

AMC's Tornado Falls Flat While Days Mixes and Matches to Much Success

{mosimage}{mosimage}BUSTED: AMC'S TORNADO

All My Children's November sweeps stunt of sending several tornados to decimate Pine Valley, its citizens and their relationships, was a giant bust. When will daytime soaps learn that using special effects is a domain best left to modern movies? Special effects end up looking silly on daytime since they don't have the technology or the budget to pull it off. AMC's big, killer tornado looked no more realistic than the tornado in the Wizard of Oz – a movie that was released in 1939!

Not only were the special effects lacking authenticity, but the game changing effects to the characters were repugnant and out of left field.

It made no sense that Zach uncovered a pregnant Bianca from the rubble and instantly knew he was her unborn child's sperm donor father. Zach has been haranguing his wife, Kendall, for months about her penchant for keeping secrets, yet all the while, he was harboring this whopper of his own? It was completely out of character for Zach to make a "donation" to Bianca – his own wife's sister – without discussing it with Kendall first. Imagine how different this story would have played if Kendall and Zach decided together to help Bianca conceive? Without Kendall's involvement, it damages the integrity of both Zach and Bianca, a character who is usually selfless to a fault.

Other casualties of the tornado included Babe (literally), Aidan and Greenlee's marriage, Jesse and Adam's secrets, and Jake and Amanda's burgeoning relationship. Why the show felt the need to kill off the character of Babe, I don't know. She was pivotal to the takeover of Fusion and the tainted Bella product storylines, not to mention her reconciliation and upcoming third marriage to JR. With her former best friend Bianca back in town, as well as her estranged father David lurking, the possibilities to involve her in storylines appeared limitless. Now it seems the show is going to revisit the old JR and David feud as they mourn Babe's death. Nothing terribly original there.

The muddled mess that is Aidan/Greenlee/Ryan/Annie wasn't helped by the tornado either. The show simply used the natural disaster as an excuse for Ryan and Greenlee to engage in the old soap staple "we're going to die so let's have sex one last time" sex, which of course, Greenlee's husband, Aidan, witnessed before he was swept away by the wind.

The show also took the opportunity to use the tornado to continue its quest to make the character of Annie look as bad as possible. Was there anything more pathetic than Annie at the hospital surrounded by dead and wounded tornado victims asking Jesse – the police chief – to stop what he was doing to search for her missing daughter?

Also losing credibility was Jake, who insisted on performing brain surgery on Kendall with the aid of a flashlight, after the hospital lost power. Does Pine Valley Hospital not have a back up emergency generator?

The entire tornado storyline was preposterous and if AMC thought it was going to attract new or lapsed viewers with this ill advised sweeps spectacle, they were wrong. If anything people laughed at the unintentionally hilarious special effects and absurd situations, and then changed the channel.

{mosimage}BLISSFUL: DAYS' NEW COUPLES

Days of Our Lives has hit pay dirt with some of its latest pairings. First, the “Sami and Nicole are both pregnant by EJ” storyline, struck gold with the chemistry between Alison Sweeney (Sami), Arianne Zucker (Nicole) and James Scott (EJ). Next, the show hired Galen Gering (ex-Luis, Passions) to play the role of Rafael, Sami’s new bodyguard in the Witness Protection Program. Finally, the show wisely chose to develop a friendship between EJ’s half brother, John, (Drake Hogestyn) and Nicole.

All of these actors and their new permutations are making Days watchable – even enjoyable – again after a long drought.

Shows are notorious for their “who’s the daddy” storylines, so it was ingenious of Days to take it to the next level by having both of EJ’s paramours turn up pregnant at the same time. After all, he slept with both them (clearly not using protection) so now he’s going to have to face the consequences. What a novel idea on a soap.

This set up also generates years of storyline because EJ is now connected to both women for eternity. Since Nicole and Sami are mortal enemies, can you imagine the years of comedic possibility for shared birthday parties and holiday gatherings featuring the two spitfires, their offspring and mutual baby daddy?

Sami won’t be at family gatherings for awhile since she is currently in the Witness Protection Program, not to mention the fact she hasn’t yet told EJ he’s going to be a father again. However, that hasn’t stopped her from setting off sparks with her new sparring partner, Rafael. The instant chemistry between Sweeney and Gering, not to mention the instant adversarial relationship between their characters, is reminiscent of the popular Sheridan and Luis pairing on Passions. It seems Gering likes to mix it up with feisty blondes! It will be great fun to watch this relationship unfold.

The friendship between Nicole and John has also been an unexpected highpoint of the show recently. Hogestyn injects a sweet innocence into his portrayal of NuJohn that mixes well with Zucker’s world weary Nicole. They are each able to let down their protective armor with each other, and their scenes have been surprisingly sweet and charming. Neither has any friends, so it’s delightful to watch them bond over Nicole’s pregnancy with John’s nephew.

Days is proving that every once in awhile all you need to do is shuffle the deck with your current characters to discover previously unforeseen fruit.

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