reason why women watch it day after day. They are always creating new scenes.

Q: When you sit down to watch it, do you do anything while you watch it?

M: Never.

Q: Do you eat lunch while you watch it?

M: Yes, I do.

Q: Do you watch the commercials?

M: Yes.

Q: Do you buy the products they are selling?

M: No.

Q: Do you find that what you see seems to be a pretty realistic portrayal of life, or do you think it is exaggerated?

M: Well, I think it is exaggerated and dramatized, but if it were not, I don't think the interest would be there. There is one girl on the show who has had the rottenest luck in the world. She always has problems and situations to deal with. But I know a lot of people and these things happen to them, but not so often. I think ordinary people get a break somewhere along the line, but the poor people on TV never do.

Q: There are 14 soap operas on now and you are only watching one of them.

M: That is all I can afford to watch. I am sorry I got hooked on this one because I have found that invariably wherever I am at 12:30 p.m. I have to find a TV set. Which is very unlike me.

Q: You don't usually get that involved?

M: I get involved, but not like that. My friend and I watch the same show. If anything happens to a character she just sobs and sobs. She says it is a release for her whereas I don't know what it is for me. It is just a story I got involved in.

Q: Like reading a long book?

M: These things never end.

Q: Do you think you will continue watching?

M: Yes, I do.

Q: Do you ever get disturbed?

M: Well I get a little perturbed when I get a phone call between 12:30 and 1:00. You can leave for a couple of days and follow it pretty well, though.

Q: Anything you would like to add?

M: Yes. I just bought a new gadget that allows me to tune into the audio of television. It is portable and now I can listen to my soap without having to go home. It's great!